

**Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
August 5, 2010**

Attending: R. Casner; D. Mathiasen; P. Stricker; M. Ziobron (EDC Coordinator)

Absent: J. Albuquerque; E. Sabetta; M. Gionta

Guests: D. McMahon; P. Nedovich; J. Rucker; M. Walter; S. Wheeler;

Ms. Stricker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The minutes for the July 7, 2010 meeting were reviewed. Ms. Wheeler advised that Ms. Ziobron had sent her some changes to minutes and she read them to the Commissioners.

MS. MATHIASEN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. CASNER, TO APPROVE THE JULY 8, 2010 MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Ms. Stricker advised that she had followed up on the potential septic issue at the Moodus Plaza, as reported in the July meeting minutes, and confirmed that there is not an on-going septic problem at the pharmacy.

OLD BUSINESS

Status Reports:

Goodspeed Properties – Mr. McMahon reported that the foundations for the houses on Creamery Road have been poured and that the wall panels are expected to be received on August 6th. He advised that drilling of the wells for the Ray Hill Road houses has been completed and that they had had to do some blasting at one of the locations because they had hit ledge. He stated that they would like to have some of the houses completed and ready to occupy by their fall schedule.

Mr. McMahon stated that a number of Village merchants have expressed their disappointment that the people that purchase the Lady Catherine Cruise/Goodspeed Theatre packages are not coming over to the Village to shop. He stated that Ms. Scherrer had put together a brochure with a listing of the Village shops and that he has placed them at the Theatre and at the cruise docks.

Guest:

Ms. Stricker introduced Mr. Nedovich and invited him to speak to the Commissioners about his plans to purchase and upgrade the old Grand View Camp Resort (Torah Institute) site. Mr. Nedovich thanked the Commissioners for inviting him to their meeting and distributed copies of schematic plans for the camp site. He noted that he has not closed on the property yet; however, he is very excited about the potential for creating an upscale RV/campground on the property. He advised that he has a 40 years history of successfully developing and managing campgrounds. He reviewed the schematic drawings and provided an overview of his plans for the site.

The Commissioners and First Selectman Walter expressed their support of his proposed plan and, in response to their questions, Mr. Nedovich stated that he plans to open the campground in phases, beginning next spring. He stated, however, that he has some concerns that he would like to have addressed before he closes on the property. In particular, he noted the following three sections of the Town's campgrounds regulations: (1) Section 15.4.2 concerning a requirement for a 200' setback, (2) Section 15.4.5 regarding the maximum length of RV that can be accommodated (he suggested that rather than stipulating a specific length, the existing wording could be changed to "the national standard"), and (3) Section 15.4.7 concerning density.

Mr. Nedovich stated that he has scheduled an informal meeting with the Planning and Zoning Commissioners to go over his plans and concerns. Several of the Commissioners stated they would attend the P&Z meeting in support of his project. Mr. Walter stated that he would also arrange a meeting for himself, Mr. Nedovich, the Building Inspector, the Fire Inspector, and the Director of the Chatham Health District to discuss his plans and identify any other potential issues or concerns.

In response to a request from Ms. Stricker, Mr. Nedovich agreed to arrange a walk-through of the property for the Commissioners. He thanked them for their support and left the meeting at that time.

Ms. Stricker recommended that EDC send the Board of Selectmen a letter expressing their strong support of Mr. Nedovich's project. The Commissioners agreed with her recommendation and Ms. Stricker agreed to draft the letter.

Status Reports (continued):

Economic Development Coordinator: Ms. Ziobron distributed a packet of materials including:

- A draft checklist for East Haddam Tax and Business Incentive Program applicants;
- A draft application for the East Haddam Tax and Business Incentive Program;
- A copy of an article from the 8/1/10 New London Day titled “Signs pit Old Saybrook businesses against zoning laws”; and
- A draft of the proposed changes to the Town’s signage regulations.

Ms. Ziobron requested feedback on the Tax Incentive application and checklist. She also requested Mr. Casner review the proposed changes to the Town signage regulations. She stated that she will meet with Mr. Ventres to finalize the signage regulation draft prior to the next EDC meeting.

Ms. Ziobron advised that she and Ms. Stricker had researched blight ordinances from other CT towns but stated that it is her recommendation that EDC defer this project to the Board of Selectmen and the Building Inspector. The Commissioners agreed that EDC should send their findings to the Board of Selectmen with a request that the Board work with the Building Inspector to draft an appropriate ordinance for the Town. They also agreed that they would like to have the opportunity to review the draft ordinance language.

Ms. Mathiasen provided Ms. Ziobron with information regarding a direct mail brochure for industrial space in Essex as well as a Veterans’ automobile purchasing program established and managed by an East Haddam resident.

First Selectman’s Report – Mr. Walter reported that he is working with the Goodspeed regarding potential development opportunities in the Village. He stated that Mr. Fellner has created at least one rendering of a conceptual plan for the Town Office Site and that he has requested he also draft some alternative concepts.

Mr. Walter stated that he has not received any update from the State DOT on the Town’s plans for the Village Pedestrian Safety Project.

Revitalization Commission – This item was discussed during the First Selectman’s report and is reported on in the minutes above.

Business Tax Incentives – Publicity – In response to a request from Ms. Ziobron, Ms. Stricker agreed to not post any additional publicity on the Tax Incentive program until after August 16th. Ms. Mathiasen stated she would also ask Ms. Zemienieski to feature the program on the home page of the Town’s website and agreed to include a blurb about it in the business updates she submits to the next Events magazine.

Signage Ordinance: This item was discussed during the Economic Development Coordinator’s report and is reported on in the minutes above.

Vacant/Non-Revenue Properties: Ms. Stricker stated that the State has advised that they have hired a utility contractor to review the electrical service at the old Sunrise Resort site and that the RFP will be issued after they get the contractor’s report. Ms. Stricker recommended bringing the Town’s concerns about the park’s undeveloped status to the attention of the State’s gubernatorial candidates after the primary.

Ms. Ziobron reported that she has taken pictures of the structures at Johnsonville to document their current condition. She further stated that she met with a potential buyer for the Shadybrook property as well as the camp’s current caretaker. She noted that the Town’s Building Inspector had sent a letter to the property owner listing a number of building code violations on the property. She stated that she will meet with the Land Use Administrator to develop a comprehensive list of the Town’s concerns regarding the Shadybrook, Torah, Johnsonville, and KlarCrest properties.

Moodus Commercial Infrastructure – next steps: Mr. Casner reported that Mr. Ventres had called the State DEP and was told that there is virtually no grant funding available for projects like this one. He noted that funding will need to come from the Town and/or local business that tie into the service.

Goodspeed 2nd Theatre – next steps: This item was discussed under the First Selectmen’s report.

Other Businesses Updates/New Businesses/Events/Tourism:

- Directory Signs – Ms. Mathiasen reported that the new signs had not been installed and Ms. Stricker agreed to ask Public Works to install them if Mr. Albuquerque is unable to.
- Brochure distribution – Ms. Mathiasen reported that she had received 3600 tourism brochures in mid-July and that they have been distributed around Town and a substantial supply was left at Gillette’s Castle State Park.
- Service & Signage Policies – Ms. Mathiasen distributed draft copies of the EDC Service Policy and the EDC Signage Policy. The draft policies were reviewed and some changes were suggested. The Commissioners agreed that the final policies should be posted on the website.

NEW BUSINESS

Mail received – Ms. Mathiasen advised that no mail had been received.

Any EDC New Member Interest – Ms. Stricker welcomed Mr. Rucker to the meeting. In response to his questions, the Commissioners agreed to provide him with some background materials on the current EDC projects and Ms. Ziobron offered to give him a walk-through of the several properties listed on the EDC agendas. Mr. Rucker thanked the Commissioners and stated that he would like to schedule the site visits with Ms. Ziobron.

Ms. Mathiasen distributed copies of an updated list of EDC members.

Public Comment/Other – There was no public comment.

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, MR. CASNER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING, UNANIMOUS AYE.

The meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Wheeler
Recording Secretary