

**Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 2, 2010**

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

Absent: J. Albuquerque; E. Sabetta

Guests: W. Alt; J. Clark; G. Fellner; W. Gerrish; R. Paraday; P. Rubenbauer; M. Walter; S. Wheeler, L. Williams; H. Kittner; D. McMahon; Regina?

Ms. Stricker called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

MR. CASNER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MS. MATHIASEN, TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 5, 2010 MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

OLD BUSINESS

Status Reports:

Goodspeed Properties – Ms. Kittner advised that, due to delays in starting the construction of the Actors’ Housing project, the original construction manager could not commit to the new timeline and had to be replaced. She stated that the Goodspeed has engaged the Atlantis Building Company from Old Saybrook as the new construction manager. Ms. Kittner also noted that the work on the two Creamery Road houses was progressing and that the foundations for 5 houses on Route 82 are in. In response to a question from Ms. Stricker, Mr. McMahon stated that the houses would not be ready for occupancy in time for the next show.

In response to a request from Ms. Mathiasen, Mr. McMahon asked her to deliver some East Haddam Tourism brochures to him and he would place them in the theatre lobby and also have them included in the group packets.

Grand View Camp Resort – Update – Ms. Ziobron distributed a packet of materials related to Mr. Nedovich’s proposal to purchase and restore the Old Grand View Camp Report. In addition to an e-mail from the Town’s Land Use Attorney, the materials also included a copy of the Town’s Camp Ground regulations marked up with attorney comments and potential changes being considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and a copy of the CT Public Health Code regulations for Family Campgrounds. She requested the Commissioners review the materials after the meeting and provide her with any feedback so that she can bring their comments and concerns to the new P&Z meeting.

Ms. Ziobron reported that Mr. Nedovich and she had met with First Selectman Walter and representatives from the Chatham Health District, CT DEP, and East Haddam’s Land Use, Building, and Fire Departments. She advised that she and Mr. Nedovich had also met with a representative from the CT Campground Association. Ms. Ziobron stated that Mr. Nedovich has confirmed to her that, barring any unforeseen major problems, he plans on moving forward with the project.

Ms. Stricker expressed her concerns with several of P&Z’s proposed revisions to the Town’s Camp Ground regulations and, in particular, to the changes in section 15.4.2 related to buffer zones. The Commissioners agreed with Ms. Ziobron’s suggestion that the owners of the other camp grounds in Town should be invited to any discussion regarding revisions to the regulations.

Ms. Mathiasen referenced the letter of support for the project that EDC had sent to the Board of Selectmen requesting they make it a priority and requested that the letter be made a part of these minutes. Ms. Stricker noted she had attended the Board of Selectmen’s meeting where the letter was discussed and noted that the Selectmen had unanimously agreed that the project should be a priority for the Town’s officials, Boards and Commissions.

MR. GIONTA MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER, TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO MOVE ITEM “STATUS REPORTS - EAST HADDAM VILLAGE REVITALIZATION COMMISSION” UP FOR DISCUSSION NEXT. UNANIMOUS AYE.

East Haddam Village Revitalization Commission – Mr. Gionta informed the meeting attendees that Mr. Fellner had been hired by the Town to develop a conceptual rendering for a commercial development of the Town Office Site and would be providing a presentation at this meeting. He introduced Mr. Feller who thanked the Commissioners for inviting him to their meeting.

Mr. Fellner provided some background on the project and displayed a computer-generated presentation of his conceptual designs. He noted that a number of existing historical structural elements in the Village influenced his design. He went over four design options that were based on various entry ways to the site.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Ziobron, Mr. Gionta confirmed that the conceptual designs would be used to shop the Town's vision for the site to potential developers and would not be used to dictate specific uses for the spaces. Ms. Ziobron suggested Mr. Fellner also consider including a boat dock in his designs.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Rubenbauer, Mr. Walter stated that several options are being considered regarding ownership of the property, including a lease option where the Town retains ownership of the land.

Economic Development Coordinator – Ms. Ziobron reported on the following items:

- She has been working with a few local business owners who are interested in forming a Town-wide business association.
- She has been helping several local business owners with marketing and social media issues.
- She met with the owner of Brownell and discussed the need for a Phase I environmental inspection of his property
- She has been working with the owners of Shagbark to resolve complaints received by the DEP and other outstanding infractions.
- The Middlesex Chamber of Commerce will hold their Sept. 24th (moved to Friday this month only) breakfast meeting on the Riverquest. She will not be able to attend, but encouraged the Commissioners to attend.

Signage Ordinance – Ms. Ziobron distributed copies of the Town's signage ordinance with proposed changes she and Mr. Ventres had agreed on. She stated that the next step is to propose the noted revisions to P&Z. She requested the Commissioners review the changes and provide her with any input by September 12th. Mr. Casner stated that he expects the proposal will be included on P&Z's agenda for the meeting scheduled at the end of September.

Business Tax Incentives – Ms. Ziobron noted that the blurb regarding the Business Tax Incentive program had been updated on the Town's website to indicate that the ordinance has been adopted by the Town. The Commissioners reviewed the checklist and application. Ms. Mathiasen suggested several revisions to the checklist.

MR. CASNER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER, TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM CHECKLIST AS AMENDED. UNANIMOUS AYE.

MR. CASNER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER, TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS TAX INCENTIVE APPLICATION AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Vacant or Available Properties – Mr. Casner reported that he and Ms. Stricker have identified a number of large properties that are either formally or informally up for sale. He stated that they would like to start working with the Board of Selectmen and P&Z to develop a "needs assessment" on each property and discuss best use scenarios. Ms. Mathiasen distributed a draft a letter addressed to the Board of Selectmen and P&Z indicating EDC would like to work with them to brainstorm ways the Town can assist the property owners in moving these properties. There was a general discussion regarding the best format for the three entities to work together. Ms. Ziobron recommended inviting the owners of the properties under discussion to the meetings.

MS. STRICKER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. CASNER, TO SEND A LETTER TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION EXPRESSING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONERS' INTEREST IN WORKING TOGETHER ON VACANT AND/OR AVAILABLE PROPERTIES IN THE TOWN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

First Selectman's Report – Mr. Walter reported that Fuss & O'Neil is working on a final design of the parabolic crosswalks for the CT DEP. He noted that they are also considering other traffic calming options for the crosswalks in the Village.

Revitalization Commission – This item was discussed earlier in the meeting and is reported on in the minutes above. In response to a question from Ms. Mathiasen, Mr. Gionta advised that he expects the Commission may want to schedule a public hearing in the late fall or early winter.

Moodus Commercial Infrastructure – Next Steps – Mr. Casner reported that he and Mr. Albuquerque are focusing their efforts on identifying specific problems and providing guidance to several of the commercial property owners in Moods. He stated that Mr. Ventres confirmed that there is no state or federal funds available for such projects.

Goodspeed 2nd Theatre – Next Steps – The Commissioners agreed to table this agenda item.

Other Businesses Updates/New Businesses/Events/Tourism:

- Project Safe Halloween – Ms. Mathiasen reported that Ms. Malavasi had advised her that there will be space at the Project Safe Halloween event for business owners to set-up individual tables. She stated that she had notified the business owners who had participated in EDC’s Expo table last year of this. She advised that she, Ms. Stricker and Ms. Ziobron will coordinate the Expo table and the raffle of merchandise and services donated by local businesses again this year.
- Senior Center Make A Difference Project – Ms. Mathiasen stated that Ms. Rozniak had informed her that the Senior Center has taken on a project to create a walking park on the property below the Center and requested EDC’s help with placing donation jars in local businesses for the month of October. The Commissioners agreed to assist the Seniors with placing and collecting the donation jars.
- Other – Ms. Mathiasen reported on the following:
 - She did not receive an update from Mr. Albuquerque, but she believes the directory signs have been updated. She stated she would take pictures of the existing signs to create an inventory.
 - Since there are no new businesses openings to announce, she will not submit a “new businesses” report for the October Events magazine.

Ms. Ziobron reported that the Economic Development Coordinator for Lyme hosted a Homebased Business Forum and Networking event with Rep. Marilyn Giuliano and John McDonald as speakers. She stated she will be reaching out to Rep. Giuliano to discuss coordinating a similar event in East Haddam.

NEW BUSINESS

Mail received – Ms. Mathiasen distributed a copy of EDC’s draft annual report for the Commissioners’ review.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. CASNER, SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER, TO SUBMIT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT TO THE TOWN AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Ms. Mathiasen advised that EDC had received a response from Senator Daily accepting the Commissioners’ invitation to attend one of their meetings. She advised she would draft a reply suggesting Nov. as a good date for her to attend the EDC meeting.

EDC New Member Interest – Mr. Gionta noted that four potential members had attended this meeting. He thanked them for their interest and asked if they had any questions. There were no questions at this time.

Public Comment/Other – Ms. Rubenbauer inquired if there was a Town ordinance addressing the appearance of buildings in the Town. There was a general discussion regarding the proposed blight ordinance.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Wheeler
Recording Secretary