

**Economic Development Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
November 4, 2010**

Attending: J. Albuquerque (arrived 7:15 p.m.); R. Casner; M. Gionta; D. Mathiasen; P. Stricker; M. Ziobron (EDC Coordinator)  
Absent: E. Sabetta  
Guests: Senator Daily (arrived 7:30 p.m.); J. Maheu; E. Odell; S. Pagnano; R. Parady; P. Rubenbauer; J. Rucker; M. Walter; H. Kittner; D. McMahan

Ms. Stricker called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

MR. CASNER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MS. MATHIASEN, TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 7, 2010 MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

**Guest:** This agenda item was deferred until Senator Daily could join the meeting.

Ms. Mathiasen noted that she had e-mailed the Commissioners and EDC applicants a document outlining the Commission's current projects and responsibilities. She stated that it is a working document and would be helpful during the interview process for the new EDC Commissioners.

At Ms. Stricker's suggestion, the Commissioners agreed to amend the agenda to discuss Other Business Updates until Senator Daily joined the meeting.

**Other Businesses Updates/New Businesses/Events/Tourism:**

- Project Safe Halloween – Ms. Mathiasen and Ms. Ziobron reported that Project Safe Halloween had gone well; however participation at the business table was lower than in previous years. Ms. Ziobron noted that several of the business hosted their own tables at the event. Ms. Stricker noted that Ms. Ziobron had run-off a number of the fliers for the business giveaways on her personal printer and thanked her for her contribution.
- January Business Night – Ms. Ziobron suggested either January 21<sup>st</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> for the event. There was a general discussion about where to host the event. It was agreed to offer the opportunity to host the event to the businesses and if no one came forward, it would be held at the Grange. Ms. Ziobron agreed to reach out to local business to see if anyone is interested in hosting the January event.
- February Eagle Flyer/East Haddam Connection – The Commissioners discussed whether or not to again offer shuttle service from the Essex Steam Train Station in Haddam to East Haddam on Presidents' Day weekend. Ms. Mathiasen noted that the shuttle was a success last year. Mr. Gionta offered to work on coordinating promotion of the event with the Haddam EDC.
- Other – The Commissioners discussed their quarterly meetings with the Haddam EDC and Ms. Ziobron stated she would organize a joint meeting for January.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Status Reports:**

Goodspeed Properties – Ms. Kittner reported that work on the Actors Housing is going well. She stated that they expect to complete the houses on Creamery Road in February and the entire project should be completed in July, 2011. In response to a question from Ms. Stricker, Ms. Kittner advised that they are close to finalizing the water system design with DPH.

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

- Mr. Clark plans to submit applications for the East Haddam Brewery with Planning & Zoning and DPH this month. A representative from DPH has agreed to provide Mr. Clark with guidance on their requirements.
- Work on the Grandview Campground is progressing. The owner's was able to save several of the cabins but had to demolish the administration building; his long-range plan is to restore the old hotel. Ms. Stricker suggested posting a sign at the site recognizing EDC's support of the project.

Senator Daily joined the meeting at this point and Ms. Stricker welcomed her. Ms. Stricker provided Sen. Daily with information on several of the EDC projects and accomplishments. She encouraged the Goodspeed to consider all opportunities for their 2<sup>nd</sup> theatre and expressed EDC's concern about the land-swap proposal.

Ms. Stricker noted the Village Revitalization project and Mr. Gionta provided the Senator with some background information and a booklet containing conceptual drawings for the site.

Ms. Stricker mentioned the numerous vacant properties in East Haddam and noted the Town's frustration with the continued deterioration of the old Sunrise Resort property. She also noted that small business owners in Town have expressed dissatisfaction with the State's annual \$250 business entity tax.

Sen. Daily advised that legislators are aware of the concerns over the entity tax; however, they have not agreed on a solution. Regarding the land-swap she stated that the Goodspeed is not a participant in the process. She said that new legislation will have to be introduced on the proposal and noted that it is her opinion that economic development bordering towns generally spills over to the neighboring towns. She further noted that the land-swap deal would not be contingent upon Tylerville solving its water issues. In response to a request by Ms. Stricker, Sen. Daily agreed to advise the EDC if legislation reviving the land-swap deal is proposed.

Sen. Daily said that she is just as frustrated as the EDC Commissioners with the lack of activity on the old Sunrise Resort property. She advised that the State chronically deals with these large, scenic properties poorly and it has been made worse by under-staffing at the DEP. She stated that she has been very vocal with DEP about her frustration regarding the old Sunrise Resort.

Regarding upcoming business legislation, Sen. Daily stated that Governor-elect Malloy is looking at a sales tax exemption and also plans to do a study on DECD tax exemptions.

Mr. Casner spoke about the long delays related to the CT Department of Health's permitting process for water systems and the impact on small businesses. Sen. Daily acknowledged the lack growth in small businesses in CT and suggested EDC write to Governor-elect Malloy's transition team about their concerns. Ms. Ziobron agreed to draft the letter.

First Selectman Walter noted the slow progress on getting the Mobility Study grant funds and described a problem with installing a section of sidewalk in the Village because of the location of telephone poles. Sen. Daily suggested looking into ADA Compliance funding to move the poles. Ms. Ziobron advised that she had included several key improvement projects for the East Haddam Village in her earmark request last year.

Ms. Ziobron advised that the DEP Supervisor of several state parks in the area, including Gillette Castle, had been reassigned to Hammonasset State Park and noted the negative impact it would have on the parks he had been over-seeing.

Ms. Stricker thanked Sen. Daily for attending the meeting. The Senator left the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

#### **OLD BUSINESS - Economic Development Coordinator Report (Continued)**

Ms. Mathiasen re-visited Ms. Stricker's suggestion of posting a sign declaring EDC's support at the Grandview project. She stated she would prefer another approach and several suggestions were discussed, including establishing an "EDC Business of the Month" program or publishing a "Welcome to Town" article in the Events Magazine.

Ms. Ziobron reported on the following items:

- Businesses continue to be overwhelmed with requests for donations. Mr. Gionta stated that business donations are generally viewed as an advertising expenditure and noted that businesses should have some guidelines that help them determine what contributions they will make. He agreed to draft sample guidelines for consideration.
- The Morning Glories' flower shop in Moodus is closing.
- A small business owner has entered into a lease with the American Legion to use their kitchen for baking. The bakery items will be sold to businesses in East Haddam and Middletown.
- At the recent Chamber of Commerce meeting, she emphasized the Town's concern with the continued deterioration of the old Sunrise Resort property.

- The East Hampton Brownfield Committee will be contracted to provide guidance on how to establish a similar committee in East Haddam.
- A developer in the vertical farming business has asked to view a vacant building in Town.

Vacant or Available Properties – Ms. Stricker reported that the next step is for P&Z to establish a sub-committee to work on this project.

First Selectman’s Report – Mr. Walters did not provide a report at this meeting.

East Haddam Village Revitalization Commission – Mr. Gionta reported that the next step for the committee is to issue a RFQ. He stated that the Committee’s Chairman, Mr. Garrish, will be available at the Middle School Conversion Committee’s Public Hearing on November 10<sup>th</sup> to answer questions. He stated that they have also been asked to provide several slides to include in the presentation.

Signage Ordinance and Campground Regulations – Mr. Casner reported that he had sent the draft signage ordinance to P&Z for review by their sub-committee. Ms. Ziobron stated that she has informed businesses that are affected by the Campground Regulations that P&Z is considering a number of changes to the regulations. She stated that she expressed concerns with the revisions at a recent P&Z meeting and, as a result, expects some modifications to be made. She requested the Commissioners e-mail her with their concerns regarding the proposed revisions before the next P&Z meeting.

Moodus Commercial Infrastructure – Next Steps – There was no update on this agenda item.

Goodspeed 2<sup>nd</sup> Theatre – Next Steps – Ms. Ziobron stated that in anticipation of the land-swap deal getting revived, East Haddam should identify items that might make the proposal more appealing to the Town, such as approval of the walkway on the Swing Bridge.

Sunrise – It was reported that Mr. Walters, Mr. McKinnon, Mr. Dill, and Mr. Gionta had recently walked the Sunrise Resort property to take stock of its current condition.

**Other Businesses Updates/New Businesses/Events/Tourism:**

- Project Safe Halloween – This item is reported on above in the minutes.
- January Business Night – This item is reported on above in the minutes.
- February Eagle Flyer/East Haddam connection – This item is reported on above in the minutes.
- Other - Directory Signs – Mr. Albuquerque reported that, with a few exceptions, all of the signs have been installed. He noted that there were errors on a few signs and they are being corrected. In response to a question from one of the guests, Ms. Stricker noted that there is no charge to businesses for a listing on the sign but that they must complete a request form.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mail received – Ms. Stricker reported that EDC had received an invitation to the 5<sup>th</sup> Environmental Roundtable on November 13<sup>th</sup> at the Moodus Sportsmen’s Club. Ms. Mathiasen noted that none of the Commissioners will be able to attend; however, she will provide a document outlining EDC’s efforts on environmental-related projects.

Business Appreciation Event with Youth & Family Services – Ms. Mathiasen noted that Y&FS would like to thank the Town businesses who have contributed to their organization. She and Ms. Stricker agreed to meet with Ms. McCabe to brainstorm appreciation event ideas.

Setup interview dates for EDC Candidates – Mr. Gionta and Ms. Mathiasen agreed to act as the EDC interview sub-committee and will coordinate interview dates with the candidates.

Return Coordinator Evaluation Forms & Goals – Ms. Stricker reminded the Commissioners that the EDC Coordinator evaluations/goals forms are due on November 5<sup>th</sup>.

Public Comment/Other – Ms. Rubenbauer noted that Yankee Magazine had rated East Haddam eleventh in New England towns for leaf peeping. Mr. Maheu stated that he had found the meeting very informative and that HTNP is planning on assigning a regular reporter to cover East Haddam. He noted that he is working with Ms. Ziobron to get HTNP registered as a small business in East Haddam.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. CASNER TO INVITE MS. ZIOBRON INTO AN EXECUTIVE SESSION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. GIONTA AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. GIONTA TO ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF A PERSONNEL DISCUSSION AT 8:59 P.M. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. CASNER AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Commissioners returned to regular session at 9:39 p.m. No motions or decisions were made.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Wheeler  
Recording Secretary