

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

Attending: R. Casner; M. Gionta; D. Mathiasen; P. Stricker; M. Ziobron (EDC Coordinator)  
Absent: J. Albuquerque; E. Sabetta  
Guests: P. Rubenbauer; M. Walter

Mr. Gionta called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Ms. Ziobron noted two changes to the November 4, 2010 meeting minutes. MR. CASNER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. GIONTA, TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 4, 2010 MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED. UNANIMOUS AYE.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Status Reports:**

Goodspeed Properties – Mr. Walter reported that work on the Actors’ Housing is progressing; however, the State DEP has not yet approved the water system.

Economic Development Coordinator – Ms. Ziobron reported on a number of items, including the following:

- The Boardman House Bed and Breakfast submitted letters to the Planning & Zoning Commission expressing concerns about the proposed microbrewery for the Village and raising issues regarding Hayden Package Store. The letters were discussed at the last P&Z meeting and the Commissioners did not take action on either.
- She has scheduled meetings with Mr. Ventres and others to discuss the Grandview Campground and East Haddam Brewery projects.
- On December 8<sup>th</sup> CT Farm Fresh will received an award from CERC at their Celebrate CT! event.
- On December 13<sup>th</sup> CT Commission on Culture & Tourism is sponsoring a Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits workshop for industrial and commercial property owners as well as private homeowners. Ms. Ziobron hopes to attend.
- The Haddam/East Haddam Chamber of Commerce breakfast is scheduled for December 16<sup>th</sup> at the River House in Haddam. Ms. Ziobron encouraged the Commissioners to attend if they are available.
- CT DOT items:
  - Officials will hold a public meeting at the Hadlyme Public Hall to discuss the ferry closing.
  - Work is planned for the bridge on Route 82 near Hungerford Road.
- A planning meeting for the stakeholders of the newly created East Haddam Business Association is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on January 11<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Ziobron will facilitate the meeting and Ms. Mathiasen stated she would attend the meeting.
- She met with the Chairman of the East Haddam Historic District Commission to discuss signage.
- I-Park is entering its 11<sup>th</sup> season is and is soliciting applications for its Landscape and Garden design program
- Gillette Castle has been decorated for the holidays and will be open for tours until December 19<sup>th</sup>. Several East Haddam businesses have contributed holiday plants, decorations and refreshments.
- “East Haddam Patch” is a new on-line newspaper that will begin reporting news at the end of the month.

Ms. Ziobron also reported that she met with the Finance Director to discuss various items. She noted that the Town will be providing her with a Blackberry for her Town business for phone and email. She will be maintaining more scheduled part-time work hours going forward. She stated that her office hours will be from 9:00 a.m. until 12 noon on Mondays through Thursdays. She and the

Commissioners discussed the possibility of her keeping a journal so that economic development items she cannot fit into her schedule can be tracked.

The Commissioners and Ms. Ziobron discussed the schedule for the combined East Haddam/ Haddam EDC meeting on January 6<sup>th</sup>. They agreed to hold the East Haddam EDC meeting at 6:45 p.m. and begin the joint meeting at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Ziobron solicited input for the joint meeting agenda.

Signage Ordinance – Mr. Casner advised that the consensus of the P&Z Commissioners was to move the draft signage ordinance project up from the sub-committee for consideration by the full Board. He stated that he expects the topic will be on the agenda for their next meeting and that he and Ms. Stricker will attend that meeting. Ms. Ziobron encouraged them to remind Mr. Ventres to distribute the draft ordinance to all of the P&Z Commissioners prior to their next meeting.

Campground Regulations – Ms. Ziobron reported that she and Ms. Mathiasen attended the last P&Z meeting when the revised campground regulations were discussed. She stated that she notified the owners of local campgrounds that the item would be discussed at the P&Z meeting. Although no campground owners were in attendance at the meeting, Mr. Ventres had maps of many of the sites which helped the Commissioners determine the impacts of the proposed regulations on the existing businesses.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Stricker, Ms. Ziobron advised that the regulations call for a 200' setback but that they also state that, under certain conditions, the depth of the setback can be minimized to no less than 50' by P&Z. Ms. Stricker stated she hopes that the new regulations are flexible enough to accommodate events such as conferences and concerts at the campgrounds.

Mr. Casner encouraged Ms. Ziobron to continue to inform the owners of the Cave Hill Resort about P&Z's actions concerning the new campground regulations. He also stated that he feels that Ms. Ziobron's participation on projects with P&Z has had a positive impact.

Vacant or Available Properties – Ms. Stricker reported that DOT has advised her that Fuss & O'Neil is evaluating the utilities at Sunrise Resort and that their findings will be included in the RFP that is to be distributed at the end of the year.

In response to a question from Mr. Casner, Ms. Ziobron stated that she has no information on the Cumberland Farms property in Moodus. Ms. Ziobron stated that she & First Selectman Walter has scheduled a meeting with representatives from P&Z to discuss cataloging vacant properties and that she and Mr. Ventres will be developing a work-plan for a joint P&Z/EDC project.

First Selectman's Report – Mr. Walter stated that he had attended a meeting of the Lower River Valley Selectmen's Association where the CPA Association gave a presentation on the state of CT's economy and he found it very sobering. He reviewed several points made in the presentation.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Gionta, Mr. Walter advised that some progress had been made with the State regarding the Mobility Project. He also responded to a question from Ms. Stricker regarding funding for the proposed open space purchases, and advised that the Board of Selectmen has agreed to create a Financial Needs Committee to analyze the short- and long-term impacts of proposed Town projects and/or purchases as well as to advise on how to structure the debt for same. He stated that the Selectman made a motion to move the Open Space Committee's request for \$1.1M on to the Board of Finance for consideration. Ms. Stricker expressed her concern that the Town is planning to spend \$1M on open space purchases instead of investing in economic growth projects such as the Moodus Commercial Infrastructure.

East Haddam Village Revitalization Commission – Mr. Gionta reported that the Village Revitalization Commission did not meet in November so there was no update on this agenda item. Ms. Ziobron advised that she had visited Blueback Square in West Hartford and noted that it had planned for ample parking. She stated that any commercial development project planned for the Village should give similar consideration to providing adequate parking.

Moodus Commercial Infrastructure – Next Steps – Mr. Casner stated that \$1-1.5M would be needed to accomplish the project and noted that 8-10 acres in the Moodus commercial district would have to be acquired for the leeching fields. Mr. Walter recommended EDC create a sub-committee to identify suitable sites for that purpose and develop a proposal to present to the Selectmen. The Commissioners agreed with his suggestion. Mr. Walter further advised that the sub-committee should research how other towns created their commercial sewer district and, particularly, any pro-active steps they took to avoid claims by businesses outside the boundaries of the newly created district that they were unfairly disadvantaged.

Goodspeed 2<sup>nd</sup> Theatre – Next Steps – There was no update on this agenda item..

Sunrise – This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting and is reported on in these minutes under Old Business – Vacant or Available Properties.

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

- January Business Night – Ms. Ziobron stated the next Business Night is scheduled January 31<sup>st</sup> at the Grange. She noted several items that were being considered for the agenda and solicited additional suggestions for topics from the Commissioners.
- February Eagle Flyer/East Haddam connection – There was no update on this agenda item.
- Other - The Commissioners briefly discussed dates for the Chowder Festival. Ms. Ziobron noted that several Village businesses have expressed an interest in being the host site for the event and suggested that, at their next planning session, the Commissioners discuss how to situate the event to the best advantage of all of the Village businesses.

Ms. Mathiasen reported that Mr. Scherrer had lit the Christmas trees in the Village. She also solicited input from the Commissioners on business news for her Events magazine article and Ms. Ziobron agreed to e-mail her information about several new businesses in Town. Ms. Ziobron stated that she will also draft an article for the magazine recapping the projects EDC worked on in 2010.

Ms. Mathiasen stated that it is time to renew EDC's advertisement in the CT Tourism & Visitors Guide. MS. STRICKER MADE A MOTION TO ALLOCATE \$500 FROM THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION'S BUDGET TO RENEW ITS AD IN THE CONNECTICUT TOURISM & VISITORS' GUIDE. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. CASNER AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- Joint Meeting With Haddam EDC – This item was discussed during the Economic Development Coordinators report and reported on in the above minutes.
- Directory Signs – There was no update on this agenda item.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mail received – Ms. Mathiasen reported that the following mail had been received:

- Information from the State about Cooperative & Challenge grants and Ms. Ziobron suggested adding it to the agenda for the joint East Haddam/Haddam EDC meeting.
- A letter of resignation from Eric Sabatta which stated he would like to focus his attentions on the Village Revitalization Commission.

She stated that EDC had sent a letter to the Environmental Roundtable summarizing the projects the Commissioners have worked on since the last Roundtable and supporting the creation of an Agriculture Commission. She noted the letter was read into the minutes at the November 12<sup>th</sup> Environmental Roundtable gathering.

Business Appreciation Event with Youth & Family Services – Ms. Mathiasen advised that Ms. Wheeler had suggested Youth & Family Services purchase an ad in the Events Magazine that would thank and list all of the businesses that have made contributions to them and to encourage citizens to shop locally. She stated that she will follow-up with Ms. McCabe and provide her with the suggestion.

Public Comment/Other – Ms. Mathiasen noted that several new Commissioners would be installed in the near future and offered to draft guidelines outlining the expected commitment from Economic Development Commissioners. It was agreed that commitment guidelines would be useful for both in-coming and existing Commissioners.

Ms. Ziobron stated that, at the January Business Night, she would like to distribute the document that outlines guidelines for making business donations that align with an enterprise's advertising program. Mr. Gionta stated he would try to get her a draft before the event.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MS. STRICKER TO INVITE MS. ZIOBRON INTO AN EXECUTIVE SESSION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. MATHIASEN AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. CASNER TO ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF A PERSONNEL DISCUSSION AT 9:19 P.M. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Commissioners returned to regular session at 9:45 p.m.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MS. MATHIASEN TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN THAT EDWARD ODELL AND GERRY RUCKER BE MADE REGULAR MEMBERS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION, AND THAT PAMELA RUBENBAUER AND RALPH PARADY BE MADE ALTERNATE MEMBERS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. CASNER AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Mathiasen agreed to prepare and deliver the recommendation letter to the Selectmen's Office. She also agreed to contact the applicants to tell them the status of their application.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Wheeler  
Recording Secretary