

**East Haddam Economic Development Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
January 2, 2020**

Attending: D. Bergeron; R. Casner; J. Fennema; R. Parady; J. Stone  
Absent: J. Albuquerque; M. Robidoux

Guests: S. Mackinnan; R. Smith; S. Wheeler

1. Call to Order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.
2. Attendance – Mr. Casner sat Ms. Stone for Mr. Robidoux
3. Approval of Minutes

**Regular Meeting – December 5, 2019**

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 5, 2019.

MOTION MADE BY MR. FENNEMA, SECONDED BY MS. STONE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 5, 2019 AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

4. Old Business

A. Status Reports

1. EDC Chairman Update

- a. Goodspeed Landing – Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.
- b. River Valley Five Town EDC – Mr. Casner asked Ms. Haines to provide an update on this agenda item. Ms. Haines reported that the group is moving forward with the Explore CT Shoreline on-line marketing program. She noted that rather than apply for an Eversource grant for the \$400.00 per town annual fee, the group decided that each town will pay their own fee. Ms. Haines also discussed business participation in the program.
- c. Moodus Center – Mr. Casner discussed the proposed joint PZC/EDC/Board of Selectmen Moodus Center Beautification sub-committee and solicited volunteers. He noted that the committee may seek out the assistance of the CT Main Street Center and work with business owners to secure low interest loans to update their buildings. Mr. Fennema volunteered to be on the sub-committee.
- d. Appoint Chairman and Vice Chairman (2-year terms) – Mr. Casner opened the floor to recommendations for the EDC Chairman and Vice-Chairman positions.

MOTION MADE BY MR. BERGERON, SECONDED BY MR. FENNEMA, TO RE-APPOINT ROBERT CASNER FOR A TWO-YEAR TERM AS THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION'S CHAIRMAN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

MOTION MADE BY MR. CASNER, SECONDED BY MR. FENNEMA, TO APPOINT MR. DONALD BERGERON FOR A TWO-YEAR TERM AS THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION'S VICE-CHAIRMAN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Mr. Casner noted that EDC's \$50.00 East Haddam Business Association's membership fee is due.

MOTION MADE BY MR. CASNER, SECONDED BY MS. STONE, TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF \$50.00 FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION'S ANNUAL DUES FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE EAST HADDAM BUSINESS ASSOCIATION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

2. First Selectman Update

Mr. Smith stated that the Town is going into its budget planning session and he encouraged Mr. Casner to schedule a meeting with himself and Ms. Varricchio to discuss EDC's 2020/2021 budget. He also provided the Commissioners with an update on several on-going Public Works road projects. He advised that the Town had received the preliminary engineering plans for repairs to Neptune Road and the projected cost was \$1.2M. He stated that the Town had anticipated the expense to be closer to \$500,000.00 and they are working with the contractor to tighten up the budget for the project.

Mr. Smith reported that he had been contracted by Getaway regarding the possibility of purchasing the 4-H property for an "unplugged" trailer destination vacation site. He stated that the group had been impressed with the area's tourism information that Mr. Ventres had given to them.

3. Economic Development Administrator Report

- a. Tax Incentive Program – Ms. Haines agreed to review the state statutes to see if the Town's Tax Incentive Program had taken full advantage of what is available.

Ms. Haines reviewed the challenges of securing any grants for building improvements in the Moodus business area and discussed the need for a master plan for the Moodus Village.

4. Tourism Committee

The Commissioners discussed Mr. Robidoux's suggestion that EDC consider purchasing space in Shore Publishing's seasonal magazines and agreed not to pursue it at this time.

Ms. Haines advised that she had delivered a supply of Visitors' Guides for distribution at the newly reopened CT Welcome Centers in Stonington, Westbrook, and Darien and noted that the Darien Center has asked to be re-supplied. The Commissioners' noted the increased demand for the Visitors' Guides and agreed to request their printing budget be increased for the next fiscal year to cover the cost of printing a greater supply of the Guides.

Ms. Haines also recommended EDC consider developing a Christmas in East Haddam brochure to distribute to the CT Welcome Centers next year.

5. EDC/PZC Sub-Committee

- a. New Business District on Lower Town Street (Rt. 82) – Mr. Casner advised that this topic will be on PZC's January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda for discussion. Ms. Haines agreed to contact Mr. Zuba, Director of Planning at Milone & MacBroom, to secure potential dates in late January or early February for him to participate in a joint meeting of EDC and PZC and review his proposal for developing a master plan for the Lower Town Street District. Mr. Casner stated he would present the dates to the PZC Commissioners at their January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

- B. Proposed expansion of the industrial area in the IG zone – There was no new update on this agenda item and Mr. Casner stated it will be removed from the agenda.

5. New Business

- A. Review costs of Route 82 South for Board of Finance approval – Discussion of this agenda item was postponed pending Mr. Zuba’s review of his proposal with the EDC/PZC sub-committee as noted in the minutes above.
- B. Business of the Month – Nominations and Vote – Ms. Haines reported that, due to a delay in publishing business information in the East Haddam News, Curtin Construction’s recognition as Business of the Month has been moved out to February 2020. She recommended that, going forward, EDC pick the Business of the Month awards on a quarterly basis to avoid future publishing delays. She noted that she is working with the editor of the newspaper to secure a business section be added to the newspaper on a regular basis to post news about new businesses, management changes, awards, business closings, etc.

The Commissioners agreed to select the March and Q2 2020 Businesses of the Month at their next meeting.

- C. Recommendation to PCZ to Add Drive-in Windows as an Allowable Use in All Commercial Zones – Mr. Casner reported that he had received a request that EDC propose changes to the Town’s building code to allow drive-thru windows in all commercial zones. The Commissioners discussed the request and agreed that it would be appropriate to write a letter to PZC to propose the change.

MOTION MADE BY MR. PARADY, SECONDED BY MR. FENNEMA, THAT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION SUBMIT A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION THAT THE TOWN’S BUILDING CODES BE REVISED TO ALLOW DRIVE-THRU WINDOWS IN ALL COMMERCIAL ZONES. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Mr. Casner also advised that the Banner Corporation has submitted a request to PCZ more than four residential rental units in an existing building be allowed. He noted that Banner would like to add sixteen rental units to an existing building on their property and their request for an exception will be discussed at the January 14<sup>th</sup> PCZ meeting. He stated that he will attend the meeting and he invited the other Commissioners to the meeting as well.

6. Public Comment

Mr. Smith noted that Gillette Castle’s visitor center is closed until spring and would not, therefore, require a resupply of Visitors’ Guides until that time.

7. Adjournment

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. FENNEMA, SECONDED BY MR. PARADY, TO ADJOURN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MEETING. UNANIMOUS AYE.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sharon Wheeler