

**East Haddam Economic Development Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
July 9, 2020**

Attending: D. Bergeron; R. Casner; W. Melon; M. Robidoux

Absent: J. Albuquerque; J. Fennema; W. McEnery; R. Parady; J. Stone

Guests: I. Haines

Virtual Guests: S. Wheeler and other members of the public

- I. Call to Order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Ms. Haines reviewed the process for submitting public comments for discussion at the meeting. Mr. Casner noted that several Commissioners had expressed concern about meeting in person and he offered the option for future meetings to be held outdoors.
- II. Attendance & Welcome to New Members – Mr. Casner welcomed Dr. Melon as a new member to the board and sat him in place of Mr. Fennema.
- III. Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting – March 5, 2020

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the regular meeting of March 5, 2020.

MOTION MADE BY MR. ROBIDOUX, SECONDED BY MR. BERGERON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 5, 2020 AS WRITTEN. DR. MELON ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE AND THE MOTION PASSED BY A MAJORITY OF AYES.

IV. Old Business

A. Status Reports

1. EDC Chairman Update

a. Goodspeed Landing – Old Town Office Site

Mr. Casner reported that the East Haddam Revitalization Committee (EHRC) received a proposal from the preferred developer and the committee has met several times with the developer who has been responding to their questions. Mr. Casner noted that he expects the Committee to make its recommendation to the Board of Selectmen in about one month.

b. Milone & MacBroom contract

Mr. Casner reported that funding for this project was not approved in the 2020-21 budget.

2. First Selectman Update – First Selectman Smith was not at the meeting so discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

3. Economic Development Administrator Report

a. 2020 Visitor Guide Book

Ms. Haines circulated a copy of the updated Visitor's Guide and advised that she expects to receive the printed supplies next week.

b. Essex Steam Train

Ms. Haines reported that Mr. Bradway reached out to her and asked if EDC would like to collaborate on a flier listing tourism information for the Steam Train's Rail-Bike excursions. She responded to several questions from the Commissioners.

c. 5-Town EDC

Ms. Haines stated that meetings of the 5-Town EDC had been suspended because of COVID-19; however, they are ramping up again. She stated that their focus is on drafting sample day-trip itineraries for the Concierge tab on the Explore CT Shoreline website.

d. Fall Weekend

Ms. Haines stated that this year's Fall Weekend event is scheduled for the first weekend in October. She advised that the organizers are scheduling events that will comply with social distancing guidelines. The Commissioners discussed the feasibility of safely holding the event. They discussed using a trolley or the Senior bus to move visitors around to events but agreed not to pursue this option since it would not be possible to social distance on the vehicles.

Mr. Bergeron encouraged the Commissioners to make a special effort to include the Moodus businesses in the event. Mr. Casner noted that CT Landmarks has expressed an interest in including their historic properties in the event.

MOTION MADE BY MR. BERGERON, SECONDED BY DR. MELON, FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TO SUPPORT THE 2020 FALL WEEKEND. UNANIMOUS AYE.

4. EDC/PZC Sub-Committee

a. New Business District on Town Street (Route 82)

Mr. Casner reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission is taking the lead on the joint Sub-Committee. He noted that no meetings have been scheduled yet and discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

b. Moodus Business District

Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

5. East Haddam Business Association

There was no new update on this agenda item.

V. New Business

A. Business of the Month – Nominations and Vote

Mr. Casner noted that EDC had previously voted to award the Business of the Month designation to several businesses; however, the presentations had been delayed due to COVID-19 concerns. He said he would like to re-start the program and suggested making the outstanding approved presentations as follows: Wolf's Den for the month of August, and Maus & Son Inc. in September. The Commissioners agreed with his recommendation.

Mr. Casner nominated Chris Bihilo's rubbish removal service for the October Business of the Month. He noted that Mr. Bihilo provides many complimentary services to the Town and his involvement with the local Boy Scout Troop. The Commissioners discussed Mr. Casner's nomination.

MOTION MADE BY MR. CASNER, SECONDED BY MR. ROBIDOUX, TO NAME ALL WASTE CONTROL INC. AS THE OCTOBER 2020 BUSINESS OF THE MONTH. UNANIMOUS AYE.

B. East Haddam Village Activities

Mr. Casner reported that the airport property in the Village is up for sale and the Town has established a committee to evaluate and submit its recommendation to the Board of Selectmen regarding making an offer to purchase it.

The Commissioners took a brief recess at 7:31 p.m. to allow the public to submit comments. The meeting reconvened at 7:36 p.m.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment discussed at the meeting.

VII. Open Discussion – EDC Commissioners

There was a brief discussion regarding the potential re-development of the Old Town Office Site and Mr. Casner suggested that, if the preferred developer's plan is approved by the Village Revitalization Committee, EDC should invite the developer to a meeting to provide a presentation of their plan.

Mr. Caser recapped EDC's involvement in the potential re-zoning of several business districts. The Commissioners discussed the Goodspeed Realty Company's application for a zoning variance to construct storage units on their Grist Mill property in Moodus. The Commissioners agreed that they would not have any objection to the variance if the storage units are not located curbside but in the rear of the property. Ms. Haines reviewed Goodspeed Realty's application and confirmed that it did not propose to locate the storage unit facility near the street.

MOTION MADE BY MR. BERGERON, SECONDED BY MR. ROBIDOUX, THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION IN SUPPORT OF GOODSPEED REALTY COMPANY'S APPLICATION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Mr. Bergeron reiterated that he feels EDC should focus attention on improving the Moodus business district. Ms. Haines proposed adding brackets to the street light poles around the district so American flags and seasonal and/or event banners could be displayed on a regular basis. There was a general discussion regarding Ms. Haines suggestion and the Commissioners agreed it would add character to the district.

There was a general discussion regarding ways EDC could further support the Town's small businesses, particularly given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

VIII. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Wheeler