East Haddam Economic Development Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
August 19, 2020

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

Guests: I. Haines

I. Call to Order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

II. Attendance – Mr. Casner sat Mr. McEnery in place of Mr. Fennema and Dr. Melon in place of Ms. Stone.

III. Approval of Minutes

The review and approval of the minutes of the Regular meeting of July 9, 2020 was postponed.

IV. Old Business

A. Status Reports

1. EDC Chairman Update

a. Goodspeed Landing – Old Town Office Site

Mr. Casner reported that a joint meeting of the Village Revitalization Committee and Board of Selectmen, to review the preferred developer's proposal for the old Town Office site, is scheduled for later this evening. He stated that he expects the Village Revitalization Committee to send an informational package on the proposed project to EDC within the next month.

2. First Selectman Update – Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

3. Economic Development Administrator Report

a. 2020 Visitor Guide Book

Ms. Haines reported that she had received printed supplies of the updated Visitor's Guide and requested the Commissioners' assistance in distributing them to Town businesses.

b. Essex Steam Train

Ms. Haines reported that the Essex Stream Train is promoting its Rail-Bike Adventure and providing participants with a flier that lists several East Haddam businesses they could visit on their ride. She stated that she has also provided them with the updated Visitor's Guide for distribution to their customers.

c. 5-Town EDC

Ms. Haines reported that East Haddam, Haddam, Deep River, and Chester are gathering information on restaurants, shopping, and other tourism related activities to use to create "tourist trails" based on particular themes. She said the tourism trails will be posted on the Concierge tab of the Explore CT Shoreline website. She noted that Essex has not yet identified an individual to

participate in the process. Ms. Haines advised that the group's next steps are to create a process to gather useful analytics for the participating towns.

d. Fall Weekend

Ms. Haines reported that the Fall Weekend event will occur during the first weekend in October and she is currently working on recruiting signature events. There was a general discussion regarding potential events for the weekend.

4. EDC/PZC Sub-Committees

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

Mr. Casner reviewed the process of how the Planning & Zoning Commission and EDC sub-committee will move forward. He noted that the Goodspeed area will be also be covered in the Town Street area sub-committee discussions.

2. Moodus Business District

Mr. Casner reiterated the process for the P&Z/EDC sub-committee and noted that they will be looking for input from all the EDC Commissioners.

5. East Haddam Business Association

Mr. Casner advised the Business Association has not been meeting; however, he stated that the P&Z/EDC sub-committees will be reaching out for input from the Business Association members.

6. East Haddam Village Activities

Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

V. New Business

A. Tax Incentive Program Application – Review/Vote

1. Staehly Farms, Petticoat Lane – Ms. Haines provided an overview of the Tax Incentive Program. She reviewed the Staehly Farms application and advised that they purchased property and renovated an old barn into their Cider Barn. Ms. Haines stated that the project's benefits to the Town include preservation of farm land, as well as increased jobs and tourism. She advised that the Staehlys invested approximately $600,000.00 in the project, qualifying it for a 2-year tax abatement of 80% in the first year and 70% in the second year.

Ms. Haines reviewed next steps and the process for approval of the applications and stated that the goal is to get final approval by October 2020. She and Mr. Casner responded to several questions from the Commissioners.

MOTION MADE BY MR. ROBIDOUX, SECONDED BY MR. BERGERON, TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN THAT THEY APPROVE STAEHLY FARMS' APPLICATION FOR A TWO-YEAR TAX ABATEMENT FOR THE PURCHASE AND RENOVATION OF THEIR CIDER BARN AND MOVE IT FORWARD TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

2. Clark Gates, LLC, 382 Town Street – Mr. Casner recused himself from the discussion of this application and turned the meeting over to Mr. Bergeron.

Ms. Haines reviewed the Clark Gates, LLC tax abatement application for the purchase, renovation and expansion of the 382 Town Street property. She stated that the benefits to the Town are the preservation of a historic home, creation of space for new businesses and additional jobs, and esthetic improvements to the commercial district. She advised that Clark Gates LLC invested a little over $500,000.00 which qualifies the project for 2-year abatement. Mr. Bergeron complimented the work that was done on the property and building.

MOTION MADE BY MR. McENERY, SECONDED BY MR. ROBIDOUX, TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN THAT THEY APPROVE CLARK GATES LLC'S APPLICATION FOR A TWO-YEAR TAX ABATEMENT FOR THE PURCHASE AND RENOVATION OF THEIR CIDER BARN AND MOVE IT FORWARD TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

B. Business Promotion

1. Moodus Area – Route 149 & Palmer Road

Mr. Casner advised that the P&Z/EDC sub-committee will also try to develop some business promotion programs for this area.

2. Shagbark Area – Routes 82 & 151

Mr. Casner advised that the P&Z/EDC sub-committee will also try to develop some business promotion programs for this area.

C. Business of the Month – Nominations and Vote

Ms. Haines noted that the Commissioners had already voted Businesses of the Month through October and there was a general discussion regarding the scheduling of some of the awards.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment discussed at the meeting.

VII. Open Discussion – EDC Commissioners

In response to a question from Mr. Bergeron, Ms. Haines provided an update on her efforts to put together an estimate to install American flags, and other seasonal flags, on telephone phones in several areas of Town.

VIII. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:47 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Wheeler