PLANNING AND ZONING
TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
LAND USE OFFICE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
September 3, 2020
(Not yet approved by the Commission)

There is access to this meeting via a YouTube Live link from the Town's website:
www.easthaddam.org

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Brownell called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Crary Brownell (Chairman), Richard Pettinelli (Secretary), Bernard Gillis (regular member), Ed Gubbins (regular member), Lou Salicrup (regular member) and Justin Anderson (regular member).

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: James Curtin (Vice Chairman), Susan Kinsman (alternate member) and Joe Zaid (alternate member). James Ventres, Land Use Administrator.

OTHERS PRESENT: Rob Smith, First Selectman, Carleen Quinn, Selectwoman, Robert Casner, Chairman, Economic Development Commission, Irene Haines, EDC Administrator, Michael Robidox, EDC, Ralph Parady, EDC, Judd Melon, EDC, Don Bergeron, EDC, Sharon Wheeler, EDC, Recording Secretary, Cameron Beard, Chairman, Goodspeed Airport Evaluation Committee, Maryjane Malavasi, Secretary, , Michael Callahan, GAEC, Jacqueline Nowell, GAEC, Patricia Stricker, GAEC, Bill Gerrish, Chairman, Village Revitalization Committee and Toni Marie Dumaine, Recording Secretary.

INTRODUCTION: This meeting was called to order starting with a brief synopsis from each chairman of the Planning & Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission and Goodspeed Airport Evaluation Committee.

Chairman Casner began by elaborating on paragraphs 4, 5 & 6 of the scenic real estate easement of the Goodspeed Airport which was submitted by Mr. Timothy Melon, Goodspeed Airport Owner to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environment Protection (DEEP). Mr. Casner referenced a map of the property, indicating the potential for ten 20' long docks, to provide public access at the Connecticut River. He envisions a boardwalk connecting the Goodspeed Airport property with Chapman's Pond, adding that the parcel is of sufficient size for outdoor concerts to be held.

Chairman Brownell stated that the Connecticut River Gateway Commission and DEEP had been in negotiations with Mr. Melon for approximately 5 to 7 years prior to the East Haddam Town Representatives meeting with Mr. Melon's Attorney, Hudson Cambell in the Fall of 2017. At this meeting, Mr. Melon granted permission for all items spelled out in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the easements to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. He granted

permission for the items listed in paragraph 5 to a municipality or non-profit organization. Paragraph 5 annotates potential development to construct ten 20' docks; install kayak racks; utilize a portion of the existing 40,000 square ft. building for a marine based educational center as well as construction of a restroom facility and a connecting boardwalk to Chapmans Pond. In October, 2019, Mr. Melon requested a formal response from the town to purchase the property by December 31, 2019. Chairman Brownell stated that the town of East Haddam did not respond by this deadline.

Chairman Beard referenced the Goodspeed Airport Evaluation Committee's interim report to the East Haddam Board of Selectmen of September, 2020. In the "Summary of Meetings Held" section, it states "The Goodspeed Airport Evaluation Committee will evaluate the pros and cons of the Town of East Haddam purchasing the property. The committee will attempt to ascertain a fair market value of the property and it will evaluate the conservation easement (CE) on the property and how it affects the property value and the potential uses for the property". Chairman Beard stated that the committee could not physically access the property to obtain a fair market value because it is not offered to the town for purchase at this time. He elaborated on the various limitations of the property, such as conservation easements, flood plain considerations and airport operations. GAEC requests written comments from the Economic Development Commission, Planning & Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission by September 15, 2020 to complete their final report to the Board of Selectmen.

The meeting was opened for commission members to comment:

Mr. Parady of the EDC commented that East Haddam is probably the only town in the area that does not capitalize on its riverfront location. He feels that the town could profit from tourism if it has public access to the Connecticut River.

Mr. Robidoux of the EDC agreed that this property would encourage economic development for the town.

Mr. Bergeron of EDC questioned whether there is still an opportunity to purchase this property. He feels that the general consensus is that this property would be a tremendous asset to the town. Mr. Bergeron suggests a plan to move forward with a formal offer to get this started again.

Mr. Pettinelli of P&Z remarked on the boardwalk in West Haven that draws thousands of people each year. He explained that having a boardwalk in East Haddam along the Connecticut River would allow people to walk from a commercial zone to Chapman's pond for bird watching, then on to Gillette castle. It would create economic development for the village zone.

Mr. Gubbins of P&Z stated that with the airport no longer in operation, there will be the opportunity for numerous moorings adjacent to the riverfront property. He confirmed that the village zone currently has infrastructure for a sewerage system and the potential for public water to allow development in the Creamery and Lumber Yard Road areas. Mr. Gubbins referenced the East Haddam's 2019 Plan of Conservation and Development and indicated that development in the village zone south of Rte. 82 meets the POCD criteria.

Discussion ensued in regard to the easements on the property; re-purpose use of the existing building; potential cultural & arts development opportunities and the process to reinstate a formal offer to purchase this property from Mr. Timothy Melon.

Members at this meeting were in agreement that the Goodspeed Airport property would be an asset to the town. An aggressive approach will be initiated to reinstate interest and present financial options to acquire this property.

Chairman Brownell will discuss the Planning & Zoning Commission's site requirements at their next meeting on September 8, 2020

A motion was made by Mr. Salicrup to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson and passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni Marie Dumaine
Recording Secretary