East Haddam Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 1, 2021

Attending: D. Bergeron; R. Casner; R. Parady; J. Stone
Attending Remotely: M. Robidoux
Absent: J. Albuquerque; J. Fennema; W. McEnery; W. Melon
Guests: R. Davis; S. Wheeler

I. Call to Order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:16 p.m.

II. Attendance – Mr. Casner reviewed the attendance at the meeting.

III. Approval of Minutes

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 4, 2021.

MOTION MADE BY MS. STONE, SECONDED BY MR. ROBIDOUX, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR EDC MEETING OF MARCH 4, 2021 AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

IV. Old Business

A. Status Reports

1. EDC Chairman Update - Mr. Casner reported that he had attended the March 25, 2021 Commission on Aging meeting. He stated that EDC's Welcome Wagon proposal was discussed at the meeting and the Commission members agreed to work with EDC on the project.

   Mr. Casner requested input regarding the level of participation of East Haddam Business Association (EHBA) and he and Ms. Stone agreed to meet to discuss it later in the week. In response to a suggestion from Mr. Robidoux, Ms. Stone stated the Business Association has a supply of bags with their logo on them which she volunteered for the Welcome Wagon project.

   Mr. Casner reported that on March 3st he had attended a presentation by the CT Department of Transportation on the state's planned Swingbridge repair project. He stated that local business owners are extremely concerned about the impact of limited access to the bridge on their businesses and he emphasized the need for on-going communication with them regarding the project.

   Ms. Haines provided information regarding a committee established by the towns of Middletown and Portland that provides updates and other information regarding the Arrigoni bridge repair project. She stated that the committee was spearheaded by the Middletown Chamber of Commerce and her contact offered to assist East Haddam and Haddam establish a similar committee. She further stated that she had discussed the DOT project with First Selectman Smith who agreed to add a page to the Town's website where information and updates about the work/schedule will be posted. Ms. Stone stated she would like to link the Town's page to the EHBA website.

   There was a general discussion regarding how to support local businesses throughout the duration of the project and immediately after it is completed. Ms. Stone distributed and reviewed information from the DOT's March 31st presentation which included proposed schedules and detours available.

Ms. Haines reported that a Haddam business owner is conducting a survey of businesses that she expects will be impacted by the bridge closures and she agreed to provide Ms. Haines with her report.

Mr. Casner stated that East Haddam and Haddam should create a joint sub-committee for the purpose of providing public updates and information regarding the bridge work for the duration of the state's project. The Commissioners agreed that EDC should be involved in the project.

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

3. Economic Development Administrator Report – Ms. Haines reported the following:

    - Corvo Restaurant is the April Business of the Month and photos will be taken next week.

    - Due to the pandemic, there is still a significant supply of Business Guides available and she and Mr. Casner agreed not to update/reprint a new supply for FY2021-2022. Ms. Stone recommended including information about the Swingbridge repair project in the next version of the Business Guide.

    - The business database was lost during the recent conversion of the Town's website and she is working on recreating it. Ms. Stone agreed to provide her with the EHBA's listings.

    - She would like to create a quarterly newsletter for the Town's businesses once the business database is completed.

    - She would like to revisit drafting an ordinance for a tax exemption for barns and agriculture businesses in Town. Ms. Stone suggested tasking the Agriculture Commission with the project.

    - The East Haddam Sidewalk Art Festival is scheduled for August 7th. Ms. Haines stated that the Goodspeed Theatre has offered its side lawn for the event and she noted that additional sites in the Village can also be used if necessary.

4. EDC/PZC Sub-Committees – Mr. Casner reviewed the activities of the Sub-Committee. He stated that the Committee's initial focus is on developing a master plan and traffic calming measures for the Moodus business district.

    In response to information shared by Mr. Parady, Mr. Casner stated that he was not aware of a $500k grant that had been awarded to the Town for improvements in the Moodus area. Mr. Parady agreed to check with his source and report his findings at the next regular EDC meeting.

    a. Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program – Mr. Casner reported that CT Landmarks submitted their grant application to the National Parks Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program and noted that a response is expected this summer.

5. East Haddam Business Association – Ms. Stone reported the following:

    - Celebrate East Haddam is scheduled for September 4th and will be held on the Goodspeed Airport grounds.
    - The EHBA's next meeting is scheduled for April 20th.

    Mr. Robidoux suggested posting the August Sidewalk Art Festival and the September Celebrate East Haddam event on the "Getting Local" app. He also agreed to reach out to the owner of the East Haddam BBQ food truck to see if they would like to participate in the September event.

B. Open Space Commission – Name Representative

Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

C. Letter from Commission on Aging (Joseph Sina) – Welcome Wagon initiative

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting and is reported on under the EDC Chairman's report in the above minutes.

V. New Business

A. Tax Incentive Program – Scully Land Development LLC Application

Mr. Casner advised that Scully Land Development LLC had moved into the Industrial Park and inquired about the Town's tax incentive program. He stated that he had provided them with an application and will be following up with them.

B. Business of the Month – Nomination and Vote

This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting and is reported on under the Economic Development Administrator's report in the above minutes. Mr. Casner stated the Commissioners would select additional businesses for the award at their next meeting.

VI. Public Comment

Mr. Davis reviewed his activities, including creating an Instagram account for the Town. He stated that one of his goals is to engage the Nathan Hale High School students in more of the Town activities.

There was a general discussion regarding nominating Mr. Davis as an alternate member of EDC when an opening becomes available.

VII. Open Discussion – EDC Commissioners

There was no additional discussion at the meeting.

VIII. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Wheeler