East Haddam Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2021

Attending: D. Bergeron; R. Casner; M. Robidoux; J. Stone

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

Guests: I. Haines; S. Wheeler

I. Call to Order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance – Mr. Casner noted that all attendees were regular voting members of the Commission.

III. Approval of Minutes

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 3, 2020.

MOTION MADE BY MR. BERGERON, SECONDED BY MR. ROBIDOUX, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR EDC MEETING OF DECEMBER 3, 2020 AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Mr. Casner stated that the minutes of the January 21, 2021 EDC/P&Z Sub-Committee meeting were included in the meeting notice for informational purposes. He provided an overview of the purpose and goals of the sub-committee.

IV. Old Business

A. Status Reports

1. EDC Chairman Update – Mr. Casner stated that his updates would all be covered under the other agenda items.

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

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

- There were 700 entries to the East Haddam Eats holiday program. There was a general discussion regarding incorporating some of the features of the Old Saybrook program into the next event.

- Home Town Market's opening has been delayed until mid-February due to slower than expected vendor deliveries.

- Hilltop Barbeque is reopening as Tavern On The Hill.

4. EDC/PZC Sub-Committees – Mr. Robidoux reported that the sub-committee held its initial meeting on January 21st and he provided a synopsis of the topics discussed at the meeting. He stated that Mr. Petinelli offered traffic-calming suggestions for Route 149 in the business area of Moodus. Mr. Robidoux noted that the sub-committee's next meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2021.

a. Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program – Mr. Casner called the Commissioners' attention to handouts regarding the National Parks Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program. He stated that the Program offers non-financial grants that provide expert assistance with designing hiking/bike trails as well as facilitating public meetings.

Mr. Casner reported that he has been working with representatives from CT Landmarks Association to apply for a grant focused on designing a walking/bike path loop from the Rose Farms open space to Chapman Pond. It was noted that the deadline for submitting applications is March 1st.

MOTION MADE BY MS. STONE, SECONDED BY MR. ROBIDOUX, FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TO PURSUE A GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'S RIVERS, TRAILS & CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. UNANIMOUS AYE.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Bergeron, Mr. Casner confirmed that he had requested $5,000.00 be added to EDC's 2021-2022 budget for engineering fees.

5. East Haddam Business Association – Mr. Robidoux and Ms. Stone reported on the following activities of the Business Association:

- They received a copy of Chester's Merchants Association's survey; the East Haddam Business Association hopes to develop something similar that can be distributed to East Haddam businesses.

- They participated in a Zoom meeting with CT DOT regarding the Swingbridge repair project.

  There was a general discussion regarding the need for more information to be provided to Town businesses and the general public regarding this project. Ms. Haines stated she and Selectman Smith had discussed adding a "Projects" tab to the Town's website where more detailed information about Town and state repair projects, such as the Swingbridge project, can be made available. Ms. Stone recommended scheduling update quarterly meetings with CT DOT staff.

  There was a general discussion regarding the expected impact of DOT's work on the Swingbridge.

- EHBA members discussed the charges invoiced by the East Haddam News for the Business of the Month postings.

  Mr. Casner reported that First Selectman Smith does not support funding this expense and Ms. Haines advised that she will resume drafting the Business of the Month postings.

Ms. Stone reported that the next meeting of the EHBA is scheduled for February 16th and there will be presentations by Chatham Health District Director Melmed and Megan Smith of Explore CT Shoreline. Director Melmed will speak about the COVID vaccine status and availability. Ms. Smith will discuss a new "Getting Local" app on the Explore CT Shoreline website where businesses can post specials, coupons, and notices. Ms. Stone advised that the EHBA is offering one-year's free use of the app to Town businesses.

6. East Haddam Village Activities – Mr. Casner reported that the project developer is waiting to receive the formal sale/purchase agreement proposal from the Town. In response to a question from Mr. Bergeron, Mr. Casner stated that he believes the developer would like to have all the details of their agreement with the Town in place before presenting their proposal to the public.

B. Business of the Month – Nominations and Vote

Ms. Haines reported that Mr. Cavanaugh had informed her that, due to his retirement and closing his plumbing business, he would not be accepting the Business of the Month award. She recommended Corvo Restaurant be given the award for February.

There was a general discussion regarding naming Parady Roofing the Business of the Month for March.

Ms. Haines noted the "Busines of the Month" flag needs to be replaced and Mr. Casner confirmed that there were funds in the 2020-2021 budget to do so.

C. Open Space Commission – Name Representative

Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

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

Mr. Casner called the Commissioners attention to a Welcome Wagon proposal that was distributed with the meeting notice.

Ms. Stone reviewed the draft proposal and stated she agreed with the concept. She recommended the following:

- If the EHBA takes responsibility for the "swag" bags, i.e., collecting the swag and stuffing the bags, it would be appropriate to have their logo on the bags.
- Implement a code that can be imprinted on the coupons distributed so that their use can be tracked.
- Include new businesses in the Welcome Wagon recipients; EHBA would deliver these.
- Distribution to new residents should be done quarterly.

There was a general discussion regarding the cost to print the materials that would go into the folio and Mr. Casner stated that he believed EDC could underwrite that expense. He stated that he would call Commission on Aging Chairman Sina to inform him of EDC's discussion of his recommendation.

Ms. Stone also suggested implementing public tours of the Municipal Office to familiarize the public with where various offices are located.

V. Public Comment

There was no public comment discussed at the meeting.

VI. Open Discussion – EDC Commissioners

Mr. Robidoux stated that he had some suggestions for the Town's website and he and Ms. Haines agreed to meet off-line to discuss his ideas.

VII. 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 8:05 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Wheeler