East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee
November 29, 2021 Special Meeting
DRAFT Minutes

Members Present: Randy Dill (temporary chair), Melanie Kolek (secretary), Bob Casner, Jim Curtin, Will Brady (arrived 7:35 p.m.)

Also Present: Irene Haines, Harry Marotto

Absent: Mark Walter

Call to order 7:32 pm

Approval of Agenda

Casner/Curtin, motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of special meeting of September 30, 2021

Casner/Curtin, Kolek abstained, motion carried.

First Selectman Update

First Selectman Haines discussed the Redevelopment Agency/Centerbridge Group (CBG) and their status. Mrs. Haines reached out to EHVRC committee members to inquire if they wanted to be part of the Redevelopment Agency. There was discussion about a possible reconstituting of EHVRC in the event CBG does not wish to move forward in the future.

Mr. Dill raised the issue of the sales agreement and restrictions on the same regarding the reselling of the property/reversion back to the town if the property was ever to be sold. The committee previously agreed and so stated at this meeting that payment of taxes to the town is very important as is this reversion language in the purchase and sale agreement. The sales agreement will dictate the project as will committee/commission approvals of which there are many.

Other Business

There was discussion about the previous recommendation of this committee to the BOS requesting that it schedule a vote on the Centerbridge proposal for the village revitalization, and subsequent result of joint meeting of BOS and BOF. Mrs. Haines said that the vote questions remain pending. There was discussion about a Redevelopment Agency v. Development Agency and the need to pause to determine these options. The Redevelopment Agency will help to answer many questions that citizens have had about the project which in large part has already been answered by this committee. Incremental steps of the project were discussed including what information each committee could obtain from the developer directly to answer their particular questions. Mr. Casner discussed the fact that the developer already provided rough estimates in the proposal.

The committee members all discussed forward progress with the project and how that process needs to move forward with the BOS moving the question(s) to a vote of the town. Mr. Brady

discussed the retaining of certain buildings including the option to move buildings nearby as well as input from the town on various levels on the conceptual proposal, commenting that it is not a plan until it goes before the various commissions and committees. Mr. Brady addressed his concern that looking at the proposal from an emotional perspective is not looking to the future or even based on fact in many instances. Mr. Dill mentioned that a start over is a huge mistake with this new agency and is hopeful that the Redevelopment Agency as created would be structured in a way to move forward with CBG's conceptual project.

Mr. Dill questioned whether CBG was still interested in moving forward. So far, CBG is interested in the project notwithstanding the present pause according to Mrs. Haines. Mrs. Haines discussed that before a vote goes before the voters, information about what this agency is supposed to do should be publicized including how it should operate in accordance with state statute. Mr. Dill recommended that the question could be constructed in a way that there would still be a process moving forward for various approvals.

Mr. Dill recommended that there be a letter sent to BOS about what the committee has accomplished and the committee has completed the tasks in its charge.

Audience of Citizens

Mr. Marotto moved to town in March 2020. He discussed the commercial viability of the property and how this decision was made years ago. He believes this decision should be brought to a vote of the citizens. He questioned what a Redevelopment Agency can do versus what EHVRC cannot, and Mrs. Haines discussed the various charges of the agency and committee, respectively. Mr. Marotto mentioned that CBG should be given a priority by the agency to bring their plan forward if CBG remains willing.

Adjournment 8:40 p.m.

Curtin/Casner; Motion carried.