East Haddam Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 3, 202 2

Attending: R. Casner; D. Bergeron; E. Glidden; R. Parady; M. Robidoux
Absent: J. Albuquerque; R. Davis; W. McEnery; J. Stone
Guests: Lauren Pszczolkowski (ED Coordinator)

I. Call to Order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. He stated that he would like to amend the agenda to add the following discussion item under New Business:

- C. Election of EDC Chairman and Vice Chairman

II. Attendance – Mr. Casner sat Ms. Glidden for Mr. Albuquerque.

III. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Casner noted minor revisions to the January 6th minutes.

MOTION MADE BY MR. BERGERON, SECONDED BY MR. PARADY, TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 6, 2022 MINUTES, AS AMENDED. UNANIMOUS AYE.

IV. Old Business

A. Status Reports

1. EDC Chairman Update – Mr. Casner reported the following:

- He welcomed Ms. Glidden to the Board and Ms. Pszczolkowski as the new Economic Development Coordinator.

- He reviewed the EDC 2022-2023 budget proposal with Ms. Pszczolkowski and responded to questions from the Commissioners. He confirmed that there are funds in the budget to re-print the Visitors Guide and there was a general discussion regarding increasing the print amounts, particularly since the GetAway campground has opened.

- He advised that the Planning & Zoning Commission is going to request funds in their 2022-2023 budget to do traffic flow/calming studies in the Moodus business district. He noted that EDC's budget will include a request for funds to construct sidewalks in the 4-Corners area. In response to a question from Mr. Bergeron, he confirmed that the contractor funds had been eliminated from EDC's 2021-2022 budget.

- A Public Hearing to discuss a proposed ordinance to ban the sale, growing, and production of cannabis in East Haddam was held on February 2nd and approximately 50 people attended. He stated that he felt the opinions voiced at the Hearing were fairly equally split. He confirmed that his application for a retail cannabis store located in the 4-Corners area had been rejected by P&Z due to the lack of a traffic study; however, he stated he could resubmit the application if the referendum to adopt the draft ordinance fails.

2. First Selectwoman's Update – The First Selectwoman was not in attendance; consequently, discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

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

   - She is working on updates to the Visitors' Guide.
   - She is working on the 2022 Summer Celebrate East Haddam event.
   - She has reached out to the Lion's Club regarding organizing a Town-wide ice-skating day at Miller's Pond.

   In response to a question raised by Ms. Pszczolkowski, it was noted that EDC does not currently have a brochure/directory listing homeowner services that are offered by local businesses.

4. EDC/PZC Sub-Committees – Mr. Casner confirmed that zoning regulations for the Moodus area had been adopted and next steps are for P&Z to study traffic flow/calming options in the Moodus business district. He advised that the Sub-Committee has not met since the ordinance revisions were finalized.

   a. CT Landmarks/EDC – Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program

      Mr. Casner reported that, the last meeting of this group, it had been decided at that the proposed bike/walking trail would be designed in a loop. He said that he expects the design to be completed by the end of this month and he will bring copies of it to the next EDC meeting.

      Mr. Casner advised that they are also working with the Chester EDC to facilitate using the trail as a spur to include Chester businesses. He noted that the proposed Swingbridge walkway and the new sidewalks in Tylerville will also add to the attraction of the trail.

      Mr. Casner reiterated that the initial trail loop can be expanded in future phases to include the Moodus area, the Village, and the Mt. Parnassus area.

5. East Haddam Business Association (EHBA) – Mr. Robidoux reported that the COVID pandemic has resulted in a significant attrition of Business Association members. He advised that the Association is brainstorming ways to attract new members as well as how to get previous members to re-commit.

   a. Welcome Wagon Initiative – Mr. Robidoux distributed material regarding the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program. He provided an overview of the program and noted that East Hampton, Marlborough, and possibly Hebron are participants. He noted that 90% of the listed advertisers are local businesses and there is a 1x cost of $245 for the businesses to advertise on the site.

      There was a general discussion regarding developing a combination Welcome Wagon program that would include the Neighbor-to-Neighbor website along with hardcopy informational packets that include a list of Town contacts and other Town info, as well as a directory of local businesses, etc., that could be delivered to new residents and new businesses on a monthly basis.

      Mr. Robidoux agreed to set up a meeting with the Neighbor-to-Neighbor representative and himself, Mr. Casner, and Ms. Pszczolkowski.

6. Goodspeed Landing – Swingbridge Project – In response to a question raised at the meeting, Mr. Casner and Ms. Glidden stated they did not believe the contract for the Swingbridge repairs had been awarded yet. Mr. Casner confirmed that work is scheduled to begin this summer; however, Ms.

Glidden stated that, based on current labor shortages and the existing supply chain crisis, she is skeptical of the project beginning on time. There was a general discussion regarding the impact of the repair project on local businesses.

V. New Business

A. Business of the Month – In response to a suggestion made by Mr. Casner, Mr. Robidoux stated he preferred to keep this program going during the winter months. Mr. Casner said he would work with Ms. Pszczolkowski to schedule a photo and award presentation to Scott Energy.

Ms. Pszczolkowski stated that she would like to create a theme-of-the-month program that can highlight a number of local businesses each month. There was a general discussion regarding the idea and Mr. Robidoux recommended establishing a regular column in the East Haddam News for this purpose. Ms. Pszczolkowski agreed to reach out to the newspaper's editor to set-up a monthly Economic Development Coordinator's Corner column.

B. Business Communications – Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

C. Election of Officers – Mr. Casner advised that it was time to elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Economic Development Commission.

Mr. Bergeron nominated Mr. Casner to continue as the Chairman of EDC.

MOTION MADE BY MR. BERGERON, SECONDED BY MR. ROBIDOUX, TO ELECT ROBERT CASNER AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Mr. Casner nominated Mr. Bergeron to continue as the Vice Chairman of EDC.

MOTION MADE BY MR. ROBIDOUX, SECONDED BY MR. PARADY, TO ELECT DONALD BERGERON AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment discussed at the meeting.

VII. Open Discussion – EDC Commissioners

Mr. Robidoux complimented Ms. Pszczolkowski on her work on the holiday tree lighting ceremony and on expanding EDC's presence on social media.

VIII. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Wheeler