East Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission
Land Use Office

Regular Meeting Minutes
June 23, 2026

1) CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Brownell called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

2) COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Crary Brownell (Chairman), James Curtin (Vice Chairman), Bernard Gillis, D. Duncan Orr, and Gary Turenne. Mr. Brownell appointed D. Duncan Orr to fill in for Deborah Langdon and Gary Turenne for Susan Kinsman as voting members.

   COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Maureen Pierson, Deborah Langdon, Richard Pettinelli, Susan Kinsman, and Eric Chamberland

   OTHERS PRESENT: James Ventres LUA

3) MINUTES –

   Mr. Brownell instructed the June 9, 2026 minutes to be filed as presented.

4) BILLS – No bills

5) DISCUSSION

A. Housing Bill 8002 Review

Mr. Ventres reported that Housing Bill 8002 was not approved during the legislative session but may return in a future session.

The bill was discussed as a revision to Public Act 25-1 related to affordable housing requirements. Key provisions included clarification of definitions, adjustment of affordability term requirements, and introduction of standards for transit-oriented communities. Mr. Ventres clarified that a transit-oriented community is defined as an area within one-half mile of regular, scheduled public transit service operating at least five days per week. East Haddam does not meet this definition due to lack of fixed-route public transportation service.

Mr. Ventres shared feedback from the Regional Planning Agency consultant, who indicated that minimal regulatory changes would be required if the bill had passed. Specifically, East Haddam Village regulations already allow many housing types contemplated under the bill, with potential need limited to adding definitions

B. Moodus Village Master Plan – Regulation Review

Mr. Ventres presented revised draft language for the Moodus Village District regulations.

New and clarified permitted uses include middle housing, mixed-use residential, townhouse developments, cluster housing, and breweries/brewpubs as a separate category from general restaurant use.

Discussion occurred regarding whether to maintain separate design standards for Plains Road or expand the existing East Haddam Village District standards to cover all areas uniformly. The standards discussed include provisions for landscaping, sidewalks, lighting, and architectural compatibility, including informal consideration of historic context where applicable.

Proposed dimensional changes were reviewed, including reducing minimum lot size from one-half acre to one-third acre to support modest increases in development density. Mr. Ventres noted that the impact on overall build-out would likely be limited due to other site constraints such as width requirements and septic capacity.

Revisions to the East Haddam Village District include requiring site plan review for middle housing, single-family, and two-family residential development. Discussion confirmed that mixed-use development is intended to follow conventional planning patterns, with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses above. New definitions were introduced to align local regulations with statutory housing terminology and clarify previously undefined uses allowed under current zoning.

Parking standards were discussed, including state provisions allowing flexibility or reduced requirements in transit-oriented areas. While not directly applicable, provisions for parking needs assessments were added.

Road classification terminology was updated to reflect appropriate planning terminology, replacing "state highway" with classifications such as arterial or collector roads.

Mr. Ventres presented revised zoning maps intended to improve clarity and usability. The revised maps remove prior consultant overlays that were considered confusing and provide a cleaner visual presentation. Versions were prepared both with and without property line details.

Mr. Ventres shared with the commission a proposal from the Economic Development Commission to create overlay districts for various commercial and industrial areas. The proposal would divide areas into subdistricts such as Matthews Drive, Town Street commercial areas, and Industrial Park zones. Commission members agreed that while the proposal has merit, it should be deferred until completion of the Moodus Village regulatory work to maintain focus and avoid fragmentation of efforts.

Mr. Ventres will distribute draft materials to absent Commission members for review. The draft regulations will be forwarded to the Regional Planning Agency consultant for technical review and feedback. Following consultant revisions, materials will be submitted to legal counsel (Attorney Willis) for formal review.

A public hearing will be scheduled after all revisions are complete and reviewed.

C. Limited Car Sales in the IG-1 zone.

9) LAND USE ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Ventres provided an update on zoning enforcement activities related to unregistered and inoperable vehicles and boats. Most property owners have responded positively and are working toward compliance. Additional site visits are planned to verify progress, with follow-up notices to be issued where needed.

In addition, the Commission discussed coordination with emerging town committees, including the newly formed Library Exploratory Committee. It was emphasized that town committees should consult with Planning and Zoning early in project development to ensure consistency with land use regulations and avoid costly redesigns.

Updates were provided on redevelopment and East Haddam Village initiatives, including land surveys, appraisals, and acquisition discussions.

The Golf Course Committee is expected to submit its final report very soon.

The proposed firehouse project continues to advance through cost estimating and approval processes, with eventual review by the Board of Finance and a potential referendum anticipated.

10) ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ms. Gillis to adjourn at 8:03 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Curtin and was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Olson
Recording Secretary