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

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

I. Call to Order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

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

III. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Casner called the Commissioners' attention to the February 3rd meeting minutes.

MOTION MADE BY MR. PARADY, SECONDED BY MR. ROBIDOUX, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 3, 2022 MINUTES, AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

IV. Old Business

A. Status Reports

1. EDC Chairman Update – Mr. Casner's report was covered in the other discussion items on this meeting's agenda.

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 that she is working with Essex Printers on the updates to the Visitors' Guide. In response to a question from Mr. Casner, she confirmed that she will provide the proof to the Commissioners for their feedback.

   Mr. Casner recommended increasing the print quantity and there was a general discussion regarding the pros and cons of creating a stand-alone EDC website, updating the EDC page on the Town's website, or relying on hardcopy Visitor's Guide. Mr. McEnery suggested that creating a QRC for the EDC website might cut down on the number of printed copies needed. Ms. Pszczolkowski stated she will reach out to Ms. Zemienieski to discuss management of the EDC page on the Town's website.

4. EDC/PZC Sub-Committees – There was no new update to this agenda item. Mr. Casner reviewed next steps for the Sub-committee.

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

      Mr. Casner reported that a public meeting will be held in late April to provide an overview of the walking/bike trail project. He stated that anyone is welcome to attend the meeting, however, its primary purpose will be to educate area business owners and get their feedback

5. East Haddam Business Association (EHBA) – Mr. Robidoux and Ms. Stone reported the following:

- The Business Association, in conjunction with the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce, are surveying their members regarding the impact of the planned Swingbridge construction on their businesses; the goal of the survey is to determine how the EHBA and Chamber can best support their members.

- The EHBA and the Chamber are planning to hold a series of meetings, beginning March 16th, to keep abreast of the Swingbridge project.

- The EHBA and the Chamber are planning to organize workshops for the business community to help them address the disruption the construction causes their businesses.

- The East Haddam Community Foundation is planning a fundraising Gala at the Gelston House on March 26th. Ms. Stone advised that the Foundation's mission is to "support people and grassroots movements … to strengthen our community", and their vision is "… to provide seed money to community members with great idea that will benefit all of East Haddam".

a. Welcome Wagon Initiative – Mr. Robidoux advised that the representative from the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program was not supportive of a combined program that provides hardcopy informational packets that are delivered to new residents and new businesses. He agreed to set-up a meeting with representatives from EDC, the EDC Administrator, and the Neighbor-to-Neighbor representative.

6. Goodspeed Landing – Swingbridge Project – This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting and there was no additional update.

V. New Business

A. Business of the Month – Mr. Casner advised that the Business of the Month photo with Scott Energy has been scheduled.

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

C. Brownell Mill property – Mr. Casner reported that the Brownell Mill, 15 acres and 70k sf of space, was sold to Jason Morin and David Erlandson. He suggested EDC could help the new owners identify potential tenants. He noted that he had discussed the Town's Tax Incentive program with them; however, the Commissioners agreed that it was premature for them to pursue a tax incentive before actually having tenants in the buildings.

Mr. Casner advised that the owners are planning to petition the Board of Assessment Appeals for a reduction in the property's tax assessment. There was a general discussion regarding whether or not EDC should formally support the petition and it was agreed that, at this time, it would not be appropriate.

D. Wolf's Den Camp – Mr. Casner reported that the Wolf's Den Camp has new owners. He stated he would reach out to them and welcome them to the community on behalf of EDC.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment discussed at the meeting.

VII. Open Discussion – EDC Commissioners

Mr. Parady observed that there have been a number of positive developments in the Town's business community over the past two years. There was a general discussion regarding new and improved business sites. In response to an inquiry by Ms. Glidden, Mr. Casner confirmed that the Julia Balfour office building had been sold and the new owners are changing it back to a residence.

VIII. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Wheeler