East Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission
Town of East Haddam
Land Use Office

Regular Meeting Minutes
(Not yet approved by the Commission)
May 24, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER: James Curtin called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

2. COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Crary Brownell (Chairman), James Curtin (Vice Chairman), Richard Petinelli (secretary), Bernard Gillis (regular member), Ed Gubbins (regular member), Lou Salicrup (regular member), Susan Kinsman (alternate member) and Debbie Langdon (alternate member)

   COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Justin Anderson (regular member)

   Crary Brownell appointed Susan Kinsman to vote for Justin Anderson

3. MINUTES - The May 10, 2022, minutes were accepted as amended.

   Page 1, Section 2, Ed Gubbins was not listed as present, but did attend the meeting.

   Page 3, second paragraph, last sentence: "He continues to give an example of you cannont use it in a Park as being illegal." Should read *"He continues to give an example of you cannot use it in a State Park as it is illegal."*

   Page 3, fourth paragraph: "In addition, Mr. Pettinelli references Page 3, Section D. Prohibitions, Subsection 2, suggesting that it reads *"Temporary Cannabis evens, including but not limited to private marijuana vending events, cannabis trade shows or public cannabis events are prohibited unless authorized by state law and Zoning Regulations.*" Should read *"Temporary Cannabis evens, including but not limited to private marijuana vending events, cannabis trade shows or public cannabis events are prohibited unless authorized by state law and Zoning Board."*

4. BILLS

   Two bills from Halloran & Sage, both dated 5/16/22. First bill is for general legal in the amount of $372.50 and the second bill is for *Town of East Haddam v. Robert Casner* in the amount of $1,553.00.

   Motion was made by Mr. Gillis to pay the bills. Seconded by Mr. Gubbins and unanimously approved.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
   None

6. SITE PLAN REVIEW
   None

7. SUBDIVISION AMENDMENT
   A. #22-02 – 15, 17, 21 Banner Road, Kenneth Simon (applicant & property owner), Lot line change. Map 073, Lots 035, 036, 037.

   Mr. Ventres begins a discussion that Mr. Simon owns the property to the East of this property and a large track that goes around. The intent was to take a little of it in the middle to put with the property owned by David Merrick and put the balance of it with the land of Kenneth Simon on 15 Banner Road. This was part of a previous subdivision that was done back in the 80's. Moving land around to accommodate the neighbor. This complies with zoning and the Easement will stay as indicated. This is only addressing lot lines. In addition, there are no wells or septic in the triangular area. This is one acre zoning.

   Mr. Ventres stated that Mr. Merrick is aware and approves of these changes.

   Motion was made by Mr. Curtin to approve the Subdivision Amendment. Seconded by Mr. Pettinelli and unanimously approved.

8. REGULATION DISCUSSION

   A. CAMPGROUNDS
      Awaiting feedback from the Economic Development Commission and should have that by the next meeting.

   B. PARKING
      Mr. Ventres begins a discussion regarding the potential guidelines for the Moodus area. It is requested that the members review the guidelines. It is indicated that 90% of them are ours, some are Coventry's, and some are Darien's. If after review, there are items that are not applicable, feedback would be needed. All had the same concept of the village design. If we are going to use Plains Road and Falls Road as a template of structures in the area that has some historic look, do you want this type of language?

      At the end are guidelines that have not been discussed too much. For example, outdoor dining, vending machines, traditional New England colors and franchise architecture.

      This will be revisited later.

      Mr. Salicrup brought up Cumberland Farms and questioned if this would fall under these guidelines. The use would be grandfathered in and they still need to come back to Planning and Zoning as a special exception, but the design, traffic and setup is what makes it important to review.

      As of right now, no official paperwork has been submitted.

      Mr. Brownell question if there were any other projects that any of the members would like to talk about and the members did there were none.

Mr. Casner (from audience) began a conversation regarding the EDC looking to do something with Moodus and to review the South end of Town Street by Staehly's. This would require a zoning change to a Village Zone. Mr. Brownell reminds that there was a lot of pushbacks from the property owners when this was discussed a few years ago.

Mr. Brownell suggested to Mr. Casner to get together some interested parties from the EDC that would like to review this corridor and see if there is any viability.

Mr. Gillis thoughts are to fine tune a list of ideas so that it would be easier to approach the property owners.

This will be brought up at the next meeting.

Mr. Brownell begins a discussion regarding an email that was sent by Mr. Casner about possibly of getting the Moodus Subcommittee together at a future at some point. This would include the EDC. There was a request to the Board of Finance for monies to conduct studies in the Moodus Village area. There has been work on trying to get some studies done. It is also indicated that with a good master plan we could pursue the State to help with Route 149. It does not appear that this is in the budget.

Motion was made by Mr. Pettinelli to take a 5-minute recess. Seconded by Mr. Brownell and unanimously approved.

9. PUBLIC HEARING 8:00 pm

1. Annual review of the 2019 Planning & Conservation Plan of Development and review of the Affordable Housing Plan.

Mr. Petitinelli reads, Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, at 8:00 pm, at the Municipal Office Complex, Meeting Room One and Two, 1 Plains Road, Moodus, to hear the following; Annual Review of the 2019 Planning and Conservation Plan of Development and review of the Affordable Housing Plan. You may access the YouTube live link from the Town's website www.easthaddam.org. At the hearing interested party shall be heard, and correspondence received, questions or comments about this application may be emailed to jventres@easthaddam.org during the hearing.

Mr. Ventres introduces Megan Jouflas, Senior Planner for The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Government and provides a background of the plan. There was a discussion previously in the 2019 Planned Conservation & Development. The Connecticut River Valley COG is used this opportunity to help with a five-year requirement by state statute.

Ms. Jouflas begins her presentation. She advises that the Project Team includes the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments, the Town of East Haddam, SLR consultants TYCHE Planning & Policy Group and Goman York Advisory Services.

Before getting into the affordable housing plan, she first thought it would be good just to go over what is Affordable Housing? She stated that the colloquial definition of Affordable

Housing is housing that costs no more than 30% of the household's income. If the household is spending more than 30% on of their income on housing and housing related expenses, which would include rent, mortgage payments, property taxes, utilities, HOA's and maintenance costs, then they're considered to be cost burdened by their housing. Aside from that there is also the statutory definition of Affordable Housing, or what we might think of as Affordable Housing that comes under CGS 8-30 G, and that is housing which due to deed restriction or subsidy costs, a low-income household, no more than 30% of their income. A low-income household is defined as a household making less than 80% by the State area median income or the area median income, whichever is less. This is the standard that is used both by the state of Connecticut and by HUD. In East Haddam, based on these definitions, a family of four making less than $79,900 per year, or an individual making less than $55,950 a year, would qualify as low income.

With that definition in mind, what is an Affordable Housing Plan? Under CGS Section 830j, which was updated in 2017, all municipalities in the State of Connecticut, are required to create an affordable housing plan, that needs to be submitted by June 1, 2022, and updated every five years. Plan must set out goals for how the municipality can increase its supply of affordable housing. Each community decides what strategies are best for their community.

RiverCog is facilitating the creation of these affordable housing plans for 12 towns in the region. It began with a region-wide analysis on housing trends and challenges. Broke out into town specific data that was used to inform each of the town plans. They held regional and town specific presentations to discuss data and recommendations. After town plans are adopted, regional recommendations will focus on coordinating effort's and sharing resources between towns.

Each town's affordable housing plan created through this process contains, community values statement, housing needs assessment, evaluation of local land use and zoning and goas, stratagies and actions.

Community value statement: A diverse and inclusive housing stock allows young people to live in the community where they grew up, allows current residents to downsize within the community, and provides housing opportunities that strengthen East Haddam's and the Region's economic base. Future housing development should continue to align with unique characteristics of each neighborhood, in accordance with the plan of Conservation and Development.

In the plan of Conservation and Development, the Town encourages affordable and diverse housing opportunities to meet the needs of all residents, regardless of age and income, while ensuring the preservation of East Haddam's historic and rural charm.

Finally, East Haddam prides itself on its excellent quality of life for all residents, including its school systems, natural resources, and access to recreational, economic, and cultural opportunities. These factors contribute to the town strong sense of community and culture of volunteerism. As volunteers critical to the function of the Town and its emergency services age, it is essential that a new generation is able to live in East Haddam and fill their shoes. A diverse housing stock will allow new residents to enjoy all that East Haddam has to offer and ensure that existing residents can continue to live in the community as they move through different life stages and lifestyles.

The housing needs assessment considered East Haddam's demographics population trends and existing housing stock to determine the affordable housing needs for the town. The full analysis can be found in the plan and the data will all be included in the appendices. She believes you all have copies of much of this data, which was also presented at the Town workshop. This is available to view on RiverCogs website, www.river cog.org/RHP.

In summary the conclusions found that 1075 households in East Haddam, or 29%, meet the definition of low-income household. That's people who are already here. About 68% of all low-income households are cost burden in East Haddam, and 37.5% of seniors, 65 and older, and 31% of young adults, are indicated by the US Census data are also considered cost burdened.

Looking at existing conditions, zoning, land use, regulations and policies, the one thing she noted is at the outset, is this plan does not go into were housing should go, and it does not identify parcels. It is not that specific. This analysis is really just to inform what the recommendations should be coming out of this. Some action steps that might be worthwhile to look into, and also to be useful for the Town going forward as a tool to inform future decisions. You can pull from any of the data that is found in here and any future endeavors with an understanding of the housing need. The plan considers the Towns existing conditions for the ability to accommodate that need. It will be no surprise to this group much of East Haddam is zoned residential, predominantly at densities of one house per two acres. Although the Lake District and East Haddam Village do allow for higher densities under certain circumstances. Zoning alone doesn't paint the entire picture of what housing can be accommodated or where it should go. The plan also considered environmental constraints and infrastructure limitations. 25% of the land in East Haddam is committed to open space, and 22% of the land is considered vacant. However environmentally sensitive areas, such as water courses, wetlands, steep slopes, flood zones, aquifer protection areas and public water supply areas will limit the use of this land that is identified as vacant. In addition, most of East Haddam is in avoidance areas and residents rely on well water and septic, which will also have limitations on the number of units that can be accommodated. These limitations aside the POCD does provide several great goals already and strategies related to creation of additional housing opportunities that this plan highlights and seeks to reinforce

The following goals and strategies, which is the real heart of the plan, where developed based on public engagement and coordination with Mr. Ventres, who was our liaison for this project. Strategy one: East Haddam should pursue the housing goals and recommended strategies in the 2018 plan of Conservation and Development. The Town's Plan of Conservation and Development details strategies for improving housing conditions in East Haddam as well as contributing to affordability. In the pursuit of housing affordability, these strategies should be implemented.

Strategy two: Determine if suitable properties should be acquired by the Town or the development of Affordable Housing. In the future, there may be properties for sale that would be suitable for housing development.

Action Steps: Prior to the parcel(s) being listed, the Town should determine if it is in the public interest to purchase the land and developing a Right of First Refusal agreement with the current owners.

Determine suitability, the Town should assess the properties with respect to the following conditions: evaluate site constraints, determine density that can be supported by on-site septic system, evaluate market conditions to determine highest-and-best use, and conduct a fiscal impact study as part of the identification of highest-and-best use.

Following purchase, the Town should create a design plan prior to issuance of a developer RFQ/RFP to select a partner that can help it achieve its desired vision for the site.

The town should work with the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority to promote home ownership in East Haddam. CHFA is a self-funded quasi-public organization. Its mission is to alleviate a shortage of housing for low to moderate income families and persons in the state, and when appropriate, to promote or maintain economic development of Connecticut through employer assisted housing efforts. Mortgages through CHFA are available for first time homebuyers.

East Haddam should share information to encourage potential homebuyers to consider and pursue CHFA mortgages. East Haddam should host or advertise CHFA homebuyer and real estate agent education classes. East Haddam should partner with a non-profit and/or with other towns to locally provide a CHFA housing counselor.

Strategy Four: Implement East Haddam's Affordable Housing Plan. The Town will work to implement this Plan over the next 5 years and these recommendations represent a starting point for the Town. As required by CGS Section 8-30j, this plan will be updated every 5 years.

Action Steps: Consistently updating the plan. The recommendation of this Plan represents a starting point and guideline for potential future changes. As required by CGS Section 8-30j, this plan will be updated every 5 years.

Amend the Plan of Conservation and Development to include the Affordable Housing Plan. The Planning and Zoning Commission should amend the Plan of Conservation and Development to include the Affordable Housing Plan so that it can be referenced as part of future land use and zoning decisions. The Town of East Haddam will update its POCD in 2028. Since Affordable Housing Plans are required to be updated every 5 years, it is recommended that the next Affordable Housing Plan be updated concurrent with the POCD update and included in the POCD.

Strategy Five: Strengthening the Region's capacity to further Affordable Housing. Implementation of the recommendations of this plan will require resources and an additional level of government and staff oversight. What we've heard from a lot of the towns going through this process, is if they want to provide more information about CHFA mortgages, how are we going to afford a point person to do that? Who do we have on our staff? That can take on additional responsibility so really this is where we're coming in looking at sort of that overarching picture. What are all the towns trying to do? Where can we coordinate efforts? That's really what this recommendation is about. If multiple towns are looking to you to hire somebody to serve as an information source for Affordable Housing, then maybe all of the towns can hire one person to do that, and they can share resources. This would cost less for each of the towns. That's what this is going towards and this will be carried into the regional portion of the Plan. It will be taken to the C.O.G. Board at the conclusion of this entire process.

I would welcome any questions. I know that was a lot of information, so I hope it was useful and I appreciate you taking the time.

Mr. Salicrup asked a couple of questions: we already have an application in process for Banner for 10 affordable units. Is it up to the Board and the Town of East Haddam, I'm looking at the community value statement, that we select from town residents? Who gets those and how is that administered? Ms. Jouflas answers that you don't get to handpick who lives in the affordable unit. The idea of the community value statement is that you're providing opportunities for people who are here, to live here. A conversation ensues regarding the who gets to move in how the process works and wait lists.

Ms. Kinsman comments that if we agreed to participate in the regional Housing Committee, they could share the opportunities of Affordable Housing not only in East Haddam, but in our surrounding communities as they become available. There wouldn't be private developers, this resource would have available opportunities that they shared with the Regional Housing Committee. This Committee would need to be created. A conversation ensued regarding the creation of the committee.

Mr. Brownell begins a conversation to confirm that towns do not have to opt in on this. Ms. Jouflas confirms that towns are required to create a plan but not pursue it. You must create the plan but there's no penalties if you don't do anything with your plan. You can write it and put it on a shelf but there is no penalty for not implementing your plan.

Audience member asks a question, if we adopt this, then there will be goals and we will be expected to attempt to meet the goals? What if what if we don't meet the goals? Ms. Jouflas answers, there is nothing in statute that has any sort of penalty for any town failing to meet their goals. Long discussion regarding the goals and meeting goals, State and any future granting should goals not be met. Also, a discussion regarding length of time for Affordable Housing.

Question is, ask if RiverCog has any ties with like organizations like Habitat for Humanity? Ms. Jouflas advises that they have reached out to us recently. It was noted that there is a lot of real estate in town that that could be rehabilitated. A conversation ensued regarding the organization and how to reach out to them.

Open to the audience for questions or comments:

Tony Dumaine ensued a conversation regarding the cottages. A lot of cottages and the square footage. Mr. Ventres advises that the square footage rule is no longer an issue. It has been removed. He goes on to discuss that the owners will be responsible for figuring out the septic as there are no records.

Mr. Brownell ensues a conversation regarding if someone comes in with an application and puts in Affordable Housing, the Commission is unable to do anything because of the State and meeting quotes, Ms. Jouflas stated that one of the ways around it, if it is put in the Plan and it is showing where developers are allowed to put Affordable Housing then it will go much smoother.

Conversation ensued regarding the property values of properties around Affordable Housing. Mr. Ventres brought up the question as to if the Plan is adopted, do we want to

go out and purchase land and plan the housing? At the minimum the possibility of right to first refusal.

A very short discussion ensued regarding of Banner Estate regarding Affordable Housing and 55 plus.

Mr. Casner comments that he would like to see a more specific description of the location of the Affordable Housing. Meaning a specific street location or giving it a boundary. Mr. Ventres confirms that there is already a zones for cluster housing and it has been in place for 30 years. A short discussion ensues.

Motion was made by Mr. Pettinelli to close the Public Hearing. Seconded by Mr. Curtin and unanimously approved.

Ms. Langdon ensues a conversation regarding the fact that there is a lot of legislation happening in Hartford and maybe a situation where it should not be adopted right now. Maybe wait for the outcome of the pending legislation. Mr. Ventres brought up the fact that the legislation won't specifically end. The conversation continues as to if we are adopting or sending a letter to the State as to why you aren't meeting the deadline of June 1.

Motion was made by Mr. Pettinelli to adopt the Affordable Housing Plan. Seconded by Ms. Kinsman. Opposed by Mr. Curtin and Mr. Salicup. Abstained by Mr. Brownell. Motion was passed.

John Olin, Representative from the Conservation Commission appeared to advise that they are reviewing additions, specifically Chapter 4. And climate resiliency being reviewed at next C.C. meeting on 6/7/22 and will report back.

B. Revisions of the Customary Home Occupations – Section 27 of the East Haddam Zoning Regulations.

Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, at 8:00 p.m., at the Municipal Office Complex, Meeting Room One and Two, 1 Plains Road, Moodus, to hear the following; Revisions of Customary Home Occupation - Section 27 of the East Haddam Planning and Zoning Regulations. You may access the YouTube live link on the Town's website www.easthaddam.org. At this hearing, interest parties should be heard, and correspondence received, questions or comments about this application, may be emailed to jventres@easthaddam.org during the hearing.

A conversation ensued regarding the recap of last meeting with the different classes of trucks and questioning gross weights back and forth between class 3 and class 4. The minor was not to exceed Class 2 which is 10,000 pounds and then the moderate had class 4 at 16,000 and in the bidding going back and forth between class 3 and class 4, one person from the public stated it should stop at 14,000. That was the only comments I received from the public via email.

I conversation ensued regarding class 2 being split into A and B. US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration defines vehicles class 1 through 8. Most common categorized and used in the fleet industry classes are based on the vehicles gross vehicle weight rating, which is the maximum operating weight of the vehicle measured in pounds. Conversation continues regarding this document.

Mr. Casner from the audience comments that he believes that this is growing this to be more than it needs to be. This is supposed to be for someone like a carpenter and not for the dump trucks in the residential neighborhoods. He believes that it should be limited and use the larger trucks for the commercial areas. Suggests to cap at 10,000 pounds.

A member from the audience comments that he agrees with Mr. Casner. Residential construction workers are ok and when you get the bigger vehicles with signs, it becomes an issue.

Conversation continues regarding the classes that will be acceptable. Minor class 2 would be acceptable and moderate would be acceptable. The larger vehicles will need special acceptations. No bigger than a class 4.

Mr. Ventres that there are not any changes from the last two meetings.

Mr. Casner from the audience is looking for clarification. Nothing larger than a class 2 without special acceptation. If it is larger than a class 2, to get approval it needs to be on a state road and a Special Exception Review.

This will be reviewed and voted on at next meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Salicrup to continue the Public Hearing the next regular hearing to discuss the Proposed Additions to Section 27, Home Occupation. Seconded by Ms. Kinsman and unanimously approved.

11. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Pettinelli to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Curtin and passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Lenice Tripputi
Recording Secretary