East Haddam Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2022

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

I. Call to Order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

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

III. Approval of Minutes

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

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

IV. Old Business

A. Status Reports

1. EDC Chairman Update – Mr. Casner's reported that the Board of Selectmen is currently interviewing candidates to populate the Town's Redevelopment Agency. There was a brief discussion regarding the need to build up the commercial base in the Village area.

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 finalizing the updates to the Visitors' Guide and expects to have a draft for sign-off very soon.
- The Business Bingo cards will be printed and distributed next week and the program will run through the end of July.
- A new book store opened in the Village and the ice cream shop has a new owner.
- She would like to schedule a fall scarecrow event for the Village and will talk with Ms. Zemienieski about potential dates.
- She confirmed that she plans to schedule a Santa fly-in in the Village for December 6th.

There was a brief discussion regarding scheduling the Fall Weekend this year and Ms. Pszczolkowski agreed to get planning information on previous events from Ms. Haines.

4. EDC/PZC Sub-Committees

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

    Mr. Casner reported that representatives from the Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance group, CT Landmarks, and the River Cog, met with him and representatives from Chester's Sustainability committee and Economic Development Council to tour sites in Chester where the proposed bike/walking path could be extended. He stated that the Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance group is gathering all of the information together and will draft a map of the potential trail. He advised that CT Landmarks is planning to host an open house in June at the Palmer-Warner House property where parking, a visitors' center, and public restrooms for the bike path will be available.

    In response to a question from Mr. Robidoux, Mr. Casner stated that there is currently no established goal for breaking ground on the trail. He noted that the group expects that there will be federal grant funding available for the construction of the trail once the design is completed. There was a general discussion regarding Haddam's interest in participating in the project.

5. East Haddam Business Association (EHBA) – Mr. Robidoux reported that EHBA events have been quiet; however, a networking event is planned for the end of June.

    a. Welcome Wagon Initiative – In response to a request from EDC Coordinator Pszczolkowski, Mr. Robidoux agreed to schedule a meeting with the representative from the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program in July.

6. Goodspeed Landing – Swingbridge Project – Mr. Casner reported that the state DOT has opened the bids for the Swingbridge repair project and the contractor should be in place by mid-July. Further, that the start of work on the bridge has been pushed out to the fall.

V. New Business

A. Business of the Month – Ms. Pszczolkowski advised that she is working on scheduling the June Business of the Month photo with David Merrick of Eastland Enterprises.
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B. PZC request for comments – Does the Town need more RV sites? – Mr. Casner advised that the Planning and Zoning Commission has requested input from EDC regarding whether or not there is a need to expand the potential for RV sites in Town. There was a general discussion regarding existing RV campgrounds and it was agreed that, while EDC views seasonal RV camp sites as beneficial to the Town, they would like to have more information about what stimulated P&Z's inquiry.

C. PZC/EDC- Moodus Development Plan – Parking Regulations – Mr. Casner solicited volunteers to represent EDC on a joint sub-committee with the Planning and Zoning Commission to review and potentially revise parking regulations in the Moodus commercial district. He noted that the River COG may have grant opportunities available for an engineering study of the area.

D. Route 82 Bike Path / Zoning Uses in the Area – Appoint Subcommittee – Mr. Casner stated that the volunteers participating on a joint PZC/EDC sub-committee reviewing parking regulations in the Moodus commercial district would also review the current zoning regulations in the existing Four Corners commercial area and identify possible additional commercial uses for south Town Street to present to the Planning & Zoning Commission for potential revisions in the zoning regulations.

E. Membership – Mr. Casner advised the Mr. Albuquerque's membership on the Economic Development Commission is coming up for renewal and he distributed information regarding EDC meeting attendance.

He noted that he is aware of individual(s) who would like to join EDC and there was a general discussion regarding membership.

MOTION MADE BY MS. GLIDDEN, SECONDED BY MR. ROBIDOUX TO THANK MR. ALBUQUERQUE FOR HIS PAST SERVICE; HOWEVER, NOT TO RECOMMEND HIS REAPPOINTMENT ON THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

F. Business Communications – In response to an inquiry from Ms. Wheeler, the Board agreed to remove this agenda item from future meeting agendas.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment discussed at the meeting.

VII. Open Discussion – EDC Commissioners

Ms. Pszczolkowski suggested the Business Association organize quarterly or semi-annual business owner networking events that would be open to non BA members. Mr. Robidoux advised that a BA/EDC sponsored picnic at Cold Spring Farm is planned for June 29th, from 6-8 p.m., and stated that the event could be opened up to all of the Town's business owners.

Mr. Robidoux reviewed the response to a survey of local businesses regarding the potential impact of the Swingbridge repair project on their companies. He stated that results of the survey show that the projected financial impact of the project on local businesses is expected to be significant.

VIII. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Wheeler