East Haddam Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 15, 2023

Attending: R. Casner; W. McEnery; D. Merrick; R. Parady; M. Robidoux
Absent: D. Bergeron; R. Davis; E. Glidden; J. Stone
Guests: L. Pszczolkowski

I. Call to Order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance – Mr. Casner sat Mr. Merrick for Mr. Bergeron.

III. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Casner called the Commissioners' attention to the May 18, 2023 meeting minutes. He noted a minor typographical error at the bottom of page 1.

MOTION MADE BY MR. ROBIDOUX, SECONDED BY MR. PARADY, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 18, 2023 AS AMENDED. UNANIMOUS AYE.

IV. Old Business

A. EDC Chairman Update - Mr. Casner advised that there was a guest at the meeting who would be making a presentation on the Welcome Wagon initiative. He stated he would like to amend the agenda to move the presentation, agenda item 4E-a, up to cover at this time in the meeting.

Mr. Robidoux introduced Robert McGovern, the owner of Neighbor To Neighbor of America, Inc. Mr. McGovern provided some of his personal background as well as information on his company. He distributed a sample welcome packet and advised that the packets are distributed via regular mail. Mr. McGovern stated that the packets include relevant community information as well as advertisements from local businesses.

Mr. McGovern advised that the initial one-time sponsor/advertiser investment is $245.00 and then sponsors pay $3.50/pp per mailing. He also noted that he only accepts one sponsor per category within a municipality. He responded to questions from the Board and informed them that he requires a minimum of five sponsors to initiate the program for a municipality.

Mr. Casner thanked Mr. McGovern for coming to the meeting and explaining how his program works. He stated that EDC will work on recruiting sponsors and then follow-up with Mr. McGovern.

Mr. Casner also reported the following:

- He spoke with Tom Sanders about organizing future airport festivals. He stated that the next step is to determine whether or not the First Selectman is in support of holding the annual festivals. He stated that he would like EDC to act as a sponsor to cover the cost of the insurance for the events.

  Mr. Casner noted that parking and traffic are significant concerns. There was a general discussion regarding when the festivals would be reinstated and whether the Town and/or airport docks could be used by a water taxi.

- Elizabeth Glidden submitted her resignation noting that family responsibilities are taking up more of her time.

  MOTION MADE BY MR. ROBIDOUX, SECONDED BY MR. McENERY, TO FORWARD, WITH REGRET, MS. GLIDDEN'S LETTER OF RESIGNATION TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN FOR ACCEPTANCE. UNANIMOUS AYE.

  Mr. Casner stated that he would write a note to Ms. Glidden, on behalf of EDC, thanking her for work on the Commission.

- East Haddam has the smallest amount of commercial property in Middlesex County.

- He had met with First Selectman Haines and they discussed the need to collect information about new businesses in Town. He stated that a Google form has been created for that purpose and it will be added to the Town's website.

  Mr. Casner stated that he also met with the First Selectman, the Building Official, the Fire Marshal and representatives from P&Z and the Chatham Health District to discuss how to encourage new businesses to come to Town.

  He noted that the lack of available storefronts and commercial properties inhibits new businesses from starting up or moving into Town. He suggested EDC work with the Planning & Zoning Commission so that EDC can be kept in the loop about available commercial properties. Mr. McEnery suggested EDC establish a relationship with a commercial real estate agent. He stated that such an individual would have information on available properties as well as how to market them.

- Old Saybrook has offered East Haddam a gazebo at no cost other than transportation. Facilities Director Angersola inspected the gazebo, stated it is in good condition, and recommended it be installed on the Moodus green. Mr. Merrick's company can transport the gazebo from Old Saybrook to Moodus for a cost of $800.00.

  MOTION MADE BY MR. ROBIDOUX, SECONDED BY MR. PARADY, TO ALLOCATE $800.00 FROM THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION'S FY 2022-2023 BUDGET TO PAY TO MOVE A GAZEBO FROM OLD SAYBROOK TO THE MOODUS GREEN. MR. MERRICK ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE AND THE MOTION PASSED BY A MAJORITY OF AYES.

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

C. Economic Development Administrator Report - Ms. Pszczolkowski reported she has begun to work on the Fall Festival, Scarecrow contest, and Christmas event.

D. Sub-Committee Reports

a. CT Landmarks/EDC – Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program – Mr. Casner reported that the Town had been approved for a $40k grant for engineering work on the bike path. He advised that the Town is well positioned to get approved for future grants for construction costs and that CT Landmarks is working on a grant for the cost of putting in a parking lot at the Palmer Warner House for cyclists' use.

Mr. Casner further reported that the National Parks Service's contract with the Town is concluding on July 1st and they will be stepping back from the project. He stated that a thank-you celebration for the National Parks Rivers, Trails & Conservation group is planned for June 29th at the Palmer Warner House.

Mr. Casner advised that the collaboration with the towns of Chester and Haddam on the project has resulted in plans for a 15-16 mile bike path.

b. EDC/PZC – Moodus Development Plan – Parking Regulations – Mr. Casner reported that he will be meeting with P&Z to discuss options for parking in the Moodus business district and noted that there is funding in the FY2022-2023 budget for the work.

c. Route 82 Bike Path / Zoning Uses in the Area – There was no new update on this agenda item.

i. Cross Walks in the South Town Streat Area (Route 82/434/151) - Mr. Casner advised that the cross walks project will be incorporated into the bike path plans and will be removed from future agendas.

E. East Haddam Business Association (EHBA)

a. Welcome Wagon initiative – This agenda item was addressed earlier in the meeting and is reported on in the minutes above.

F. Goodspeed Landing – Swingbridge Project – Mr. Casner suggested that EDC make an additional effort to support Town businesses during the Swingbridge reconstruction work and solicited the Board's input on how to do that. There was a general discussion and Ms. Pszczolkowski suggested an article encouraging people to patronize local businesses. Mr. McEnery supported Ms. Pszczolkowski's suggestion and recommended that the article be published in surrounding towns' newspapers as well as the East Haddam News. Ms. Pszczolkowski agreed to provide a draft article.

V. New Business

A. Business of the Month

The following were nominated as future Businesses of the Month: Swingbridge Package Store (June); the Village Ice Cream Shop (July); Jansky Rubbish, Scully's, and Sanibel's. Ms. Pszczolkowski stated she would schedule the photos.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment discussed at the meeting.

VII. Open Discussion – EDC Commissioners

Mr. Casner advised that a sub-committee will be formed to study legislation related to farm stands and will consist of two representatives each from EDC, P&Z, the Agriculture Commission, and the farm stand community. In response to a request from Mr. Casner, Mr. Merrick volunteered to sit on a sub-committee to study legislation related to farm stands. Mr. Casner stated he will be the other EDC representative on the sub-committee.

Ms. Pszczolkowski solicited input from the Commissioners for suggestions on food trucks for the Halloween Scarecrow and Christmas events. The Board provided her with several recommendations.

Mr. Casner informed the Board that Mr. Bergeron is ill and circulated a get well card for their signatures.

VIII. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Wheeler