Town of East Haddam
Redevelopment Agency
October 12, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER
Mr. Lord called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Office Complex and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ATTENDANCE
Redevelopment Agency Members: Andrew Lord, James Curtin, Jacquelin Nowell, Randy Dill, Gary Laskowski, John Cotter, William DiCristofaro, and Harvey Thomas-BOF Liaison.

Absent Member(s): Thomas Sevigny and Caitlin Taylor.

Other(s): First Selectman Irene Haines, Bob Casner-Economic Development, John Olin, Amalia Shaltiel, Dick Everett, 3-4 Townspeople and Ruth Ziobron-Recording Secretary.

Mr. Lord acknowledged Melanie Kolek's resignation as Agency Chair and member. Agency members thanked her for her many years serving on the Redevelopment Commission and Agency. A new Chair will be appointed at the next meeting. The First Selectman will appoint a new member.

2. Approval of Minutes – meeting of September 14, 2023
Motion to approve the minutes as presented.
Nowell/DiCristofaro Passed unanimously.

3. Committee reports

A. Executive

Mr. Lord will schedule a meeting with the WPI students to answer any questions they may have.

B. Environmental

i. Review of draft RFP

Agency members reviewed the Town of East Haddam Request for Qualifications and Proposals (RFP) for the Municipal Brownfield Grant Program. It was noted DECD approval is required before posting.

ii. VHB invoice approval

Motion to approve the VHB invoice #0420774 dated September 28, 2023, in the amount of $3,326.25.
Nowell/Laskowski Passed unanimously.

C. Finance

i. Camoin contract

Mr. DiCristofaro explained the Finance Subcommittee was responsible for exploring all the possible financing options that might be available as the project moves forward such as grant writing and tax abatement. He explained the purpose of hiring Camoin was that they were experts with tax incremental financing.

ii. Grant writing follow up

An experienced grant writer in town has offered to develop grant proposals. Mrs. Nowell noted that VHB also had grant writers available. Ms. Shaltiel asked if expanding the TIF district size would be examined. Mr. DiCristofaro replied the Agency was still gathering data and if it made sense, would consider expanding the district map size.

D. Community Engagement

An article will be published in the East Haddam news reviewing the project history and next steps.

E. Legal

i. Review of Attorney Carella letter of 9/26/2023

Agency members reviewed Updike, Kelly & Spellacy (UKS) letter dated September 26,2023 regarding the public hearing process for redevelopment plan by Attorney Richard D. Carella.

Mr. Lord stated there was no defined point at which the Agency was required to have a public hearing. Multiple plans may be reviewed at the same time provided the same process is followed for each. Mr. DiCristofaro suggested that the Agency develop a Development Evaluation Criterion to identify what would be acceptable for the project at the next meeting.

4. New Business

Mr. DiCristofaro stated the TIF plan and grant opportunities needed to be moved forward. He stated of the importance of knowing what the developer's financial commitment would be as well as the Town's financial commitment to the project.

Mr. Curtin suggested meeting with the State to discuss road modifications. First Selectman Haines stated she was coordinating a meeting with them, and they were currently evaluating the area.

Responsive to Mr. Dill's question, Mr. DiCristofaro answered that the Agency did not have enough funding for a full TIF plan at this time. He stated there were enough funds to complete an assessment of the scope of the project to give the Agency a general idea of what they could expect in terms of financing if they were to go with a TIF. Mr. Dill added that the Town would need to approve a TIF. Agency members agreed that determining some of the unknowns like remediation, grant funding, a TIF, and the Town's financial responsibilities would attract developer interest.

Mr. Cotter suggested adding more detail to the agenda along with target dates.

First Selectman Haines suggested writing a point of purchase brochure about the project which would include the Agency's work and Town's commitment to developing the property.

Mr. Casner shared his meeting with the new owners of the Society Hall on Main Street. Mr. Casner stated the developer bought the property because of the historic building located in the village. Mr. Lord asked what the Agency could do to make developers interested in the village. Mr. Casner stated the historic buildings with parking were attractive to developers. He suggested attracting smaller developers to individually redevelop the open properties in the village. He explained that by breaking development down into sizes where more people would be involved, it would attract a bigger audience. He stated smaller development was more fitting for the village.

5. Public Comment

Mr. Casner stated he had a conversation with the new owner of the current ice cream shop. He stated the owner was excited and would contribute to the development of the village.

Jon Olin stated State Statute reads that the redevelopment of the development area should benefit the people of the town without expecting tax revenue. He stated the Brownfield cleanup and grant funding would make the project attractive to developers. He stressed the importance of community engagement.

Ms. Shaltiel asked the Agency to create a plan that gets what the town wants. She suggested talking to people and creating a charette to involve the town. She suggested creating a subcommittee to define what the people want.

6. Adjournment at 8:09 p.m.

Dill/Cotter Passed Unanimously

Respectfully Submitted,
E. Ruth Ziobron
Recording Secretary