East Haddam Economic Development Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
February 1, 2024

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

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

2. Attendance – All Commissioners in attendance were regular Board members.

3. Approval of Minutes

   - Regular Meeting of October 19, 2023 – The review and approval of the minutes of the October meeting was postponed.

   - Regular Meeting of December 21, 2023 – Mr. Robidoux noted corrections in agenda item 5B, paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4 – change "Fellman" to "Fellner".

     MOTION MADE BY MR. ROBIDOUX, SECONDED BY MR. MCENERY, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 21, 2023 MEETING AS AMENDED. UNANIMOUS AYE.

4. Old Business

   A. EDC Chairman Update - Mr. Casner reported on the following items:

   - He participated in a meeting with First Selectwoman Haines, Land Use Administrator Ventres, and Water Pollution Control Authority Chairman Lord regarding sewer plans for the 4-Corners area and the Moodus business district. He stated that it may be possible to tie the 4-Corners area into the Village system; however, due to distance, it would be too costly to tie in Moodus. He stated that they discussed the possibility of using a package sewage treatment plant in Moodus.
   - The Planning & Zoning Commission approved the renovation plans for the Society Hall building; renovations include a café on the first floor, three bed & breakfast units on the second floor, and a rental apartment on the third floor.
   - The old Town Tavern restaurant is expected to open for business mid-February under new ownership.
   - He provided an update on the activities of the Redevelopment Agency.

Mr. Casner advised that the Town has started work on its 2024-2025 budget. He stated that he will be meeting with Finance Director Belles on February 6th and Ms. Pszczolkowski agreed to provide him with a proposal for funding 2024-2025 EDC sponsored events as well as a list of 2024 events with approximate attendance figures.

Mr. Casner stated that $8k of the $12k in EDC's capital budget will be expended for a DEEP grant match for design work on the bike path and he plans to request to replenish the capital account in 2024-2025 in anticipation of the need for additional matching grant funds.

There was a general discussion regarding the printing budget and Ms. Pszczolkowski advised that EDC has a sufficient supply of the tourism brochures. She recommended shifting some of the print funds toward the development of social media content to reach a broader audience. Mr. Casner agreed to request funding for "media spending" which would include both print and social media.

Mr. Merrick and Ms. Pszczolkowski commented on the flooding from Succor Brook that occurs from Norwich Road to Creamery Road whenever there is a heavy rainfall. They noted that the culverts regularly overflow and flood the roads and buildings. There was a general discussion about the issue and it was noted that the Sustainability Team is looking into the situation and will reach out to CT DEEP for help in resolving the problem. Mr. Casner stated that drainage, in general, should be addressed in any redevelopment project that takes place in the Village.

B. First Selectman Update

The First Selectwoman was not in attendance and, consequently, discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

C. Economic Development Administrator Report

Ms. Pszczolkowski reported the following:

- The new Sweet & Savory ice cream shop in the Village opened today.
- She is working on completing the newsletter.
- She is collaborating with the Fire Department for an Easter Egg Hunt on March 30th.
- She is promoting February as the "Show Your Love For Local" month.

In response to a question from Mr. Casner, she advised that the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program has approximately 7-8 advertisers. Mr. Casner stated that Mr. Parker, the Director of the Senior Center, would like to include information in the packets that go out and Ms. Pszczolkowski said she would reach out to him. She also agreed to provide Mr. Casner with a sample Neighbor-to-Neighbor packet.

There was a brief discussion about Ms. Pszczolkowski's interactions with the Chester Economic Development Commission. Mr. Casner asked Ms. Pszczolkowski to set up a meeting with the Chester EDC for the two of them.

D. Sub-Committee Reports

a. EDC/PZC Moodus Development Plan – Mr. Casner reported that the Town is going out to bid to implement some of the DOT's audit findings regarding traffic calming in the Moodus business district as well as improvements to the sight lines at the intersection of Wlm. F. Palmer Road.

b. Route 82 Bike Path / Zoning uses in Area – There was no new update on this agenda item; Mr. Casner stated he is still waiting for CT DEEP's sign-off on the RFP for design drawings.

i. Village Zone Regulations – Mr. Casner provided information about proposed changes to the zoning regulations in the Town Street village district. He noted that the intent of the revisions is to codify allowable business uses in the district. The consensus of the Commissioners was to present the proposed changes to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

5. New Business

A. East Haddam Village

a. Discussion on Road Design - Mr. Casner pointed out that a motion made at the Board's December 21st meeting authorized him to solicit a second engineering opinion on the proposal for re-routing Lumberyard and Creamery Roads. He noted, however, that he had spoken with several engineering groups who advised him that they would not be able to compete with the LRC Group's offer. The consensus of the Board was to move forward with LRC.

B. Business Directory – Ms. Pszczolkowski advised that Amalia Shaltiel, of the Sustainability Team, has volunteered to input updates to the Business Directory on the Town's website; however, the Technology Department will have to provide her with the appropriate credentials to work on the Town's website.

C. Business(es) of the Month - Ms. Pszczolkowski stated she would schedule the photo for the March Business of the Month. The Board members recommended the new restaurant on Town Street, the Sweet & Savory Ice Cream Shop, and Society Hall as potential future nominees.

Mr. Robidoux suggested scheduling ribbon cutting ceremonies for any new bricks & mortar businesses that open in Town. The Board agreed with his suggestion.

6. Old Business

There was no additional Old Business discussed at the meeting.

7. Public Comment

There was no public comment discussed at the meeting.

8. Open Discussion – EDC Commissioners

   Mr. Casner stated that the February issue of INC Magazine included an article about the Centerbrook Architectural firm's renovation work on the Yale Peabody Museum in New Haven. He stated that he was very impressed with the work they did on the project, and also their work on the Ocean House in Rhode Island, and noted that Centerbrook is the firm that has submitted a proposal for the redevelopment of the East Haddam Village.

9. Adjournment

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

   The meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Wheeler