

Board of Selectmen  
Municipal Office Complex  
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2  
June 3, 2020  
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: R. Smith; T. Govert; C. Quinn  
Also Present: S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski  
Virtual Attendance: D. Dill; R. Gross, and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Smith called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Approval of Agenda: Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimous aye.
3. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of May 20, 2020

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 20, 2020 as written. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence

There was no correspondence discussed at the meeting.

5. First Selectmen's Report:

A. COVID-19 Reopening Report: Mr. Smith reported the following:

- Per a State Department of Public Health and Chatham Health District report, there have been sixteen (16) positive cases of COVID-19 in East Haddam and one related death.
- Many restaurants have opened for outside dining; others have continued providing curbside or pickup window service. No inside dining is allowed at this time.
- Some barber shops and hair salons have now opened with COVID-19 restrictions in place.
- The Frederick Ray Pharmacy has opened in the old Nathan Hale Pharmacy space.
- The 49-person limit on religious/spiritual/worship gatherings was increased as follows:
  - Indoor - 25% of maximum allowable capacity, not to exceed 100 people;
  - Outdoor - 150 people maximum, provided appropriate safety and social distancing measures are employed.
- The Town's two campgrounds are open with the following limitations:
  - Grandview – open, with reduced capacity, to self-contained units;
  - Wolf's Den – open with reduced capacity and other constraints.
- COVID-19 Tracker: Jennifer Spencer, EMT, RN and Assistant Emergency Management Director, created a simple form for use if COVID-19 signs or symptoms are suspected. The

form will help first responders and/or health care providers when evaluating the history of a person's symptoms. The form is available on the Town's website, at Nutmeg Pharmacy, Post Offices, the Senior Center and other locations around Town.

- The East Haddam Public Schools will be closed for the rest of the school year; online education will continue thru June 16<sup>th</sup>, the scheduled end of the school year. The most complete and up-to-date information regarding summer school and other programs can be found on the school's website.
- The Municipal Office Complex is closed to the public, though residents can make appointments with a department, if absolutely necessary. In anticipation of the public having greater access to the MOC, floor markings, sneeze guards and other barriers will be installed at some offices.
- Board, Commission & Committee meetings will be scheduled, as necessary, to conduct required Town business. Meetings may be virtual or in person for up to ten members; public participation will still not generally be available. All meetings will be live streamed on YouTube.
- A zero mill increase was approved by the Board of Finance on May 7, 2020; however, as a consequence of the pandemic, there was no public vote on the budget, though there was a public hearing.
- Tax bills are being mailed out and should be received the last week of June. Whenever possible, payment(s) should be mailed in or paid online. Citizens will be able to pay in person but they will have to queue up outside as only one person will be allowed in the Tax Collector's office at a time.
- Due to a cyber-attack on the Town's old website, the launch of the new website was accelerated prior to its being 100% complete. Town staff has been working diligently to get the website fully functional but there is still work to be done.
- The Town Clerk's Office has resumed regular hours but the building is still closed to the public. If you have any questions, you may leave a message at 860-873-5027 or email [townclerk@easthaddam.org](mailto:townclerk@easthaddam.org) and the Clerk's Office will get back to you.

Land Record Recordings should be delivered via mail or courier service. They can also be left in the Tax Collector's drop box. Once processed, a copy of the receipt will be scanned and mailed out by the Clerk's Office.

- Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 7S suspends the requirement for homeowners who are already on the Tax Assessor's homeowners' tax credit program to reapply this year. The same credit received last year will be applied automatically. First time applicants had to have submitted proof of income by May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- The Public Works office is closed to the public. The staff returned to work, on their summer schedule, on May 26<sup>th</sup>. Many of the projects that were on hold due to reduced staffing are being addressed.
- On May 26<sup>th</sup>, the Transfer Station resumed full operations and is again open to residents MWF 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturday 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Smith also provided information on the Parks and Recreation programs, Senior Center, Library, Food Bank, Personal Products program, Youth & Family Services, Emergency Services, and the East Haddam News. He encouraged residents to remain vigilant and continue to practice every day preventative actions, including social distancing, wearing masks, and washing hands frequently.

He responded to several questions from the Board members and there was a general discussion regarding COVID-19 contact tracing.

- B. Responses to Previous Meeting Questions: In response to a request from Mr. G. Bogan, Mr. Smith advised that existing easements preclude the Town's ability to move the catch basin identified. He noted that Mr. Bogan will have to negotiate a change to, or elimination of the easement, with the neighboring land-owner prior to the Town's taking any action on his request. Mr. Smith confirmed that he would send Mr. Bogan a letter to that effect.

#### 6. Unfinished Business

- A. East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee Update: Mr. Smith reported that the Centerbridge Group had submitted its proposal for the former Town Office Site and the East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee is reviewing it. He confirmed that the Committee will solicit the input from the appropriate Town department's, Boards and Commissions as needed. In response to a question raised by Ms. Quinn, Mr. Smith advised that the Board members will receive a copy of the proposal for discussions once the EHVRRC completes its review and recommends the proposal to the Board. That should take place sometime in July/August as they are planning to have a public hearing sometime in September.

#### 7. New Business

- A. Open Space Commission Letter of Support: Mr. Smith called the Board's attention to materials in their meeting packets from the East Haddam Open Space Commission. The materials included information regarding the Mulazzi et al property / Hayward Parcel on O'Connell Road Extension and a request by the Commission for a letter of support from the Board of Selectmen for their grant application to the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection under the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, that the Board of Selectmen support an application to the State of Connecticut's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program for funds to purchase the Mulazzi property as described in the May 2020 document submitted by the East Haddam Open Space Commission.

Ms. Quinn expressed her concerns regarding taking on any additional expenses at this time, stating she would prefer to wait until the Town's determines whether or not to pursue the Goodspeed Landing Airport property. There was a general discussion regarding Ms. Quinn's concerns and Mr. Smith advised that he is establishing a committee to research the pros and cons of acquiring the Airport property. He noted that the Airport property would not be designated as "Open Space" and therefore, the two properties are not mutually exclusive.

Mr. Smith and Ms. Govert voted Aye; Ms. Quinn voted Nay, and the motion carried by a majority of Ayes.

B. Board/Commission/Committee Changes (EDC, CONS)

**Economic Development Commission**

Mr. Smith called the Board's attention to the March 5, 2020 minutes of the Economic Development Commission recommending changes to their Commission.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to change the status of Jessica Stone from an alternate member to a regular member filling a vacant position with a term expiration of June 30, 2021 on the Economic Development Commission. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to appoint Wilson Melón and William McEnery as alternate members of the Economic Development Commission for vacant five-year terms to expire June 30, 2025. Unanimous aye.

**Conservation Commission**

Mr. Smith called the Board's attention to correspondence relating to changes on the Conservation Commission.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to change the status of Thom Delventhal from alternate member to regular member to fill a vacancy with a term to expire June 30, 2022 on the Conservation Commission. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to change the status of Susan Pagnano from alternate member to regular member to fill a vacancy with a term to expire June 30, 2021 on the Conservation Commission. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to reappoint Charlotte Gelston and Marilyn Gleeson as regular members and John Olin as an alternate member for two-year terms to expire June 30, 2022 on the Conservation Commission. Unanimous aye.

A. Tax Refunds: There were no tax refunds presented at the meeting.

8. Selectmen's Discussion

In response to an inquiry from Ms. Quinn, Mr. Smith advised that he was not aware of any Town-wide event scheduled in memory of George Floyd. Ms. Govert advised that Together We Rise has discussed organizing a peaceful gathering but they are concerned about the number of people that might attend. There was a general discussion about how to coordinate an appropriate gathering and Ms. Govert stated she would contact Ms. Quinn to discuss the matter.

A. Liaison Reports: Ms. Quinn reviewed matters addressed at recent Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Assessment Appeals meetings.

No other liaison reports were discussed at the meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Quinn, seconded by Mr. Smith to take a brief recess at 8:16 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:27 p.m.

9. Citizens' Concerns/Public Comment: The Board addressed the following Citizens' Concerns and Public Comment submitted by Town residents:

1. Question submitted by R. Gross, M.D.: As our town reopens, how are you monitoring our progress? How are you surveilling the town for new cases, what is the training of the proposed contact tracers for contact tracing, where are the 3,000 people coming from and when are these 3,000 people going to be active. Lastly, why are we only now getting this going, and has anyone asked Laurie D'Aquila for her assistance? Infectious disease is her specialty.

In response Mr. Smith stated that the Chatham Health District is responsible for surveilling for new positive COVID-19 cases and for contact tracing. He stated he is not sure if CHD has reached out to Ms. D'Aquila for her assistance. He suggested Dr. Gross contact the CT Department of Health regarding his questions concerning contact tracing and why this is only getting started.

Ms. Quinn encouraged Mr. Smith to authorize a Town representative to manage contact tracing, especially among the Town's emergency services personnel.

Ms. Govert provided additional information regarding the history of contract tracing procedures.

2. Comment submitted by Tax Collector Dill: The tax collector's drop box is available to the public 24 hours a day. If tax payers would like a receipt, they must enclose a self-address stamped envelope or they can go online to [easthaddam.org](http://easthaddam.org), click "look up & pay tax bills" and print their receipt from there.
3. Question submitted by R. Gross, M.D.: Why does it appear that Ms. Quinn has not been informed, in advance of the meetings, about the actual agenda item presentations and plans by Mr. Smith or Ms. Govert? Do the 3 of you communicate routinely? If not, why not?

Ms. Quinn confirmed that she receives the Board of Selectmen Agendas and back-up materials prior to the meetings and at the same time as the other Board members. Mr. Smith confirmed that the Board members routinely communicate.

4. Question submitted by R. Gross, M.D.: Since the EH Revitalization committee can meet in the office building, can the Agriculture Commission meet in the town office building as well, since that Commission is only 5 people?

Mr. Smith confirmed that any Town Board or Commission can meet at the Municipal Office Complex as long as there are no more than 10 attendees. He suggested Dr. Gross contact Ms. Zemienieski who can explain the process for reserving meeting space.

5. Questions submitted by R. Gross, M.D.:
  - a. The cost of the open space you are proposing to buy, is ~\$320,000. How does that compare to the parcel of land that is for sale at or around the East Haddam airport? Why not apply for a grant for that piece of land as well or just pass on the open space purchase and buy the property on the river?

Mr. Smith reiterated that the Town would probably not get a grant for the Airport property since it will not be designated as Open Space.

- b. What will the revenue stream be if you buy the open space as opposed to the possible revenue stream the town would receive from development of the waterfront property, if bought and developed as a part of the East Haddam Village Revitalization program?

The Board noted that the Airport property would most likely generate more revenue for the Town than the Open Space parcel since Open Space is more restrictive in its use. Mr. Smith reiterated that he is establishing a Committee to consider the purchase of the East Haddam Airport property and their research will include the potential for a revenue stream.

- c. Have Ms. Haines, Mr. Kasner and the EDC been involved in the decisions regarding the purchase of the open space vs. the waterfront property?

Mr. Smith advised that Economic Development Administrator Haines and EDC Chairman Casner have not been involved in any discussions regarding the purchase of the Open Space parcel vs. the Airport; however, he anticipates the Committee that is being set-up to consider the purchase of the Airport property will reach out to EDC as well as other Town Boards, Commissions and Departments during their due diligence process.

- 6. Comment submitted by R. Gross, M.D.: My questions are echoed by Ms. Quinn and I agree with her comments. Remember that the townspeople should be asked by this Board of Selectmen to consider THE BEST option, not multiple options to choose from. You are the “experts” and you are responsible for running the town and you should, therefore, make the best recommendation, and not a multiple choice option.

Mr. Smith noted Dr. Gross’ comment; however, he stated that the situation does not call for an “either/or decision” regarding the two properties.

- 7. Comment submitted by R. Gross, M.D.: Ms. Govert is not correct. Contact tracing is done, or should be done, for every case! HIPPA does NOT prevent contact tracing.
- 8. Comment submitted by R. Gross, M.D.: Thank you for answering my questions and for the education that you have provided to me!

- 10. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Quinn, seconded by Ms. Govert, to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,  
Theresa Govert, Secretary