East Haddam Economic Development Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
April 23, 2025

Attending: R. Casner, W. McEnery, D. Merrick, M. Robidoux, H. Scully, R. Scully
Absent: R. Parady, J. Stone
Guests: Economic Development Administrator Lauren Pszczolkowski

1. Call to order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

2. Attendance – Mr. Casner sat Mr. Scully for Ms. Stone.

3. Approval of Minutes – Special Meeting of February 20, 2025

   Mr. Casner called the Board's attention to the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 20, 2024. He noted a typographical error in the minutes under the Old Business – Sub-Committee Reports agenda item b. incorrectly referenced Route 82 as Route 8 and should be corrected.

   MOTION MADE BY MR. MCENERY, SECONDED BY MR. ROBIDOUX, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 20, 2025 AS AMENDED. MR. MERRICK, MR. SCULLY, AND MS. SCULLY ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE AND THE MOTION PASSED BY A MAJORITY OF AYES.

4. Old Business

   A. EDC Chairman Update – Mr. Casner advised that he had received the bill for East Haddam's participation in the joint meeting with Chester.

      MOTION MADE BY MR. MCENERY, SECONDED BY MR. SCULLY, TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF $200.00 TO COURTNEY HENDRISON FOR THE JANUARY 15, 2025 CHESTER EDC SEMINAR. UNANIMOUS AYE.

      There was a general discussion about the content of the joint meeting and the potential for East Haddam to host the next seminar. The Board members also discussed how to encourage new business investment in the Town.

   B. Economic Development Administrator Report – Ms. Pszczolkowski reported the following:

      - The first East Haddam Heritage Market will occur on May 7th. To date 29 vendors are participating in that market. She advised that a food truck will participate, she has scheduled music for the event and purchased promotional tote bags as giveaways. The Market will be held on the first Wednesday of every month through September.

There was a general discussion regarding plans for a permanent Farmers Market on the corner of Daniels Road and Town Street.

- She collaborated with the Fire Department on the Town's Easter Egg Hunt and it went very well.

- She will be collaborating with the Rathbun Library on the October 18th Halloween in the Village event.

- Christmas in the Village is planned for December 2nd.

Ms. Pszczolkowski asked the Board members to see her after the meeting so that she can provide them with more Business Guides. Mr. Casner noted that the Guides need to be updated and he would like to the new versions printed by July 1st.

C. Sub-Committee Reports

a. EDC/PZC – Moodus Development Plan – Parking Regulations – Mr. Casner distributed materials regarding this agenda item. He advised that the Town had hired a consultant to poll citizens about what kind of improvements they'd like to see in Moodus Center. He stated that the two primary topics raised were traffic concerns and the need for access to a sewer system and public water. Mr. Casner stated that there will be a Public Hearing in May to get feedback on the project and he encouraged the Commissioners to attend.

b. Route 8 Bike Path/Zoning Uses in the Area – Mr. Casner advised that Freeman Companies is currently mapping out plans for the bike path and stated that he anticipates that there will be a Public Hearing on this project in June.

i. Overlay Zone Regulations – Mr. Casner distributed materials containing the Planning & Zoning Commission's updates to the proposed Overlay Zone regulations, including the allowable uses. He stated that the Town would like to market the area as a central business district and he would like EDC to think about potential names for the district.

He asked the Board to review the updated list of allowable uses for the south Town Street area and consider whether or not to include the existing commercial area in the new district.

MOTION MADE BY MR. SCULLY, SECONDED BY MR. MERRICK, TO CONTINUE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION'S COLLABORATION WITH THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION ON THIS PROJECT. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Mr. Casner advised that he will inform P&Z that EDC agrees that the regulations are moving in the right direction.

D. East Haddam Business Association Update – Mr. Robidoux advised that there has been significant attrition in the membership of the Business Association and they are discussing dissolution. Mr. Casner stated that this item would be removed from the agenda going forward.

E. Black Birch Golf Course – Mr. Casner reported that the interested parties met earlier this month and negotiations are continuing. Mr. McEnery suggested EDC draft a fact sheet, including financial information, about the benefits of a municipal golf course. He stated that the fact sheet would be helpful for marketing purposes if the project moves forward.

In response to a question from Mr. Casner, Mr. Robidoux reported that the recent Middlesex Economic Development Consortium meeting was quiet. He reiterated information about the presentation by the Portland developer from the previous Consortium meeting. Mr. Robidoux advised that the meetings are held regularly on the 3rd Tuesday of each month and stated he would distribute the notice of the next meeting to the Board members.

There was a general discussion about the Westbrook redevelopment project at the site of the old outlet mall.

Mr. Robidoux stated that the RiverCog hosts monthly meetings that are very information and good networking opportunities. He stated that he will send the Commissioners the details for the meetings.

5. New Business

A. Tax Incentive Program – Society Hall – Mr. Casner stated that he had received a tax incentive application from the owner of Society Hall. He noted that the project had been completed at a cost of $700k and the owner has applied for a two-year tax abatement which, if approved, would provide an 80% reduction in his taxes the first year and 70% reduction the second year. Ms. Pszczolkowski stated that she had seen a For Sale sign in front of the property; however, Mr. Casner advised that he does not believe the property is on the market.

MOTION MADE BY MR. ROBIDOUX, SECONDED BY MR. SCULLY, TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND THE BOARD OF FINANCE THAT, CONTINGENT ON THE PROPERTY NOT BE UP FOR SALE, MR. ALLEN JACOBS' TAX INCENTIVE APPLICATION FOR 23 MAIN STREET BE APPROVED. UNANIMOUS AYE.

B. Business(es) of the Month – In addition to the Home Town Market in Moodus and the Ald Auto Repair, also in Moodus, were recommended for the Business of the Month recognitions.

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment raised at the meeting.

7. Open Discussion – EDC Commissioners

   Ms. Pszczolkowski requested the Commissioners' assistance with moving the Christmas stars to storage in the Old Town Office Building.

8. Adjournment

   MOTION MADE BY MR. SCULLY, SECONDED MR. MERRICK, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. UNANIMOUS AYE.

   There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

   Respectfully Submitted,
   /s/
   Sharon Wheeler
   Recording Secretary