EAST HADDAM PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX – 1 PLAINS ROAD – MEETING ROOM #1 & 2

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 13, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called order at 7:15 p.m.

2. ATTENDANCE
PRESENT: Crary Brownell (Chairman), Bernard Gillis (Regular Member), Richard Pettinelli (Regular Member), Deborah Langdon (Regular Member), Toni Dumaine (Regular Member), Susan Kinsman (Alternate Member),

ABSENT: Jim Curtin (Vice Chairman), Ed Gubbins (Regular Member), and Stephen Lohmeyer (Alternate Member).

Ms. Kinsman was seated for Mr. Gubbins.

3. MINUTES

Minutes of April 22, 2025 approved with amendments and unanimously passed.
-Page 2, first and third motion, remove Ms. Kinsman and replace with Ms. Dumaine.

-Page 1, 5. Discussion, it was asked by Ms. Langdon to remove "SLR Presentation" but it cannot be because it is listed this way on the Agenda.

4. BILLS unanimously approved.
Jacobson invoice for Lake Haywood Preserve review of roadway for $1,259.

Jacobson invoices for Morgan Estates Subdivision for $704.04.

Jacobson invoices for Morgan Estates Subdivision for $130.99.

5. SITE PLAN REVIEW

A. Application PZC#25-08 – Triangle Drive (property location), Xenia Coutler (applicant & property owner). Map 076, Lot 027. Proposed single family home.

Pat Benjamin, civil engineer, presented a proposal for a new single-family home on a 0.63-acre parcel composed of three lots on Triangle Drive, near the Moodus Reservoir. The two-bedroom, 1,050 sq. ft. home with a one-car garage, approved by the health district, includes a septic system and rain garden for stormwater management. He reviewed the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission (IWWC) approval, which included buffer plantings along the lake and wetland areas. The properties edge is

located above the FEMA 100-year flood elevation, meets all zoning and setback requirements, and the lots will need to be combined into a single parcel before construction.

Mr. Gillis stated that he knows the applicants but can remain objective in making a decision. Ms. Langdon noted that she lives on the Moodus Reservoir but can also remain objective in her decision-making.

There was discussion about the rain garden's ability to handle overflow during heavy rainfall. Mr. Benjamin explained that while the garden is sized for two inches of rain, it is constructed in sandy, well-draining soil and would likely handle up to four inches before overflowing. In extreme weather or when the ground is frozen, overflow may occur into the lake, but since it only handles clean roof water, it is compliant with state standards. Suggestions were made regarding maintaining a level downhill edge and considering a buried curb to prevent erosion. The rain garden will be lined with mulch and planted with sweet pepperbush, as recommended by the soil scientist for durability and effectiveness.

Mr. Ventres read two letters into the record. The first, from the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, stating that the application to construct a new residential home was approved, with the condition that shoreline planting plans be added and reviewed by the Land Use Administrator. The second, from Chatham Health District dated May 6, 2025, confirmed that the septic design for 27 Triangle Drive, prepared by Patrick Benjamin and last revised April 16, 2025, complies with the Connecticut Public Health Code and the district's review policies.

Public Comment:

Joanne Courtney Clark, a neighbor, questioned why she was notified about the project and what her role was in the process. Mr. Ventres explained that notifications are required by state statute for abutting property owners, allowing them to review plans and raise concerns. Ms. Clark expressed concern about the small lot size and proximity to the lake and wetlands but acknowledged the commission's expertise in approving such projects and thanked them for the clarification.

The commission members raised concerns about the new septic technology, particularly its suitability given the proximity to wetlands and the FEMA flood line. Mr. Benjamin clarified that the property is not entirely wet and that the area around the septic system is primarily sand and gravel. Groundwater was found at 56 inches, and the septic system would be installed 24 inches above the groundwater level. The system uses a geomatrix by GST and a small air system to help denitrify the effluent, which is more effective than traditional methods.

In response to concerns about potential system failure, Mr. Benjamin assured the commission that an alarm would go off if the air compressor stops working, and the system is regularly used on commercial sites. The septic system design was tailored to the lot size and setbacks to avoid excessive visibility from neighboring properties.

The commission also discussed the merger of three lots and agreed that the merging process could be handled concurrently with the approval. Mr. Benjamin confirmed that the necessary deeds would be filed with the land records, and it was suggested this merger should be a condition of approval.

There was a motion to close the public hearing and unanimously passed.

Motion by Mr. Pettinelli to approve Application PZC#25-08 – Triangle Drive (property location), Xenia Coutler (applicant & property owner). Map 076, Lot 027. Proposed single-family home, including merging the lots and with the condition that they meet the Inland Wetlands and Chatham Health District requirements. Second by Mr. Gillis and unanimously approved.

A. Moodus Master Plan – SLR Presentation
There were no updates.

B. Beebe Road/Scenic Road
Mr. Ventres updated the commission on the Beebe Road project, noting that he will meet with the Public Works Department and Jacobson and Associates next Monday to discuss project details, including the timing and a potential drawdown of the Reservoir. The state raised concerns about downstream drainage, requiring an assessment, despite previous reservoir drawdowns without one. The project also includes replacing two failing culverts with 50% state funding, and the guardrails must be updated to meet state requirements. Traffic is light, and reconfiguring the guardrails should not disrupt parking for fishing.

6. **LANDUSE ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS**
Nothing new to report.

Mr. Brownell announced that he had received a letter from Mr. Gubbins, who will be resigning from the commission at the end of May. He recommended that, starting June 1st, Susan Kinsman take Mr. Gubbins' spot, as both he and Ms. Kinsman are Democrats. The commission agreed, and the recommendation will be sent to the selectman's office.

7. **ADJOURNMENT –Motion by Mr. Pettinelli at 7:45 to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Dumaine and unanimously passed.**

Respectfully submitted,
E. Ruth Ziobron