East Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission
Land Use Office

Regular Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Brownell called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

2. COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Crary Brownell (Chairman), James Curtin (Vice Chairman), Richard Pettinelli (Secretary), Bernard Gillis, Debbie Langdon, Toni Dumaine, Susan Kinsman

   COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

   OTHERS PRESENT: Jim Ventres, Keith Coppins, Steve Longobardi, Doug Roberts, Robert Antonelli, Craig Mansfield, Bob Casner - EDC

3. MINUTES - October 14, 2025, minutes were accepted as amended.

   Section 5A, change the name from Shanani to Shahani
   Section 5A Clarification that the application 25-17 is a special exception review
   Section 5B update the first sentence to read "commission *was presented* with preliminary diagram"
   Ms. Kinsman asked for the link to be provided where the documents are posted.

4. BILLS

   Halloran and Sage for $260, to address questions related to direction of the tower.

   A motion was made by Mr. Gillis to pay the bill as presented. Seconded by Mr. Pettinelli and unanimously approved.

5. HOME OCCUPATION APPLICATION
   A. Application PZC #25-19 257 Tater Hill Road (property location), Caitlin Taylor (applicant & property owner). Map 031, Lot 065. Proposed home occupation for home office / architectural consulting & design.

      Mr. Ventres outlined the application. It is for the owner to be able to work from home as a sub-contractor with no visitors. The owner noted she must have approval from the P&Z for an official home office, or the bank will not cash any of her pay checks. There is parking available and if in the future, her circumstances change, she will need to come before the P&Z according to outlined regulations.

      A motion to approve the application was made by Mr. Pettinelli for Application PZC #25-19 257 Tater Hill Road (property location), Caitlin Taylor (applicant & property owner). Map 031, Lot 065. Proposed home occupation for home office / architectural consulting & design. Seconded by Mr. Curtin and unanimously approved.

Motion by Mr. Brownell to change the order of the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Curtin and unanimously approved.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Moodus Master Plan - Regulation Review
Mr. Brownell opened up discussion on the plan. Mr. Ventres provided an update on the zones and the rationale related to the proposed changes. The main commercial center remains untouched. The W.F. Palmer now goes almost the full length of the district. Plains Road goes the full length of the district now. There was discussion related to the middle district (orange zone on the map being reviewed). The goal of outlining the zones is to ensure everyone understands them and what is in and out of scope for the regulations. Discussion ensued related to including a few single-family homes in the zones and if that makes the most sense or not. The single-family homes would be grandfathered in and so could continue to be sold and kept as single-family homes. Including the residential homes could be considered a non-conforming use unless it is explicitly called out allowing residential use. The commission needs to review the usages and the zones for further discussion.

B. East Haddam Land Trust – CT DEEP Trails Grant Endorsement – Golet Farm Preserve
Mr. Ventres outlined that EHLT is looking for a letter of endorsement to apply for a grant to connect the senior center to one of its existing properties across the street. The goal is to build a trail starting at Great Hillwood Road, which would require creating a crosswalk with signage across the road to the Golet Farm Preserve. The trail will continue to an existing viewing platform on a forested pond.

A motion by Mr. Curtin to authorize Mr. Ventres to write a letter supporting a grant for the EHLT to build the trail from the Senior Center to the Golet Farm Preserve. Seconded by Mr. Gillis and unanimously approved. Mr. Brownell asked Mr. Ventres to circulate the letter for review to the Commission.

7. LAND USE ADMINISTRATOR REPORT – Nothing new to report

Mr. Ventres provided an updated Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission field walk agenda schedule which starts at Beebe Road.

A motion was made by Mr. Brownell for a 5-minute recess. Seconded by Mr. Curtin and unanimously approved.

8. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Application PZC #25-17 - 416 East Haddam – Moodus Road (property location) Shahani Inc (applicant & property owner) Map 64, Lot 64. Special Exception Review Reconstruction of an existing gas station / convenience store with a drive-through window.

Mr. Ventres found out that the certificate of mailings had not been submitted in time. The applicant requested to withdraw the application and resubmit it for consideration at an upcoming meeting in December.

A motion was made by Mr. Pettinelli to accept the withdrawal of Application PZC #25-17 - 416 East Haddam – Moodus Road (property location) Shahani Inc (applicant & property owner) Map 64, Lot 64 Reconstruction of an existing gas station / convenience store with a drive-through window and reschedule a public hearing for December 9, 2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. Curtin and passed by unanimous vote.

B. Application PZC #25-18 - 440 Town Street (property location – East Haddam Firehouse) Town of East Haddam (applicant &property owner) CGS 8-24 Review of a proposed replacement of an existing tower with a 150-foot monopole emergency services tower. Map 37, Lot 66.

Mr. Coppins provided an update on the project and his architect, Mr. Roberts, also joined the discussion. The goal is to improve emergency services by placing an appropriately sized tower and then work with cellphone carriers to use the same tower to improve cellphone coverage throughout the town. The Town would receive rent from the tower and Mr. Coppins noted that the tower would be marketed to cell phone providers. There is currently a 60-foot tower that would be replaced with a 150-foot tower.

Mr. Ventres outlined the Selectmen and Board of Finance are considering entering into a contract and as this is a public improvement project, it is under the jurisdiction of P&Z and requires their review and approval under Connecticut General Statutes 8-24 before a contract is considered for signature. Mr. Ventres read into the record a letter from the Town attorney related to the tower and the Siting Council and if they get involved in the application. The Siting Tower attorney noted any time there is a wireless carrier to collocate with the tower, the Siting Council would need to get involved. Mr. Coppins noted that in prior experiences in other towns, the carriers would submit an application to the Siting Council, so the town would not have to submit this. The Siting Council's role is to confirm the structure is structurally sound as well as be aware of these types of projects across the state. There is no precedence for a collocation application being rejected.

Mr. Coppins outlined the tower would be fenced, gated and locked. The conduit would be run at the company's cost to install lines from where they currently are to the new tower. There is also an option to move the equipment near/next to the tower if desired. Power will be run to the site. Mr. Roberts outlined that when there is a water course or stream nearby, the carriers are offered a backup power option like propane which is more environmentally friendly. No existing infrastructure at the fire house will be changed or touched. Discussion ensued related to generator installation/usage for an emergency; the new model is that carriers each install their own generators. The towers on Ballek's barn will not be removed at this point. AT&T is the only carrier using that location. There is a desire for more coverage in that section of town. Mr. Roberts typically designs the towers to be able to be easily modified to address code changes that occur. Discussion ensued related to the size of the fenced in area. Mr. Coppins noted that a certain amount of space will be leased and if there is a need for more space in the future, contractually the request would need to come before the Town to expand the space. A view shed analysis will be done.

The application may also need to go before Planning and Zoning Commission as a full Special Exception review once final plans are developed.

The application for review by P&Z is related to the desire to enter into a contract with the Town; there are additional pieces of information needed before the full application can be submitted and reviewed by P&Z. The application before P&Z right now involves a review of

the Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Ventres outlined the areas of the Plan of Conservation and Development that relates to the application. Ms. Kinsman asked for clarification related to if an analysis was completed related to the minimum size of the tower. She raised the point that this tower will be very close to Ballek's, which is a Heritage Farm and very close to a historic district. Mr. Coppins noted that none of the assessments and reports have been made as the first step is to sign a contract with the Town. Once the contract is signed then the various reports and studies will be done.

Mr. Brownell opened the Public Hearing to the public for comments.

Mr. Casner from the Economic Development Commission outlined that this is a very good opportunity to expand cell phone coverage. He also outlined that this is a good idea for the Town as it provides a revenue stream and the Town has the ability to manage and support something for the public good.

Mr. Mansfield from East Haddam Emergency Management outlined that clearly from a cell phone advantage, it will help provide emergency personnel with much better coverage. The conduits out to the existing tower have collapsed and this application would address the infrastructure problems on the existing tower. This option provides the opportunity to communicate out during a catastrophic failure, like Superstorm Sandy, and the increased height would be a huge win for coverage – it would fill in existing gaps in coverage today and enable emergency providers the ability to stay in better/constant communication.
He also noted there are no plans to change anything at the Municipal Office Building regarding this application.

Mr. Ventres noted that the commission needs to confirm the application meets the requirements of the Plan of Conservation and Development, and that there is a need for a historic district review.

Additional conversation commenced related to camouflaging/screening the tower and the ability to do that. Mr. Roberts provided a perspective on adding trees to the site to block the base. Screening will be discussed further as the application advances and a site plan review is completed.
A motion by Mr. Pettinelli to close the public hearing. Seconded by Ms. Kinsman and unanimously approved.

A motion by Mr. Pettinelli that there is a finding that Application PZC #25-18 - 440 Town Street (property location – East Haddam Firehouse) Town of East Haddam (applicant &property owner) CGS 8-24 Review of a proposed replacement of an existing tower with a 150-foot monopole emergency services tower. Map 37, Lot 66, fits the Plan of Conservation and Development. Seconded by Mr. Curtin and unanimously approved.

9. ADJOURNMENT
A motion was made by Mr. Pettinelli to adjourn at 8:20pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Curtin and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted, Shannon A. Goyette - Recording Secretary