East Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission
Land Use Office
Regular Meeting Minutes May 26, 2026

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, Bernard Gillis, Susan Kinsman, Deborah Langdon, D. Duncan Orr, Eric Chamberland, and Gary Turenne. Mr. Brownell appointed Mr. Orr to fill in for Maureen Pierson as a voting member.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Maureen Pierson
OTHERS PRESENT: James Ventres LUA, Moodus Firehouse Building Committee members Craig Mansfield, Kevin Rutty, Edward Blaschik, Brad Park. Silver Petrucelli: Eric Cantar, Nancy Levesque, David Stein. Downes Construction: Nicole DeMaio, Scott Scholl.
Bob Casner

3) MINUTES – The May 12, 2026, minutes were approved as presented.

4) BILLS – Mr. Ventres presented bills for $40 and $120 for Halloran & Sage legal fees.

Motion to approve paying the bills was made by Mr. Curtin, seconded by Mr. Pettinelli. Approved unanimously.

Mr. Brownell asked to change the order of business to move Discussion ahead of Home Occupations.

Mr. Pettinelli made a motion to change the order of business. Mr. Curtin seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

5) DISCUSSION

a. House Bill 8002: Mr. Ventres said that Bill 8002 was discussed at the last meeting. Ms. Kinsman recommended that the members read the bill and understand how it could impact our town's zoning authority. We have an option to participate in a regional housing plan or develop our own. If we create our own plan, we can

customize it to fit our needs. Mr. Brownell expressed his concern regarding the possible imposition of state-wide zoning regulations.

b. Moodus Master plan: Mr. Ventres is looking it over. Mr. Pettinelli commented on the state and local roads and how they affect the kinds of businesses that can be approved in certain locations. The discussion will continue at a future meeting.

c. Limited Car Sales in the IG-1 zone: there was a very brief discussion which will be continued at a future meeting.

6) HOME OCCUPATIONS

Application #26-04 84 Falls Rd, Map 65, Lot 099, John Gagnon, property owner. Online only kitchenware retail shop

The application was tabled until the certificates of mailings are received.

7) PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Brownell called the Public Hearing to order at 7:45 pm. Mr. Pettinelli read the application as follows: Application #26-1 44 WM F Palmer Rd, Map 65, lot 138, East Haddam Fire Department, construction for new firehouse and demolition of the existing building. CGS 8-24 Review – Public Improvement, Continued

Craig Mansfield, Chairman of the Moodus Firehouse Building Committee, spoke about the project. He watched the video of the previous Planning and Zoning Commission meeting and is familiar with their concerns. Mr. Mansfield explained that the Moodus Firehouse Renovation Committee met for over a year. They consulted structural engineers and did a needs assessment with the fire department to determine the feasibility of renovating the building to meet the current and future needs of the fire department and emergency services. It became clear that, due to a combination of new building codes for Emergency Services buildings, changes in fire fighter health and safety requirements, and the structural condition and size of the building, renovating it was not practical. The committee reported these findings to the Board of Selectmen and, at a town meeting in 2025, the formation of the Moodus Firehouse Building Committee was created, and the Committee was charged with the demolition of the current Moodus Firehouse and the building of a new one on the same site.

Mr. Mansfield noted that the renovation committee considered other locations in Moodus and other parts of town but determined that the current Moodus location was the best one.

David Stein, Nancy Levesque, and Eric Cantar, of Silver Petrucelli, presented the plans.

• The new slab on grade 14,475 square foot firehouse will consist of two separate areas to meet OSHA standards.

• One area, with 5 bays, will house the apparatus (fire trucks, ambulances, equipment storage, decontamination area, etc.)

• The other area will contain offices, training rooms, living quarters including bedrooms, bathrooms, a kitchen, and laundry.

• All upgrades are required by the new building and safety codes – separate ventilation systems for the apparatus and living quarters, decontamination areas, underground water storage tanks, etc.

• The steel framed building will be clad in fiber cement board and batten siding on a masonry base, with an asphalt shingle roof.

• Windows will be double-paned and energy-efficient

• The building requires a new well and septic system. The parking area will be expanded and the vehicle entrance and exits improved.

• The building has been designed to meet the anticipated needs of the fire department, emergency services, and the town for the next 50 years.

There was a lengthy discussion about the proposed plan. Ms. Kinsman stated her concern that it would adversely affect the Moodus Center Master Plan to create a more walkable and attractive neighborhood. Mr. Stein mentioned that the driveway is a short one, so the trucks will not be speeding on it, the plan includes sidewalks, and the entrances and exits to the firehouse site have been improved.

Mr. Mansfield said that the firefighters are in favor of keeping the same location in Moodus, that at least one third of the calls they get are from either Chestelm or the Moodus senior

housing complex. If the firehouse was moved from its current location, it could cause a rise in insurance rates for homeowners in the area because insurance companies consider the distance from a firehouse when they insure homes and other buildings. One reason the town maintains the Haywardville fire house is to keep fire equipment in that area for insurance purposes. Financing the project was discussed. It is expected to cost over $15 million, and the Committee is looking for grant and loan programs to help pay for it. A Bonding application has been submitted, but the main cost will be paid by taxpayers. The cost per square foot is comparable to other similar firehouses recently built in Connecticut. East Haddam does not have public utilities such as water or sewer, and that increased the costs.

Mr. Pettinelli commented that the timing is important, and we need a new firehouse ASAP.

Mr. Brownell stated that he wished the Planning and Zoning Commission had been included in the decision to build a new firehouse. Mr. Ventres commented that the plan fits the town's Plan of Conservation and Development and does not involve a change of use or exceed the zoning regulations for lot coverage.

Mr. Mansfield said there will be a public hearing tomorrow night, then the plan will be sent to the Board of Selectmen, and the Board of Finance, then it will be presented at a town meeting, and a referendum will be held in September. He stated that he is willing to work with the Planning and Zoning Commission, and others, to address their concerns.

The hearing was opened to public comment. Bob Casner, a property owner and resident, said he does not like the location, it is at a busy intersection, and he would like to have the project sent back to the Board of Selectmen to be reconsidered.

Mr. Pettinelli made the motion to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. Curtin and approved unanimously.

The commission members continued the discussion.

Motion by Mr. Curtin to approve the plan, as it provides a qualifying facility and enhances the safety and welfare of the public and volunteers in accordance with the Plan of Conservation and Development. Seconded by Mr. Gillis. Motion passed unanimously.

8) LAND USE ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Ventres reported that he sent letters to people who are collecting junk and abandoned vehicles and is starting to get calls back from them.

9) ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Pettinelli, seconded by Mr. Curtin, to adjourn at 9:11pm. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Hansen
Recording Secretary