

**Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
August 2, 2007**

Attending: M. Gionta, D. Mathiasen; R. Scherrer; D. Sloan; P. Stricker
Guests: J. Ventres

Mr. Scherrer called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

MINUTES

The minutes of the July 11th meeting were reviewed.

MR. SLOAN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE JULY 11, 2007 MEETING MINUTES. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. MATHIASEN AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Guest: Jim Ventres, Land Use Administrator – Discussion of items of mutual interest for EDC and Land Use Office

Mr. Scherrer welcomed Mr. Ventres to the meeting. He noted that, in many respects, the work of EDC and the Land Use Office are closely aligned and he thought it would be useful to get Mr. Ventres insights on some of the Town's major development projects. He also noted that the Commissioners do not always hear about new projects until there is a problem and he would prefer EDC's efforts to be more pro-active. Mr. Ventres thanked the Commissioners for their invitation and stated that many potential developers come through his office and it is not always immediate clear which ones will follow through with their proposals. He stated he would advise EDC of valid projects as soon as a developer authorizes him to do so. Mr. Ventres and the Commissioners discussed the projects identified under Old Business and other business updates.

OLD BUSINESS

Project Status Reports

1. Goodspeed Properties

Mr. Ventres stated that pertinent Town Boards and Commissions are looking forward to working with the Theater on its actor housing project but most have not yet received sufficient information to provide much guidance. He noted that representatives from the Goodspeed have met with the Historic District Commission which did offer them some direction. Mr. Ventres also stated that he expects the Goodspeed will provide architectural renderings in the early fall.

2. Town Office Site

In response to a question from Mr. Scherrer, Mr. Ventres stated that he had reviewed Kenneth Simon's "Nathan's Landing" proposal for the Town Office Site Re-Use. He advised that he had also talked with Mr. Simon about parking issues in the Village

Mr. Scherrer expressed his disappointment that EDC has not received more proposals for the site and Mr. Ventres stated that he has discussed the site with a number of developers and one, in particular, had indicated the project would be more appealing if the Goodspeed and Town Office Site Re-Use development projects can be combined. EDC has stated all along that the two projects need to be combined as all agreed that the additional sq. footage provided by combining the two projects had a better chance of attracting more developers. There was a general discussion regarding the impact of the conversion of the current Middle School to Town offices on initiating development of the Town Office Site.

3. Johnsonville

Mr. Ventres recapped several of the problems that have prevented this project from moving forward including septic and architectural design issues. He advised that the developer, MJB, has retained a new engineering firm but noted that he has not met with any representatives of the new firm.

He also advised that the developer of Peddler's Village in Pennsylvania, Dominick Donofrio, is considering working with MJB to operate several aspects of Johnsonville and noted that Mr. Donofrio is considering the project as one of a tourist attraction. He has indicated that, in addition to day-tourism, Mr. Donofrio expects to book weddings, craft fairs, and other similar events. He noted that Mr. Donofrio plans to move into the main house for the duration of the renovation work at the site.

Mr. Ventres advised that Mr. Donofrio has expressed an interest in meeting with EDC and Mr. Scherrer requested that Mr. Ventres provide Mr. Donofrio with his contact information.

4. Banner Lodge

Mr. Ventres stated that he feels this project is moving along satisfactorily. He advised that 30 units have been completed, approximately 26 sold, and another 30 are under construction. In response to a question from Ms. Mathiasen, Mr. Ventres stated that he feels the developer and the Town were working collaboratively on this project. He noted that, after the original 86 units are completed, he expects the developer will focus on upgrading the golf course.

In response to a question from Ms. Stricker, Mr. Ventres advised that the Building Inspector spends approximately 20% of his time on this project and visits the site 2-3 times per week. Mr. Stricker expressed concern about whether or not the Building Inspector will have sufficient time to devote to the Goodspeed and Johnsonville projects once they begin. Mr. Ventres felt that, because there has been a slow down on the construction of individual residential properties and because Banner will be focusing on the golf course after the initial 86 units are completed, the Inspector should be able to manage the additional projects.

5. Other Business Updates

Ms. Mathiasen inquired about the status of the Klarcrest camp project. Mr. Ventres advised that the project is moving forward and he expects it to receive approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission at the next meeting. Septic improvements and cottage renovations will need to be completed before occupancy can occur. He also noted that he expects the venture will be a non-profit enterprise. He agreed to provide Ms. Mathiasen with contact information.

In response to several questions raised by Ms. Stricker, Mr. Ventres advised the following:

- Sunrise Resort – the owners are currently considering their options for this property but contrary to the July 11, 2007 minutes, they are not closing at the end of this season.
- Shadybrook – the owners hired an appraiser to assess the value of the property and it appears that their purchase price may have exceeded the property's value. He expects the site will be used for a camp or a residential development.
- Brownell – He has not heard of any interest in the property. He noted that the ability to provide adequate septic could be a limiting factor for a residential development and he was uncertain as to the status of environmental clean-up of the site.

Mr. Ventres provided the EDC members with revisions of the Economic development section of the Plan of Conservation and Development. He advised that he will be sending out updated versions of the draft and holding meetings to discuss the draft on August 23rd and 30th. He asked the Commissioners to provide him with their feedback after they've had time to review it.

Ms. Mathiasen reported that the Town Office Site Re-Use project was mentioned in an article by the Hartford Courant in its report on the July 31st Town Meeting to authorize a building committee to convert the Middle School to a Town Office .

Events/Tourism

1. Website

Ms. Mathiasen reported that, at this time, there is nothing new to report regarding updates to the website. She and Ms. Stricker agreed to get together after the meeting to schedule work time on the website.

2. Town Graphics Brochure and Banner

Ms. Mathiasen reported that 250 copies of the final Town Graphic map had been delivered to EDC, however, she had not yet received the vinyl banner. There was a general discussion about how to distribute the maps and if reprints would be available. The issue was not resolved, however, and the Commissioners agreed to give it further consideration at their next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1. EDC Member – New Applications through September

Mr. Robert Casner submitted an application.

2. Mail received

Ms. Mathiasen advised that she had received notice that the 8-Mile Scenic River designation had been approved by the House and needed to go before the Senate for final approval.

3. Other

Mr. Scherrer thanked Ms. Sticker and Mr. Gionta for all of the time and effort they put into the process of recruiting and screening applicants for the Economic Development Coordinator position. He acknowledged that a significant investment of their time and energies went into the process and he wanted them to know that he and the other Commissioners appreciated their efforts.

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO DISCUSS, MR. SLOAN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING TO AN EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE APPLICATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The regular meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Wheeler
Recording Secretary

MR. GIONTA MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:49 P.M. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MS. MATHIASEN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION BASED ON THE DISCUSSION DURING THE EXECUTIVE SESSION. "Resolved that the East Haddam Economic Development Commission make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen to offer Melissa Ziobron the part-time, contract position of Economic Development Coordinator as outlined in the approved job description ." THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO DISCUSS, MS. MATHIASEN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. GIONTA AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.