

**Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
October 4, 2007**

Attending: R. Casner; D. Mathiasen; R. Scherrer; D. Sloan; P. Stricker , M. Ziobron (ED Coordinator)
Guests: L. Williams (Burgundy Books); H. Kittner; D. McMahon (Goodspeed); Ken Simon (Simon Pure Productions)

Mr. Scherrer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed Mr. Casner as a new Commissioner. Mr. Scherrer stated that he is looking forward to Mr. Casner's contributions to the goals of EDC and discussed some of the roles and responsibilities of the Commissioners.

MINUTES

The minutes of the September 6th meeting were reviewed.

MS. STRICKER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 6, 2007 MEETING MINUTES. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. MATHIASEN AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Scherrer reported that Mr. Dominick Donofrio, President of Windstar Companies was unable to attend tonight's meeting but stated that he would like to attend a future EDC meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Economic Development Coordinator Update

Ms. Ziobron distributed a packet of materials which included her monthly report. She also provided the following information:

- She has drafted a preliminary timeline for the Town Office Site Re-Use project;
- HRP Associates, Inc., created a power-point presentation regarding "Redevelopment of East Haddam Village Center" (copies were included in the materials distributed). Some of the information in the presentation is inaccurate and Ms. Ziobron will schedule a meeting with them to provide them with more complete details.
- She has signed up for a seminar on grant opportunities/writing and is set-up to receive grant alerts via e-mail.
- She met with the Plainfield EDC Coordinator who provided her with additional contacts as well as a list of organizations that could be helpful.
- Mr. Ron Snow and she spoke about potential locations in Moodus for a new restaurant.
- An investor looking for a 4000 sq. ft. facility for a business venture had been in contact.
- The Wolf's Den Campground is sponsoring a Haunted House for their campers on October 13th and opening it up to the public on October 20th. The public event will benefit the Food Bank and Ms. Ziobron offered to coordinate a distribution of fliers about the event at the Town schools.
- Susan's Salon is opening a tea room at the salon.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Scherrer regarding her scheduled meetings with Brownell, Ms. Ziobron advised that she recently met with the owner of Norpro, a generator manufacturer, who informed her of his plans to expand the business. She stated that she told him about the Brownell facility and invited him to join her on the October 10th site tour. Mr. Scherrer indicated he would also like to participate in the Brownell tour.

Ms. Stricker asked about the status of any environmental issues at the Brownell site and Ms. Ziobron reported that the owner has told her that Phases I, II, and III of environmental clean-up was completed and they are in currently in compliance with regulations.

Ms. Ziobron presented a draft timeline for the Town Office Site project. Mr. McMahon noted that the Goodspeed is not yet prepared to commit to the specific dates referenced for their part of the project Ms. Ziobron confirmed that the document is in draft form and noted that she had arrived at the proposed schedule by working backward from the April 2009 date which Goodspeed has identified as the "hoped for" completion date of the actor housing. She noted that in addition to Goodspeed, neither EDC nor the Town has been asked to provide input. It was agreed that the draft timeline not be a part of the public record at this time.

Ms. Mathiasen advised that Ms. Ziobron has joined the CT Economic Development Association (CEDAS). She noted that CEDAS provides a forum for discussion and information exchange on topics of economic development and also sponsors or co-sponsors educational programs, workshops and seminars on best practices, new legislation, downtown development and issues pertaining to the economic development.

Project Status Reports

1. Goodspeed Properties

Mr. McMahon reported that Linda Savitsky and Scott Jezek are moving forward to develop a project plan for the actor housing project and are researching architects and engineers. He noted that the Goodspeed is committed to having the new actor housing available in the spring of 2009.

Mr. Scherrer read a letter that Mr. Price had sent to First Selectmen Parker reiterating the Goodspeed's "*... support of the town's development plans for the East Haddam Village*". Mr. Price's letter also stated that they had identified 5 key properties that will become available once the new housing is built that are either contiguous to or directly across the street from the town office site. The letter further stated, "*We encourage interested developers to consider including these properties with the town site in order to create as large a parcel as possible for development*".

2. Town Office Site

Ms. Mathiasen advised that the USDA grant for the Town Office Site project had been closed out but that there is a balance of slightly less than \$1,000 remaining in the budget which will be allocated for related miscellaneous expenses such as postage for a Town meeting mailing..

In response to a question raised by Mr. Scherrer concerning the status of the site's environmental assessment, Ms. Ziobron referred to the Environmental Site Assessment Brief, dated March 15, 2005, that was included in her packet of materials. She advised that the Town has already taken the appropriate clean-up actions and simply needs to comply with the monitoring requirements of Phase III. She noted that she had supplied Mr. Simon and his partner with the detailed Assessment. Mr. Simon has submitted a preliminary proposal for development of the Town Office site.

3. Johnsonville

Mr. Sloan reported that he had talked with Mr. Donofrio about the Johnsonville project. He stated that Mr. Donofrio expects to have MJB's final sign-off on the agreement in the immediate future. Mr. Sloan advised that Mr. Donofrio is purchasing a portion of the property to create a tourist destination and wedding site with an inn, restaurant, specialty shops, and a good deal of green space. He noted that Mr. Donofrio does not plan to build any residential units on his portion of the property.

Ms. Stricker noted that the CT destination wedding market is currently a very profitable business and pointed to the strong bookings at the Wadsworth Mansion and St. Clemens Castle.

4. Banner

Ms. Stricker reported that she had recently met with Chris Lewis who is the on-site construction manager for the Banner properties. She stated that he told her things are going well and there are a number of closings scheduled. She also advised that the Building Inspector informed her that Banner recently pulled several additional permits.

Mr. Lewis informed Ms. Stricker that Banner continues to experience some delays in scheduling inspections. Mr. Casner noted that the Town's requirement for inspecting electrical conduit and the Inspector's need to physically re-inspect minor modifications and corrections he has requested can be frustrating.

Ms. Mathiasen suggested that the EDC follow-up regarding the meeting with representatives from the Land Use Office, Planning and Zoning Commission, Health and Building Inspector to discuss improvements in the process for businesses and development projects. Ms. Stricker suggested adding the meeting to the draft timeline created by Ms. Ziobron.

5. Other Business Updates

Ms. Ziobron advised that the Weeds building is available for rent, however, there are some zoning restrictions on the type of business tenant allowed. She stated the building is approximately 750 sq. ft. in size and the monthly rent is \$800.

Mr. Sloan reported that he had contacted the Hartford Symphony and was advised that that they are looking to expand their base and would be interested in talking with EDC about potential locations in East Haddam to stage outdoor concerts. There was a general discussion about suitable locations. The Commissioners and Ms. Ziobron discussed the status of the Sunrise Resort. Ms. Ziobron noted that the State is doing an appraisal of the property and the owners recently submitted to Planning and Zoning a plan for a Planned residential Unit Development (PRUD). She advised that she feels the Johnson family wants

to keep all of their options open. Mr. Scherrer asked Ms. Ziobron to keep the Commissioners informed of any additional dates when the Sunrise Resort property is on P&Z's agenda. He also encouraged Mr. Sloan to continue his conversations with the Hartford Symphony.

Mr. Scherrer noted that there are several updates that need to be made to the business signs, including removal of the sign for Bistro by Benigno, and Ms. Stricker agreed to relay the information to Mr. Albuquerque.

Events/Tourism

1. Oct. 13th Eight Mile Riverfest / October 20th Moodus Drum & Fife Parade/Muster

Ms. Mathiasen reported that she had received the banner from Town Graphics and plans to display it at the Eight Mile Riverfest and the Drum & Fife Muster. She noted that she also expects to receive an interactive disk of the map by the end of next week as will the participating businesses. She stated she will review the disk to see if it is appropriate for uploading to the EDC website.

2. Oct. 31st Project Halloween

Ms. Ziobron distributed a list of 19 town businesses that will be participating in EDC's business out-reach at Project Halloween. She advised that the EDC tables will be staffed by herself, Sandy Marks, Ms. Mathiasen, and Mr. Scherrer.

3. Chowder Cookoff/Eagle Festival – February 16th & 17th

Ms. Mathiasen reported that the date for the Chowder Cookoff will be February 16th and Mr. Harris has confirmed that he will coordinate the event again this year. She and Ms. Stricker will set-up a planning meeting with Mr. Harris and report back at the next EDC meeting. There was a general discussion about how to encourage people to spend more time in the Village during the event. It was noted that the music last year helped keep people in town and there was a general discussion about holding some events at the Gelston House's Beer Garden. Ms. Stricker also suggested talking with the Gelston House about setting up a viewing station at their restaurant.

Ms. Mathiasen stated that the Eagle Festival Committee has advised her that they are taking a more regional approach to the Festival's souvenir magazine and she asked the Commissioners to think about what aspects of the Town should be highlighted in EDC's ad this year.

4. Website

Ms. Mathiasen reported that a number of updates to the EDC website's text had been sent to the programmer along with a list of items that she and Ms. Stricker would like to discuss incorporating on the site. She also noted that she is a member of the Town's Website Re-Design Committee, that will meet for the first time at the end of October.

Ms. Ziobron stated that she had spoken with Mr. Ventres about updating the "How to Do Business in East Haddam" brochure that is on EDC's website. She noted that Mr. Ventres advised her that he plans on looking into updating the brochure when he completes his work on the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Mail received

Mr. Scherrer referred to several items that had been received in the mail. In particular, he noted the following:

- A notice of a Public Information Meeting on Thursday, October 25th, at the Grange to discuss CT Department of Transportation work on the bridge over Succor Brook on Route 82. Ms. Stricker stated she would advise Shagbark of the meeting.
- An invitation to the Middlesex Business Expo (dates/location).
- A notice of the wine tasting at LaVita Gustosa sponsored by the Young Professionals Alliance. (dates/location)
- A notice of a Meet & Greet the Town candidates event at the East Haddam Firehouse at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 25th.

Ms. Mathiasen reported that she had received an e-mail inquiring about a notice in the recent Town Newsletter concerning a prohibition against posting signs on the Town greens. She advised she would clarify the Town's position and respond to the e-mail.

2. Other

Mr. Scherrer reported that the East Haddam Garden Club had done some plantings on the Village green. He stated he would talk with them to see if they have any plans to decorate the green for the holidays.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Wheeler
Recording Secretary