Board of Selectmen
Town Office Annex
February 26, 2008
Special Joint Meeting Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Crary Brownell called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. at the Town Grange.

2. ATTENDANCE:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Crary Brownell-Chairman (*regular member*), James Curtin (*regular member*), Bernard Gillis (*alternate*), John Matthew (*regular member*), Kevin Matthews (*alternate*), Harvey Thomas (*regular member*)

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Phillip Barlow (*regular member*), David Hughes (*regular member*), Anthony Saraco (*regular member)*

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Ventres, Mr. Lyman and approximately 40 townspeople

Mr. Brownell appointed Mr. Gillis to vote for Mr. Barlow, and Mr. Matthews to vote for Mr. Saraco this evening.

3. INFORMAL DISCUSSION

A) Goodspeed Opera House Foundation – discussion with:

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission
Historic District Commission
Economic Development Commission
Board of Selectmen

IWWC Chairman Randolph Dill called to order the special meeting. Present were Mary Augustiny, Wendy Goodfriend, Jennifer Burton-Reeve, and Randolph Dill. Bryan Goff and Dan Jahne were absent.

Historic District Chairman Will Brady was the only representative from the HDC present.

EDC Chairman Robert Scherrer called to order the special meeting. Robert Scherrer, Michael Gionta, Deb Mathiasen, and David Sloane were present. Robert Casner and Patty Stricker arrived at 7:20 p.m. Joe Albuquerque was absent.

First Selectman Mark Walter called the BOS special meeting to order, with himself, Emmett Lyman, and Peter Govert in attendance.

Attorney Scott Jezek addressed the Commissions on behalf of the applicant. He explained that they were present for an informal discussion of the project for new actor housing. He thanked all

of the boards and commissions for attending this meeting.

Attorney Jezek explained that the plans were similar to those introduced in 2007, with some modifications. He introduced Ms. Hattie Kittner, general manager of the Goodspeed; Ms. Linda Savitsky, outside consultant and liaison for the State; and Mr. Patrick Pinnell, architect and Town Planner.

Mr. Pinnell began by stating this meeting was to try to get everyone on the same page, and to help East Haddam Village become an even more economically viable place where residents and traffic coming over the bridge can have equal opportunities to stop in East Haddam, spend some money, and go to the Goodspeed Opera House (GOH).

Mr. Pinnell stated the overall idea was to take the multiple properties owned by the Goodspeed, strategically decide which houses were best to put back on the tax rolls, and to accommodate the actors. Their idea was that as new houses with a number of bedrooms and bathrooms were constructed, some of the houses would get put back on the market as mixed-use properties. Mr. Pinnell showed the existing GOH-owned buildings in blue, and the proposed new structures in red. Rather than construct larger dormitory-style buildings, they thought it would be better to have more buildings "salt and peppered" through the village.

Mr. Pinnell explained that their idea would be to have 3-bedroom units, which would be 14-feet wide. There would also be double units, at 28-feet wide. He noted that the small carpenter shop near the post office was 14-feet wide, and the bulk of the other buildings in the village were 22-24 feet wide.

Mr. Pinnell stated that the 14-foot wide cottages would be spaced approximately 14-feet apart. He presented a plan, which he stated he prepared through Photoshop, with a 180-degree view. He presented photographs of the Oak Bluffs section of Martha's Vineyard, where the cottages are 14-feet wide. In addition, he stated that Camp Bethel, across the river, also had similar cottages.

Mr. Pinnell referred to the plan, and stated their proposal was for four units and a garage for staff cars along Creamery Road. On Hem Street, where the path comes down to the rehearsal studio, they planned another six units. There were also nine between the Seraph and the Lawton House on Route 149. The Tech house would be removed.

Mr. Pinnell passed around presentation boards, and stated this was the first pass on the 14ft. and 28ft. wide houses. He noted that people would see some discrepancies between the two, and he stated they wanted these differences. He stressed that these houses would not look like factory housing left over from the 19th Century. The colors, columns, gingerbread, etc. would be varied. The 14-foot wide houses would have 3 bedrooms, while the 28-foot wide houses would have 6 bedrooms upstairs, and large common spaces downstairs.

Mr. Pinnell indicated these houses would be manufactured off-site. They would have to bring in a crane, etc. to set the houses. In the spirit of trying to be as neighborly as possible, he stated they would try to minimize the disruption to the residents.

Mr. Pinnell stated they planned for approximately 50% of the actors to have cars. They would

try to use hardened turf, etc. He stated they were hoping to participate with the renewal of the Mobility Study. He stated what the Goodspeed and the East Haddam Village needed was walkable space, to balance pedestrians with the traffic, so everyone could enjoy the village.

Mr. Pinnell pointed out that they would try to keep the parking out of sight as much as possible.

Mr. Pinnell stated so far this evening, they had talked mostly about hardware. However, they also needed a management strategy. He discussed a rear laneway behind the units, although he anticipated many conversations with the neighbors and commissions on this. He did not anticipate any big surprises, but they believed this was a good time to come forward to see what comments and suggestions the commissions might have.

Attorney Jezek spoke of the timing for the application. He anticipated they should be at the filing process within 60-90 days from now.

Mr. Matthew inquired what the current requirement for actor housing was. Ms. Kittner stated they would increase to 123 bedrooms. She commented that given the un-urban environment, with no hotels, etc., they faced an ongoing issue with the quality of housing. She stated that sharing bathrooms was very difficult. Their shows run 13 weeks, plus 4-5 weeks of rehearsals. Mr. Matthew asked where the 63 current bedrooms were located. Mr. Pinnell showed the locations on the plan that were used. There were none in the house closest to the Goodspeed. Mr. Matthew noted there were many located outside the village, to which Mr. Pinnell responded affirmatively.

Mr. Thomas asked if there were 123 new units. Mr. Pinnell stated there were not 123 new units, there were 123 total bedrooms. Their plan called for 43 new bedrooms. Mr. Thomas asked how many new buildings there would be. Mr. Pinnell stated there were 5 old buildings, 21 new buildings, plus a garage.

Mr. Thomas asked if any thought had been given to phasing, and in what parts of the village. Mr. Pinnell believed the first phase would be the 3 buildings along Succor Brook. The second set would likely be either the 4 along Creamery Road, or the crescent shaped area. The last phase would be the houses up on the hill. He noted that a lot of this phasing would depend on the crane. Attorney Jezek hoped that some of the construction would be completed in 2009.

Mr. Curtin asked the purpose of the garage. Ms. Kittner stated it would potentially be used as a garage for parking, but it would also likely be used for building maintenance, where people could make small repairs, etc.

Mr. Curtin asked if they would be losing bedrooms out of the Tech. building, to which Ms. Kittner responded affirmatively. Mr. Curtin noted then, that they would have to build some of the units before they tore down existing buildings. Ms. Kittner confirmed this.

Mr. Brady-HDC, indicated that in addition to the structures, they would need to know the details for the surfaces, lighting, markers, garage, etc. Mr. Pinnell stated the garage would look like a 20th Century tool shed. Mr. Brady commented that with the exception of Hem Street, most of these units would either fall within the local or federal Historic District Commission. Mr. Pinnell stated they were aware of this, and they were eager to begin working on the project.

Mr. Brady asked if the structures would be built on slabs. Mr. Pinnell stated they would not be built on slabs, but some of the units would have crawl spaces, and some would have basements. He commented that some depend on the number of houses per well.

Mr. Govert – BOS, asked if the funding had an expiration date. Ms. Savitsky responded that it did not. Ms. Kittner added that they were very anxious for the Goodspeed to move forward.

Mrs. Burton-Reeve asked if test pits had been dug. Mr. Pinnell stated they had not done this yet. Attorney Jezek commented that the entire project should be connected to the Sewer system, with the possible exception of Hem Street.

Mr. Sloane – EDC, asked if the four houses that were turned over would be put on the market all at once. Mr. Pinnell stated that was not likely, but would be dependent upon the market. Ms. Kittner noted that a lot would depend upon the building and demolition of the houses, and what would be the best strategy for the Goodspeed, Village, and Town. She stated they wanted to work very closely with the Town to figure out the best strategy for everyone.

Mr. Dill – IWWC, asked Mr. Pinnell to review the road structures that would be moved. Mr. Pinnell stated the only new structure would be the laneway width, which would be hardened turf. This crescent would be located between the Seraph building and Mr. Rozum's/Ms. Goodfriend's house. He added that there would be no new curb cuts on Route 82.

Mr. Dill asked Mr. Pinnell to explain why the road goes in back of the buildings. Mr. Pinnell stated this was done deliberately, and would become a place where many people would be invited to walk. Mr. Dill asked if there was an architectural reason for it. Mr. Pinnell stated there was not. It would be move interesting for everyone involved to have the laneway behind the buildings. In addition, he stated if they parked cars in front of the cottages, it would detract from the character.

Mr. Dill asked if the laneway would be a public way, or for exclusive use of the actors. Ms. Kittner stated it would not be exclusive, but they would need to figure out a way to maintain privacy for the actors. Mr. Pinnell stated in a real village situation, there are back alleys, etc. where children and adults can walk.

Mr. Brownell stated the time was nearly 8:00, and the public hearing would have to begin. He noted there were no sidewalks on the map, and he questioned the reason for this. Mr. Pinnell asked if he was referring to Route 82. Mr. Brownell stated he was talking about the back part. Mr. Pinnell responded that there were no sidewalks planned, as it would be too city-like. He added that the speed would be such that cars and people could co-exist. He stated the lane should not be paved.

Motion by Mr. Dill at 7:58 p.m. to close the IWWC special meeting, seconded by Ms. Goodfriend, and carried by unanimous vote.

Motion by Mr. Scherer at 7:58 p.m. to close the EDC special meeting, seconded by Mr. Casner, and carried by unanimous vote.

Motion by Mr. Walter at 7:58 p.m. to close the BOS special meeting, seconded by Mr. Govert, and carried by unanimous vote.

Motion by Mr. Curtin at 7:58 p.m. to take a brief recess, seconded by Mr. Thomas, and carried by unanimous vote. The meeting reconvened at 8:00 p.m.

Tape: None

Respectfully submitted,

Emmett Lyman, Secretary