

**Economic Development Commission
Joint East Haddam/Haddam Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2009**

Attending for East Haddam EDC: R. Casner; D. Mathiasen; R. Scherrer; P. Stricker; M. Ziobron (EDC Coordinator)

Absent: J. Albuquerque; M. Gionta; E. Sabetta

Attending for Haddam EDC: H. Batzner; J. Bergin; B. Fernandez; M. Fortuna; L. Maggi

Absent: C. Everett; P. Gillespie; D. Papallo, E. Vynalek

Guests: K. Blaschik; E. Schwing; S. Wheeler

Mr. Scherrer and Mr. Fortuna respectively called the meeting of the East Haddam and Haddam Economic Development Commissions to order at 7:03 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

Each of the attendees introduced themselves and provide a brief background on their experience and participation on their respective Economic Development Commissions.

HADDAM INITIATIVES

Tylerville project description: Ms. Maggi advised that they are in the early stages of the Tylerville project. She stated that the area is mainly a commercial district and that the Haddam EDC wants to plan for its growth and redevelopment. She noted that when they held their initial public hearing for the project, the response was very positive.

In response to a question from Ms. Ziobron, Mr. Fortuna stated that there is currently mixed zoning for the area. He advised that the EDC has identified the following three primary initiatives to be addressed by the project: (1) zoning regulations, (2) general visioning, and (3) infrastructure issues (i.e. sewer, water, and traffic control). He noted that the Higganum Village zone that was implemented several years ago can be used as a successful model for the Tylerville project.

Ms. Ziobron asked Mr. Fortuna about the water-study grant that Haddam had received and he confirmed that Haddam's grant request had recently been funded. He stated that there has been a long-term problem with water quality and one of the options they will be studying is to run the lines from Chester's public water supply up to Tylerville. In response to a question from Mr. Scherrer, Mr. Fortuna confirmed that the State DEP has responsibility for oversight of the water supply, but that they have not implemented any enforcement actions.

Responding to an inquiry from Ms. Ziobron, Ms. Maggi stated that the public' goals for Tylerville are to maintain the rural quality of the area, develop some consistency in building type and style, avoid big-box type stores, create safe pedestrian walkways, and provide sufficient parking areas. Ms. Fernandez added that the public has also expressed a desire for environmentally friendly buildings.

The following additional projects in the Tylerville section were noted: an ice cream shop is opening in the Swing Bridge Market Place and the Saybrook at Haddam retirement community project on Saybrook Road.

There was a general discussion regarding the Bridge Road/Camp Bethel Road area and Mr. Bergin stated that residents there would like to see a walkable loop created for the district.

EAST HADDAM INITIATIVES

East Haddam Village project description: Mr. Scherrer reported that, in addition to the East Haddam Village Revitalization project, the East Haddam EDC is working on the following projects:

- Moodus commercial infrastructure – He noted that Moodus is the commercial district for East Haddam; however, septic issues have limited and sometimes prevented new businesses from moving to the area.
- Pedestrian safety in the Village – He advised that East Haddam had received a \$250,000 grant from the State and that a short-term committee has made several recommendations to improve pedestrian safety in the Village, including parabolic crosswalks and the addition of sidewalks on areas of Route 82 between Creamery Road and Ray Hill Road.

- Machimoodus State Park – Mr. Scherrer advised that the State of CT purchased the old Sunrise Resort in Moodus for use as a State Park. He stated that EDC and State representatives met recently to discuss the Town’s concerns about maintenance and safety issues at the Park.
- Johnsonville – He stated that the current owner of this property was unsuccessful in getting plans approved to build high-end condos on the site because of density and septic issues, and has put it up for sale. He noted that EDC is concerned about the deterioration of the existing buildings at the site, which have not been maintained. He advised that the Commission actively supports an appropriate development of the site.
- Banner Estates – He advised that the developer has completed 86 units and recently requested an informal meeting with the East Haddam Planning and Zoning and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commissions to discuss his proposal to build an additional 44 units. Ms. Ziobron stated that EDC would also participate in the informal meetings which will be conducted prior to the developer’s formal application.
- Tax Incentive program – Mr. Scherrer stated that Ms. Stricker has promoted drafting a tax incentive plan for East Haddam and that she and Ms. Ziobron are working on an outline for next steps.
- Village Revitalization project – Mr. Scherrer reviewed the history of this project and advised that the Town has established a separate Commission charged with overseeing the redevelopment of the 2.6 acres parcel. He noted that there are two projects currently underway that should bring additional space onto the market for commercial use. He stated that the Town plans to convert a vacant middle school in Moodus into municipal office space which will free-up the existing Town Office building and that the Goodspeed actor housing project, which will break ground this fall, will result in them releasing several of their Village properties for development. He advised that the Village Revitalization Commission is currently trying to decide whether to develop a conceptual design for the site and seek out a preferred builder for that design or to solicit developers to present their own plans for the site.

There was a general discussion regarding the Goodspeed’s PILOT contributions and sewer payments to the Town, the result of which, Mr. Scherrer noted, makes them the number three tax payer in East Haddam.

COMMON GOALS

Ms. Ziobron listed the following three common goals for the East Haddam and Haddam EDCs: (1) bridge closings, (2) tax incentives, and (3) a bridge walkway. Mr. Fortuna suggested adding tourism as a fourth common goal.

Ms. Stricker suggested petitioning the State to create a pre-determined schedule for bridge openings and there was a general discussion regarding whether the majority of traffic back-ups resulted from normal openings/closings of the bridge or from problems with the bridge getting stuck open. Ms. Mathiasen suggested the Towns petition the State to post electronic signs on the highways advising when there are problems with the bridge.

Ms. Fernandez left the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Mr. Fortuna stated that Haddam’s draft tax incentive program is viewed as their primary tool for attracting new business to town. He advised that it has been presented to their Board of Selectmen for their review. In response to a question from Ms. Stricker, he stated that they did not solicit public input for the draft policy.

There was general discussions regarding developing a regional tourism map for the two towns and the improvements to the rail lines in Haddam.

EAGLE LANDING

Mr. Bergin stated that the Riverquest boats are docking at Eagle Landing; however, he had no information about the Lady Catherine Cruise Lines re-docking there. Mr. Schwing advised that the boat launch area at the Landing has been leased to Valley Railroad and that there are plans for both Riverquest and Lady Catherine to be docked there. Mr. Scherrer reported that the Goodspeed Opera House is coordinating show and lunch/dinner cruise packages with the Riverquest and Lady Catherine Cruise Lines and that the response has been very positive.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Ziobron, Mr. Fortuna stated that he expects the land-swap will be re-visited but that the State has not shared its plans for the site.

REGIONALIZATION

Ms. Ziobron reviewed summary materials in the attendees' meeting packets related to the State's regionalization program and noted that CT Office of Policy and Management (OPM) can provide direction on opportunities for regionalization.

Ms. Maggi and Ms. Blaschik left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

NEXT STEPS

Ms. Stricker stated that she would contact Ms. Maggi and Mr. Gillespie to get insights about Haddam's proposed tax incentive plan. Ms. Mathiasen and Ms. Batzner agreed to meet to discuss tourism issues. Ms. Ziobron agreed to send the minutes from this meeting to the Commissioners of both EDCs.

There was a general discussion regarding future meetings and it was agreed to meet quarterly.

FUTURE MEETING DATE

Ms. Ziobron agreed to try to coordinate the next meeting for either January 11th or 25th. It was agreed that the meeting would be held in Haddam.

ADJOURNMENT

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL BUSINESS TO DISCUSS:

MS. STRICKER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. CASNER, TO ADJOURN THE EAST HADDAM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MS. BATZNER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. BERGIN, TO ADJOURN THE HADDAM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Wheeler
Recording Secretary