

**TOWN OF HADDAM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
HADDAM YOUTH CENTER
Wednesday, 13 January 2010, at 7:00 PM
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Change by the Commission***

X	Heather Batzner
X	Joseph Bergin
X	Dan Dachelet
A	Charles Everett
X	Barbara Fernandez
X	Michael Fortuna, Chairman
X	Peter Gillespie
A	Lori Maggi
X	David Papallo
A	Edward Vynalek
A	Liz West, Town Planner
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk
X	Robert Duval, Selectman
X	Peter Arseneault, Selectman

1. Call to Order

Mr. Fortuna called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Attendance

Attendance was taken.

3. Approval of Agenda

Approved as submitted.

4. Approval of Minutes

Corrections to the 9 December 2009 minutes: page 2, first paragraph, fifth line – change “increase the ability” to “bring the cost”; page 2, first paragraph, sixth line – at end of sentence continue with “and the cost to connect to Middletown, closer together.”; page 2, first paragraph, seventh line – after “plant” continue with “if there was capacity for receiving septage from septic tanks.”; and page 2, second paragraph, third line – change “passed” to “past”.

MOTION: Heather Batzner made a motion to approve the 9 December 2009 minutes as amended. David Papallo seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment

None.

6. Joseph Mingolello – Rossi Property

Mr. Mingolello stated he wants to use the property for residential, upper class, 100 units (underground parking, no age restriction) with no commercial use (it can be across the street) and an on site sewage disposal plant. Mr. Mingolello stated the only thing he has to do is go to P&Z because he is not proposing mixed use. Mr. Mingolello continued by stating he does not want to include commercial use as no one wants to live over a store and he would be wasting money.

Mr. Fortuna stated the Village Zone requires mixed use development and the process for residential only would need to be sorted out with P&Z; however, mixed use is encouraged for a number of reasons. Mr. Fortuna stated the Village regulations address certain densities and types of mixes and strictly multi-family residential is not allowed as a matter of right and is not allowed through a site plan approval process through P&Z.

Mr. Mingolello stated there would be no sense for him to build something he could not sell or rent. Mr. Mingolello stated he didn't need glass blowers, parrot shops, cleaners or restaurants as it doesn't work and he won't put it in. Mr. Dachelet stated Mr. Fortuna was merely explaining the rules as not everyone is aware of them. Mr. Mingolello stated the rules are easy to read and the Commission needs to put themselves in his place as a developer.

Mr. Papallo asked how many units are being proposed. Mr. Mingolello stated whatever he can get on the site. Mr. Papallo asked the impact on the school system. Mr. Mingolello stated there would be none as all the people will be junior executives, women between 22-38, as they are the primary renters.

Mr. Dachelet asked the anticipated monthly rental. Mr. Mingolello stated \$2,000-\$3,000 a month (penthouses, etc.).

Ms. Fernandez asked Mr. Mingolello what lead him to believe that someone would be interested in renting in this particular area. Mr. Mingolello stated Haddam has all the things from Middletown – Wesleyan, the hospital – and Route 1, Saybrook and junior executives what something splashy, luxury units. Ms. Fernandez asked where Mr. Mingolello had previously built. Mr. Mingolello stated he has 200 units in New York. Ms. Fernandez asked where in Connecticut with Mr. Mingolello stating Stamford (Rose Hills) and Greenwich.

Mr. Dachelet asked if there were any mock ups of what the structures would look like in terms of façade and so forth. Carol Buzash, Mr. Mingolello's assistant, showed a conceptual drawing to the Commission stating the drawing was not for the proposal as the structure was too high (can only be 35 ft. high maximum), but it was similar. Mr. Papallo asked if the project would be done in phases. Mr. Mingolello stated yes.

Mr. Fortuna stated the development of the Rossi property is key to the town and doesn't believe any one of the Commissioners wouldn't want that; however, he, personally, would like to know the benefits of this type of development. Mr. Mingolello stated the town would benefit from the tax money and the little shopping center area will blow up and no one will be able to buy anything down here.

Ms. Batzner asked for clarification in regard to an earlier comment about commercial being across the street. Mr. Mingolello stated he was talking about the area of the bank and up the road and developers will buy the places up.

Mr. Fortuna stated the Commission's charge is to look holistically at the village and town and a couple of the town's initiatives that dovetail into this proposal would be infrastructure and sewer. Mr. Fortuna stated he was unaware of the cost of a system such as the one being proposed and questioned whether some of those dollars could be leveraged into a municipal village system. Mr.

Mingolello stated the system can be added on to as he has already looked into it and the town could hook in to the system.

Mr. Fortuna stated, personally, he felt mixed use whether retail or professional is important; however, Mr. Mingolello needs to make a decision on what works best for him so long as he can get the approvals. Mr. Fortuna stated one of the problems which the town is having is that the kids are being zoned out of town. Mr. Mingolello stated he's already marketed out the situation and two junior executives making \$40,000 each can live in the complex. Mr. Mingolello stated he knows what the Commission has to do and he knows what he has to do and he wants to do something nice for the town and would benefit the town.

Mr. Mingolello continued by stating there are a lot of singles, divorcees, and people living together who have the money and if they can't live here, they'll be forced to live in apartments as is being proposed. Mr. Papallo asked how many square feet per unit. Mr. Mingolello stated 1,000-1200 square feet with elevators, exercise rooms, and underground parking.

Mr. Dachelet asked Mr. Mingolello if he had considered using a section of the property for commercial and if so and why he ruled it out. Mr. Fortuna suggested retail with professional offices above. Mr. Mingolello stated there are already empty commercial buildings in town. Mr. Dachelet reminded Mr. Mingolello that he had earlier stated everyone will be coming to town so why not have the commercial development on his property as well. Mr. Mingolello stated the people need to come to town first, that the Commission wants to bring people to the town in order to make the town, and people do not want to live above a store.

Mr. Mingolello asked if the Commission realized how many local people will be working on the project as well as the maintenance and continued by stating he would be bringing a lot of work and money to the town. Mr. Fortuna stated the Commission wasn't disagreeing with his comments, but the guy paying \$2,000 also isn't mopping the floors.

Ms. Fernandez asked if Mr. Mingolello was looking for EDC to help in changing the rules which have been set up for mix use within the Village. Mr. Mingolello stated he wants to put residential on the property. Ms. Fernandez again asked if Mr. Mingolello was looking for the Commission's assistance in changing the regulations for the village. Mr. Fortuna stated there's a process in place. Mr. Mingolello stated there's a process to change the regulations. Ms. Buzash stated there's a waiver. Ms. Fernandez stated the waiver would come from P&Z.

Mr. Mingolello stated there will be five buildings on the site and all the structures will be green. Mr. Mingolello also stated he will make this town be some place to be on a map. Mr. Papallo asked how many phases are proposed. Mr. Mingolello stated whatever he can build. Mr. Fortuna asked if the brick building would be removed. Mr. Mingolello stated he couldn't disclose that information as he's in contract with the Rossi brothers. Mr. Fortuna noted another part of the Village regulations is preservation of building stock and it's one of the few non-residential buildings which is part of the fabric of Higganum Center for a number of years. Mr. Dachelet asked its age. Ms. Bazazi stated she thought it had been built in the 1930's. Mr. Mingolello stated the building has been empty for years.

In regard to a comment made earlier by Mr. Mingolello concerning the unpopularity of living over a shop, Ms. Bazazi stated it appears to be popular in Chester, Essex, Deep River, and Stonington. Mr. Mingolello stood by his comment. Ms. Bazazi stated there are a lot of towns that are considered destination spots in which there is mixed use.

Mr. Fortuna stated Mr. Mingolello has come to the Commission looking for help; however, personally, he's not convinced about the proposal especially in regard to the village zoning regulations. Mr. Mingolello again stated he doesn't want stores under the apartments. Ms. Buzash stated the other option would be another developer coming in and not knowing what that development will

look like. Ms. Buzash asked if the Commission wanted industry, where is it. Ms. Buzash stated they are out to help the town.

Steve Rocco asked if there was a site plan that could be shown to the Commission. Mr. Mingoello stated it was being developed. Mr. Rocco asked the proposed locations of the five buildings. Mr. Mingoello stated he has to work with the engineers. Mr. Rocco asked if the buildings would be constructed on the front, side or back of the site. Mr. Mingoello stated the buildings would be constructed towards the back of site and noted the town garage is a big problem for him as it's filthy, it's not cleaned up and he can't put in trees to cover it. Mr. Fortuna suggested putting in commercial downstairs and professional offices above. Mr. Mingoello stated no body wants to come here, everybody wants to go to Middletown.

Mr. Rocco asked what would be towards the front of the site if the buildings will be towards the back of the site. Mr. Mingoello stated more buildings. Mr. Rocco suggested perhaps a piece could be craved out for someone interested in commercial development.

Mr. Rocco asked in order of magnitude of the number of units he's proposing. Mr. Mingoello stated 80 to 100 units. Mr. Rocco asked if it was possible to build a unit at \$200,000. Mr. Mingoello stated \$300,000 per unit as he's putting in a sewage disposal plant.

Mr. Mingoello stated he could tell the Commission was against him and if he was going to be given a hard time, he would go somewhere else with his project. Mr. Fortuna stated the Commission wasn't against him; however, he (Mingoello) needed to realize the Commission worked for a decade to put the Village Zoning in place, it was put in place for a reason, and they are not about to tear it up and throw it in the trash. Mr. Mingoello stated the Commission better do something because there won't be any developers coming in.

Peter Arseneault, selectman, asked Mr. Mingoello if he would be asking for a tax abatement. Mr. Mingoello stated no, he doesn't need a tax abatement and that he didn't want anything from the town. Mr. Mingoello asked if the Commission had any idea what the tax base would be for the units.

Ms. Batzner asked Mr. Mingoello if the town garage was problematic to his potential development, how would the JC Products building figure in to his concept. Mr. Mingoello asked what was JC Products. Mr. Fortuna explained the location of the building. Mr. Mingoello stated it's already been bought. Mrs. Batzner asked if Mr. Mingoello was the purchaser. Mr. Mingoello stated yes and then continued to complain about the garage. Mr. Dachelet asked what he would be looking for to have the garage go away. Mr. Mingoello stated knock it down or do something with it.

Mr. Mingoello continued complaining about Higganum Center stating the town should have gotten Robert's (a supermarket) to come into town to take over the Country Market and how the town does nothing that's upscale. Mr. Mingoello stated the town's lucky to have him.

Diane Stock asked about the hazardous materials on the site. Mr. Mingoello stated all Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III will be taken care of and that he's already dug over 31 holes. Ms. Stock asked about Phase III. Mr. Mingoello stated it would be handed to him in a couple of days. Ms. Stock asked if he had an environmental firm doing the work. Mr. Mingoello stated yes and when he's ready, he'll give out the information.

Tom Worthley agreed that times have changed, however, in recent literature there's a common theme of mixed use and there are creative ways of doing this. Mr. Mingoello stated there's no work in the town, there's nothing in the town to attract people, and no one is doing anything to attract people. Mr. Worthley stated the regulations were developed as they are to try to attract people to set up businesses. Mr. Mingoello stated people will come to Haddam to sleep.

Mr. Fortuna used an example of a young accountant living in one of Mr. Mingoello's apartments and wanting to hang a shingle in the town he lives in. Mr. Mingoello stated the accountant can buy a house. Mr. Dachelet stated he felt that's what the mixed use regulations were set up for.

Ms. Bazazi agreed with Mr. Rocco's suggestion of residential towards the back of the parcel and store fronts on the street. Mr. Mingoello stated no, as he wouldn't make any money with commercial. Ms. Bazazi stated additional people will be looking for services. Mr. Mingoello told Ms. Bazazi to build the services.

Mr. Papallo asked when the site plan would be ready. Mr. Mingoello stated the site plan would be ready when he knows he's not going to have any problems. Mr. Mingoello also stated he will not spend any money until he knows he will not have any problems.

Mr. Fortuna stated if the Commission has given the impression that they are against the project, that is not the case, but Mr. Mingoello needs to understand that he needs to convince the Commission the project is something that should be supported. Mr. Mingoello stated he would be bringing jobs and money to the town and asked the Commissioners what they were bringing to the town. Mr. Fortuna stated the Commission has been working for 10 years putting together village zoning which they will not ignore. Mr. Mingoello stated he's trying to help the town and the Commission is trying to tell him what to do and it won't happen. Mr. Mingoello continued by stating the regulations need to change.

Ms. Buzash stated Mr. Mingoello is envisioning the whole town being developed not just the Rossi property while the Commission is looking at the Rossi property as bringing in both the industry and the people. Ms. Buzash stated Mr. Mingoello will bring in the people. Mr. Mingoello stated if people want to be CPA's they can go to Middletown, but there's money in rentals.

Mr. Papallo asked if approval was given, how soon could the project begin. Mr. Mingoello stated it was a silly question as he would start right away and he already had financing in place. Mr. Mingoello stated if he didn't get approval here, he'd walk away.

Ms. Bazazi asked if any of the apartments would be affordable. Mr. Mingoello stated no and then stated they were affordable with two people making \$80,000 a year. Ms. Bazazi asked if the price bracket would all be the same. Mr. Mingoello stated yes and, although you can't say discriminate, there will be a better person there. Mr. Mingoello again stated there will be a lot of junior executives and people who don't want to own their own homes. Mr. Mingoello also stated he presently has 55 and over housing and he can't do anything with it. Discussion followed regarding rental fees.

Mr. Dachelet questioned the one size apartments. Mr. Mingoello stated one bedrooms are losers except for a few single guys and it doesn't work out. Mr. Dachelet asked about three bedroom apartments. Mr. Mingoello stated no, as he wants to keep the kids out because of the schools.

Mr. Dachelet asked what the town's requirements are for the maximum number of people that can live in a building. Mr. Fortuna stated there are a number of requirements – 900 sq. ft. minimum per two bedroom unit; 1,500 sq. ft. of open recreational space per bedroom (300,000 sq. ft. on 100 - two bedroom apartments, the site is only 215,000-220,000 ft.). Mr. Mingoello stated the Commission has to make this happen and bend a little; and he will not come into a town where the town is going to bury him as a developer. Mr. Mingoello stated the only hurdle is the commercial use and he deems it a loser. Ms. Buzash stated mixed use looks awful.

Mr. Arseneault asked if he would be before P&Z on 01/21/2010 and if there would be more detailed plans available for that meeting. Mr. Mingoello stated yes, he would be before P&Z and if the plans are available, he'd bring them; but he was going to P&Z for help. Mr. Fortuna stated the Commission is willing to help, but they just want to understand the project.

Discussion followed in regard to water for the site. Mr. Mingoello stated water will be found and is being taken care of, but he's not an engineer.

Mr. Mingoello stated he's hired a marketing company to see where the people are going to come from and again stated the young ladies will be the top draw as they make more money than the guys, they don't want to get married, they want nothing to do with a husband, and only want to bring a guy in for the weekend. Ms. Buzash stated they have also heard from people who are older who want to give up their homes and this would be a prefect spot.

Ms. Bazazi asked Mr. Mingoello if he had ever built in a rural town. Mr. Mingoello stated he comes from Fairfield County. Ms. Bazazi stated she was interested in the effects this type of development would have on a rural town. Mr. Mingoello stated in five to ten years no one will be able to come down the street and commercial will come in once the people are in the town.

Ms. Fernandez informed the Commission there is a lot of development in EDC at the state level and it's all mixed use. Mr. Fortuna stated the village regulations were written with a purpose. Mr. Dachelet asked the Commission's next step. Mr. Fortuna stated the ultimate step is to advise P&Z and, if required, the Board of Selectmen as to what the Commission thinks about the proposal. Mr. Fortuna stated he makes a compelling argument assuming he knows his business and he can't rent commercial use, but it's difficult to believe when other communities in New England thrive on mixed use and Haddam can't. Mr. Fortuna continued by stating any planning model in the last 20 years shows mixed use. Ms. Fernandez agreed and stated it's not only New England.

Ms. Bazazi stated Mr. Mingoello continued to state the Commission needed to work with him, but it should be a two-way street. Ms. Bazazi stated she believes a mixed use would be beneficial to the town and there should be some compromise on his behalf. Discussion followed in regard to saving the brick building in front of the parcel.

Mr. Rocco stated the Rossi property is probably the single most important piece to be developed in the Town of Haddam, as far as one singular piece, and a lot of work was done by a lot of people over a lot of time discussing what should go there and formulating regulations to help control that. Mr. Rocco also stated he believes the town should stand by the regulations. Mr. Fortuna agreed noting there are examples in New England and nationwide that show building strictly residential is not the save all and mixed use is ultimately a better use of village properties or developed properties.

Ms. Fernandez voiced concern over the number of vehicles which could be involved in this project and the proximity of the elementary school. Ms. Stock asked if there were any regulations in regard to density of vehicles or parking. Mr. Dachelet stated typically there are two parking spots per unit with visitor parking. Ms. Stock asked if the town had parking regulations. Mr. Fortuna stated the town does have parking regulations, but does not address development of this magnitude. Mr. Rocco stated he doesn't believe there is sufficient room to put that number of cars under each building.

Mr. Arseneault asked Mr. Rocco if there are any regulations regarding the parking of vehicles under a structure, especially concerning fire safety. Mr. Rocco stated yes, fire separation; and that the buildings would need to be concrete given there proposed size. Mr. Rocco also stated there will need to be outside parking as well. Mr. Fortuna stated fire protection for a building of that magnitude without a public water supply would be significant. Mr. Rocco stated he has built one (fire protection) and it's very expensive.

Mr. Fortuna stated the order of magnitude Mr. Mingoello is talking about is something the town has never dealt with and the need to be cautious in regard to people thing of this project as a large tax base because long term it may work against the town. Mr. Fortuna stated time and time again, strictly residential in this type of setting doesn't bring in the dollars, no long term benefit

other than strictly the property assessment to benefit the town. Ms. Bazazi stated there needs to be economic and quality of life benefits for the townspeople as well.

Mr. Worthley stated additional data needs to be obtained such as did commercial follow after strictly residential constructed or if there was a commercial center within driving distance, would the people just drive there. Mr. Worthley stated he doesn't believe people will move in who don't need services for five years and they'll want services sooner than that. Mr. Worthley stated the regulations should be upheld. Mr. Worthley also stated the logic escapes him that commercial wouldn't work for Mr. Mingoello, but it would work for someone else. Mr. Worthley concluded by stating he also found it insulting that Mr. Mingoello insinuated that we aren't good enough for the people he wants to bring into town.

A brief discussion followed in regard to Mr. Mingoello not asking for an abatement. Mr. Arseneault stated Mr. Mingoello has been before P&Z a number of times with ideas of what he'd like to do with the same resolve that he has money and backing and for one reason or another the ideas have not come to fruition. Mr. Arseneault also stated there is testimony that Mr. Mingoello has done quality work in Haddam (Fieldstone off of Burr Road), but is unaware of what he may have built outside of town. Mr. Fortuna stated he is aware of Fieldstone, but asked if that development has spun off any commercial or economic development here in Haddam.

Mr. Rocco stated a special permit would be needed. Mr. Fortuna stated it's not allowed by special permit as it's not a permitted use under the village regulations and he would need to go before ZBA.

Mr. Rocco stated P&Z needs to look into the financial feasibility of this proposal as he finds it difficult to believe that the number of apartments being proposed can be built in Higganum Center and the developer can survive. Mr. Rocco also voiced concern over a half built project.

Discussion followed in regard to have 200 or more people who are all demographically the same. Ms. Batzner stated as part of that demographic she would not spend that kind of money for an apartment that doesn't already have services available. Discussion continued in regard to the steps needed to revitalize a village center, the possibility of the locating a commercial developer, and a similar proposal Mr. Mingoello had made three years ago on the same parcel.

Zach Jezek stated the Commission will need to take into consideration how many people can afford \$2,000 or more a month rent and how many people will want to live in that particular area. Mr. Jezek stated perhaps having something more affordable for more people would be more feasible and would still give the town the option to revitalize the village according to the regulations. Mr. Jezek noted the Cocommo development – a nice structure, people couldn't afford the services at the facility, and it has since been sold and purchased. Mr. Jezek stated an individual just getting out of school and obtaining their first job, will not be willing to pay that kind of money. Further discussion continued.

Old Business

a. Proposed Potential Sewer Project – Wright-Pierce Study – Higganum Center – Final Report

Mr. Fortuna stated the final report from Wright-Pierce has been received. The report provides four options – 1) gravity sewer to a black box discharge; 2) a low pressure sewer to a black box discharge; 3) gravity to the center pump it up to Middletown; and 4) low pressure to the center pump it up to Middletown. The costs to build range from \$6.4 million to \$8.3 million - an apples to apples comparison - taking out of the equation ledge between Higganum and Middletown (not has much ledge as anticipated) and \$3 million dollar contribution from the City of Middletown. Mr. Fortuna stated if Middletown does not contribute the numbers change to \$9.4 million to \$11.3 million.

Mr. Fortuna then began discussing the cost of the two gravity systems - \$7.8 million vs. \$8.3 million - and the two low pressure systems - \$6.1 million and \$6.4 million. As the prices are comparable a decision would need to be made as to whether or not the town wants to create a pollution control authority and run its own plant or would the town prefer connecting with Middletown and write a check every month. Mr. Fortuna stated the only comparable cost is if Middletown shares in the cost and they have not made any indication as to whether or not they would like to make that contribution.

Mr. Bergin asked what incentive there was for Middletown to contribute. Mr. Fortuna stated Middletown would like to further develop Route 154 as there are a lot of commercial properties which have limited development opportunities due to the lack of infrastructure. Mr. Fortuna also stated there are a couple of residential areas which are in need of public sewer.

Discussion continued in regard to operation and maintenance (O&M), with the assumption that Middletown would share the costs. For Haddam to operate their own plant annual operating costs range from \$61,000 to \$78,000 and to connect to Middletown \$14,000 per year. The capital costs can be funded in a number of ways (not discussed in detail). If the town accepts DEP funding, only the people connected to the sewer can pay for the O&M costs; and if DEP funding is not accepted, the town could have the people who connect pay a percentage with the remainder be a part of the tax base.

Mr. Fortuna stated the potential downside to connecting with Middletown is a pipe running from Higganum to Middletown and potential development pressures. A brief discussion followed in regard to zoning currently in place and standing behind the regulations, but also being aware that the regulations could change. Mr. Fortuna stated the downside of Haddam owning its own plant is the operation and maintenance (breakdowns town's costs).

Capital costs are comparable while the maintenance costs are not. The big question is whether or not sewers are needed in Higganum Center. Mr. Fortuna stated in order to develop the Rossi property appropriately infrastructure would be needed. Mr. Fortuna asked Mr. Rocco if he might know the costs of installing a package plant. Mr. Rocco stated the Goodspeed plant for the village in East Haddam was more than \$2 million and less than \$5 million (serves the whole village).

Mr. Fortuna stated the numbers will need to be re-evaluated as they were not drawn up with the thought of a development the size Mr. Mingoello is proposing. Mr. Dachelet asked if the town could react this quickly. Mr. Duval stated the item would need to go before a referendum and prior to that the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and public hearings which could take 9-12 months.

Mr. Arseneault asked who will pay for the laterals and will a property owner be forced to connect to the system. Mr. Fortuna stated the cost of the laterals would be combined with the capital project and would require commercial properties to hook up, but allow residential. Mr. Fortuna stated if DEP funding is accepted, everyone would be required to hook up to the system; however, this is still up for discussion.

Discussion followed in regarding to the following: including water while installing sewer – cost of doing both not included in the report, probably would be significant; ledge calculations – although not 100 percent accurate, actual borings results received from a couple of sources; operation costs – looked at comparable sources, funding to be set aside for repairs; location of pump house – town garage site; development – concerns voiced about losing the village through over development; and energy – a part of the O&M costs.

Mr. Fortuna requested all Commissioners to review the report and if there are any questions or comments to email them to him within two weeks to present to Wright-Pierce for discussion at the February meeting.

Gail Powell asked what political ramifications could come from this. Mr. Fortuna stated he and Mr. Bondi as well as state officials have met with Middletown officials, but nothing has been finalized (a decision of the townspeople). Discussion followed.

b. Tylerville Subcommittee – Update

Mr. Fortuna stated he doesn't believe there has been a meeting in some time. Mrs. Batzner stated she had not received any information from Mrs. Maggi regarding meetings. A brief discussion followed in regard to holding another public meeting with village zoning being the topic.

c. Tax Incentive Policy - Update

Mr. Fortuna stated he will contact Mr. Morasutti, town counsel, regarding this matter. Ms. Fernandez stated Mr. Morasutti was to revise the draft and send it out (has received nothing to date). Mrs. Batzner stated Ms. West had commented that Mr. Morasutti is re-writing the policy.

7. New Business

a. Joint Haddam/East Haddam EDC Meeting – Monday, 25 January 2010

The meeting will be held at the Youth Center beginning at 7P. Mrs. Batzner asked for direction regarding an agenda. Mr. Fortuna stated he will forward an agenda. Ms. Fernandez suggested pizza and volunteered to pick it up.

8. New Business

Grist Mill Market, Higganum - Zach Jezek, owner of the Grist Mill Market, Moodus, stated he has every intention of moving into the former Country Market location, but is waiting for the Grange to complete their work. Mr. Jezek stated their starting date continues to be pushed back due to no fault of their own noting the signing of a 20 year lease (presently not paying rent). Mr. Jezek informed the Commission the Grange did receive a large loan from Liberty Bank back in August to perform necessary repairs; however, it doesn't appear as if contractors have been hired, but rather Grange members are attempting to do the work themselves. Mr. Bergin stated usually a bank requires licensed contractors when they issue loans. Mr. Jezek stated they are required to have licensed workers to do certain aspects of the work and it's unclear what is taking place.

Ms. Fernandez asked if the former Higganum Drug Store could handle their needs. Mr. Jezek stated he has spoken to the owners, but the building is a bit smaller than what they are looking for.

Mrs. Powell stated she has contacted Fern Tremblay, Haddam building official, regarding this matter and was informed the workers doing the carpentry work are qualified to do the work, but licensed workers will be required for the electrical, plumbing, etc. Mrs. Powell stated as far as Liberty Bank is concerned, she believes if the loan were a construction loan the work would be monitored more closely. Mrs. Powell also stated there appears to be nothing anyone can do to move this project along.

Mr. Jezek stated the Grist Mill was supposed to have access to the building last May (2009) and the Grange is in default of the lease. Mr. Jezek stated if he can not get into the building by March, they will lose the summer business. When asked how long it would take for him to set up his business, Mr. Jezek stated about three months.

Discussion followed at great length. Mr. Fortuna stated he will make contact with a couple of people to see what is taking place.

a. EDC Web Site

Mr. Dachelet distributed copies of a basic concept for a web page and stated he has been in contact with Peg Scofield, Purple Dog, regarding setting up a template and additional pages. Mr. Fortuna discussed setting up a teleconference with Peg Scofield and Bette Dybick.

Ms. Fernandez stated she would like to see the town's profile be included which the State develops every year. Discussion followed that this link may already exist on the town's website. Mr. Gillespie suggested a link to the town planner's officer. Ms. Batzner suggested a link in which a forum could be held.

Mr. Dachelet asked if a new business were interested in coming to town who would they contact to discuss this. Mr. Gillespie stated the town planner. Mr. Fortuna suggested changing "Contact the Economic Development Commission" to "Important Contacts".

b. New EDC Projects/Initiatives/Discussion

Town Charter, EDC – Mr. Fortuna stated he's had second thoughts in regard to his recommendation concerning membership and believes a limit should be set.

Public Comment – A brief discussion followed in regard to the placement of Public Comment on the agenda. Some members felt the item should be placed at the beginning of the agenda to allow the public to speak and leave the meeting if they didn't care to stay for the whole meeting; other's felt it should be placed towards the end of the agenda to allow for a more straight forward meeting; and other's suggested it be placed both at the beginning and at the end of the agenda to allow the public to speak in regard to an agenda item. Further discussion followed.

Commercial Development – Mr. Bergin asked if it was the charge of the Commission to go out looking for commercial developers. Mr. Fortuna stated no, it is not part of the Commission's charge, but it is allowable under the Charter. Mr. Fortuna also stated Commission who do encourage developers have publicly owned property to offer these developers. Mr. Gillespie stated the Commission's mission is to create the public environment, promote the town as an entity and a place to do business. Mr. Fortuna reviewed the Charter.

Farmer's Market – Mr. Fortuna stated this group will be filing their tax returns soon and at that point a determination can be made regarding their status.

8. Adjournment

MOTION: David Papallo made a motion to adjourn. Peter Gillespie seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned 9:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 10 February 2009, 7:00 p.m.