

**TOWN OF HADDAM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
HADDAM YOUTH CENTER
Wednesday, 10 September 2008, at 7:00 PM
APPROVED MINUTES
*Approved as Submitted at the 12 November 2008 Meeting***

A	Joseph Bergin
X	Paul DeStefano
A	Charles Everett
X	Barbara Fernandez
X	Michael Fortuna, Co-Chairman
X	Peter Gillespie
A	Gregg Lallier, Co-Chairman
X	Lori Maggi
X	David Papallo
X	Edward Vynalek
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Mr. Fortuna called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. Attendance

Attendance was taken.

3. Approval of Agenda

Approved as submitted.

4. Approval/Corrections of the Minutes

Corrections to the 9 July 2008 minutes: Page 2, 6a. Sewer Project Study – 2nd sentence – change “as” to “has”; page 2, 6c. Discussion with East Haddam Economic Development, 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence – change “the” to “them”

MOTION: Paul DeStefano made a motion to approve the minutes of 9 July 2008 as amended and 13 August 2008 as submitted. Ed Vynalek seconded. Motion carried with Fortuna and Fernandez abstaining.

5. Public Comment

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a) Haddam Jail Site Walk

Mr. Vynalek stated that the structure is in need of repair. Mr. DeStefano stated that Ms. Nesti needs help in obtaining funds for repairs to the roof and that Commission support (vocal) might be helpful noting that there were numerous ideas and a variety of uses that were discussed (meetings, local functions, museum) and that there may be some way of generating revenue from the venture. Mr. Fortuna stated that the committee may be better off putting temporary covering (tarps or a membrane) on the roof until restoration aspects are looked at (grant funds available for architectural & structural studies). Mr. Papallo stated that he thought there were already numbers regarding restoration. Ms. Fernandez stated that the site isn't as bad as some sites she has seen and that, although it would be a long term project, the jail is an historical site and that it would be worth rehabbing. Discussion followed regarding the economic situation (can the project be sold to taxpayer).

Discussion followed regarding the size of the structure (larger than expect, but an unusual layout due to cells). Mr. Vynalek thought that working on the structure in sections would be the best way to handle a restoration.

b) Higganum Center - Subcommittee

Mr. Fortuna stated that there is a signed contract to do the last piece of the study and that he will be meeting with John Braccio. Mr. Fortuna stated that the sewer district being contemplated basically follows the Higganum Village zone (but can change) and that Mr. Braccio has indicated that the study could be wrapped up within 1-2 months and then be taken to the public. Discussion followed regarding the business environment in the Center and whether or not outside people (investment bankers, realtors, etc.) should be brought in to talk with the area business/property owners and the need for infrastructure in the Center (1 - to provide a platform for businesses to do well and 2 - a show of faith on the town's side by funding to make the Center viable).

Mr. Vynalek noted that there are three streams that run through the Center which were an asset at one time, but may now be a problem as the Wetlands Commission would have a say as to what can take place around those streams. Mr. Fortuna stated that they could be an asset due to Village Zoning encouraging building closer to the street (developing a pedestrian street front).

c) Tylerville Village

Discussion followed regarding the development in Tylerville and the need for infrastructure. A brief discussion also followed regarding Lisa Wadge's presentation at P & Z concerning a site plan review for the former Bogdan property.

Mr. Vynalek asked what the best option would be for a sewer system in Tylerville. Mr. Fortuna stated that he doesn't believe that hooking up to Chester/Deep River is viable at this time (building and heading south; pipe wasn't sized to come towards Tylerville), but that working with East Haddam is an option. Mr. Vynalek asked if a cost study should be done. Mr. Fortuna stated that a study was done some time ago.

Mrs. Maggi stated that there are several business owners (Karen Blaschik, Marianne Smith, Deb Sims) who are interested in forming a subcommittee to develop regulations for Tylerville. Mr. Fortuna stated the Joe Bergin, EDC member, and a co-worker (will ask prior to submitting his name) have expressed interest in being on the committee. Dave Papallo also voiced his interest.

Discussion followed regarding the potential for sidewalks (how to cover the cost – STEAP grants; where the property would come from; setbacks) and the status of the Eco-Tourism Center (has it been sold).

MOTION: Mike Fortuna made a motion to form a Tylerville Study Subcommittee and appoint David Papallo, Lori Maggi, Debbie Sims, Karen Blaschik, Marianne Smith, and Joe Bergin for the purposes of exploring economic development opportunities in Tylerville and establishing a mission statement and a vision plan. Paul DeStefano seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

d) Town's Tax Incentive Policy

Cocommo – Mr. Papallo stated that there's a new proposal on the table and that the numbers that are being looked at are less than what was given to the River House. Noted that this type of business doesn't impact the school system, but will benefit other businesses within town (restaurants, groceries, etc.).

Ms. Fernandez asked if the town had a process for applying for a tax abatement. Mr. Fortuna stated that the process is what state law dictates and that there's discussion as to whether the town should have an ordinance regarding this.

Draft Policy - Mr. Gillespie distributed copies of how Wethersfield handles tax abatements and reviewed with the Commission. Mrs. Maggi also distributed copies of area town's tax abatement programs. Discussion followed with it being noted that a policy makes it very clear to everyone what the policy is (level playing field; frame work). Ms. Fernandez volunteered to write a draft policy. Mr. Gillespie will provide what information he has.

e) New EDC Projects/Initiatives/Discussion

Membership – Mr. Fortuna stated that Barbara Fernandez is a new member and that Heather Batzner is interested in becoming a member. Mr. Papallo stated that he supports Ms. Batzner's appointment as she's been present at the last four meetings, but that the Commission needs to be watchful of membership numbers as he wouldn't like someone getting on the commission merely to build their resume. Mr. Fortuna stated that it's his understanding that Mr. Lallier will be resigning, but will call him to clarify. A brief discussion followed regarding maintaining a quorum.

Higganum Village Market Group – Mr. Fortuna stated that a formal request has been made by the Higganum Village Market Group (farmer's market) for assistance with funding. Copies of the request distributed and discussed. Discussion followed regarding whether or not funding the group would be appropriate, what the project will do for the town economically, positive activity in the Center being a plus, how many people would be able to attend the farmer's market due to the hours (Friday, 3-6P), whether the

Commission would be in a position to help other businesses in the future, and a previous request by Mrs. Maggi to help fund signage to promote current businesses.

Mr. DeStefano stated that given the negative publicity regarding Higganum Center (two businesses moving out) that there's a need for something positive to be developed in the Center.

Mr. Papallo suggested that an item be selected (street banner, advertising, parking signs). Ms. Batzner stated that the Commission could be asked that a sign indicate that the Commission sponsored it or fund seminars on management that will help set up the people to continue to do better in the future. Mr. Fortuna suggested purchasing banner arms for the street lights for the installation of smaller street banners. Discussion followed.

Mrs. Blaschik and Ms. Sims voiced concern over the Commission funding the market v. other businesses. Discussion followed.

Item tabled.

7. Old Business

a) Transfer Station/Town Garage Report – Status

Mr. Fortuna stated that he has no new information, but that he had asked Mr. Bondi, who was unable to attend the meeting, to explain the process in which the committee arrived at their decision, what other properties were evaluated, and what other options were discussed (private hauling, waste stream management, transfer station). Discussion followed.

The Commission briefly discussed the possibility of the Transfer Station Study Committee attending a meeting and discussing the process. Mr. Fortuna stated that he doesn't have the sense that Mr. Bondi is purposely withholding information, but rather that he's being advised not to disclose the property locations. Mrs. Maggi stated that Nancy Thompson filed an FOI complaint and that Mr. Bondi had to provide the information.

Discussion followed as to whether or not the Commission was drifting away from the purpose of the Commission unless one of the properties being considered has commercial value.

Michelle St. Marie stated that it was her understanding, as well as other area residents, that the Arrigoni Sand Pit is the only site under consideration and that the residents have concerns regarding environmental issues and the process in selecting this site. Discussion followed regarding a cost study being done, the cost of the current transfer station, the use of the current facility by contractors and outside residents, and the environment.

Higganum Cove

Discussion followed regarding the need to clean up the Cove and how one individual who had been actively involved in reviewing the site felt that taking the property by eminent domain would be best.

b) Proposed Potential Sewer Project – Higganum Center and Tylerville

This item was primarily discussed under Higganum Center and Tylerville Village. Mr. Fortuna stated that he'll be able to provide more information after talking to Wright-Pierce and is, hopeful, that a presentation can be made after the election and that Tylerville can be incorporated into that presentation.

c) Discussion/Status of Town Planner Position

Mr. Gillespie stated that the committee recommended to the Board of Selectmen that Liz West be hired. Mr. Gillespie gave a brief rundown on Ms. West's previous working experience and noted that she had outstanding references.

Mrs. Batzner stated that Ms. West would be coming into the Town Office Building to meet people and that she would be starting Monday, 15 September.

The Commission requested that Ms. West attend a meeting. Mr. Gillespie suggested that Mr. Fortuna or a representative from the Commission meet with her.

The Commission thanked Mr. Gillespie for his time and effort he put into helping to hire a new planner.

8. Adjournment

MOTION: Mike Fortuna made the motion to adjourn. Dave Papallo seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

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Recording Clerk

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 8 October 2008, 7:00 p.m.