

**TOWN OF HADDAM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
HADDAM YOUTH CENTER
Wednesday, 9 September 2009, at 7:00 PM
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Change by the Commission***

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

1. Call to Order

Mr. Fortuna called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Attendance

Attendance was taken.

3. Approval of Agenda

Approved as submitted.

4. Michael Price, Goodspeed Opera House, Discuss Potential Theatre in Haddam

Michael Price, executive producer, and Hattie Guin-Kittner, general manager, Goodspeed Opera House, were present.

Ms. West introduced Mr. Price and Ms. Guin-Kittner to the Commission and stated she had spoken to Mr. Price in regard to the possibility of the Goodspeed pursuing a new theatre project in Haddam and coming before the EDC was a good place to start. Ms. West also stated there has been discussion regarding potential new regulations for Tylerville (similar to the Village Regulations).

Mr. Price discussed the process of recycling sets after a show is completed due to sets being too small to move on to other theatres, the cost of rebuilding sets for shows to move on, seating capacity (398 of which 125 seats partially restricted view), the smallness of the

theatre and how the number of personnel on the stage and in the orchestra pit overwhelms an audience which can help by giving the impression of being bigger than it really is, and the history of the opera house originally (not originally built as a theatre; held various other businesses on the various levels of the structure).

Mr. Price stated everyone has a concern in regard to what will replace the jobs that have been in the area and what will increase the tax base within the area. Mr. Price stated the kind of facility that they are interested in is one that is a good economic engine noting the theatre presently brings in approximately 125,000 people a year to the facility with the possibility to do more. Mr. Price also stated he had asked the accounting office what the Goodspeed alone spends in Tylerville – Lukoil (gas) \$10,000-\$12,000 per year; Cooking Co. (catering) \$2,500-\$3,000 per year – and noted there 150-160 employees who also use facilities within Tylerville.

Mr. Fortuna stated the timing is great as the Commission has begun looking at Tylerville as a village and to see what makes sense for the area as well as the potential for a theatre and restaurant. Mr. Fortuna also stated a theatre in Tylerville would fit the bill for economic development. A brief discussion followed in regard to the previously sought after land swap – the parcel could either go for sale or a swap.

Ms. West stated it appears as if Mr. Price would like to expand and there is a need for a theatre and coming across the river would make sense. Ms. West also stated the Commission will need to think about what types of uses within a zoning district would be appropriate within (such as public improvements, do you want to partner with the Economic Development Commission in East Haddam, how does the Commission envision Tylerville being developed).

Mr. Vynalek asked Mr. Price what advantages he sees in the theatre coming to the Haddam. Mr. Price stated, personally, the bridge and the locale of both communities. Mr. Price also stated what sparked their imagination was the railroad, the boat lines, the intermodal aspects of bringing people up the river or from New York (750 subscriber households in Manhattan) and saw it as a natural location to build for both communities (Haddam and East Haddam). Mr. Price stated they tried to have a Labor Day excursion, but could not pull it together in time with Amtrak.

Mr. Papallo asked if funds are available to go through with the proposal. Mr. Price stated the funds were available until the recession hit, but believes the recession will not be long noting the Goodspeed is building 17 houses and there are plans to sell five or six of their buildings. Mr. Price also stated this has been a cooperative venture between the Town of East Haddam, the administration in the Town of East Haddam, and Economic Development (have appeared at every one of their commission meetings – P&Z, Wetlands, and Historic District on behalf of the project).

Mr. Price asked if it would be possible for a combined meeting of the Haddam and East Haddam Economic Development Commissions. Mr. Fortuna stated he has met informally with East Haddam's coordinator and that the two commissions should get together. Melissa Ziobron, Economic Development Coordinator, East Haddam, stated she was unable to attend the Tylerville meeting, but had sent a representative. Mr. Price stated he would like to see the relationship between Haddam grow with various Commissioners and Ms. West also echoed Mr. Price's thoughts.

A brief discussion followed in regard to various productions and potential events, and Bill Berloni, a Haddam resident, who trained Sandy for Annie and continues to train animals.

Karin Blaschik stated she feels it's important for Haddam's EDC to meet with East Haddam's EDC as this opportunity is very important.

Ms. Ziobron stated she would like to hold a special workshop meeting separate from the regular commission business in order to focus on the topic at hand. Ms. West will provide the Commission with a copy of the East Haddam Village District Regulations.

Arthur Abbott asked if the joint meeting would be open to the public. Mr. Fortuna stated yes. Ms. Ziobron asked that the posting of the initial joint meeting be a special meeting (encouraging the public to attend, but limiting their comments in order for the two commissions to focus on the topic at hand) and stated additional meetings and/or public hearings would be held allowing for public comment. Mr. Fortuna stated the initial meetings will need to have a tight agenda so as not to get off on tangents, but the public is welcome to attend.

Mr. Papallo asked if there was any factual information as to whether there was ever a proposal to put a walkway across the bridge. Ms. Ziobron stated yes, there was an engineering study in the late 1990s which deemed it feasible with a cost of approximately \$1.2 million. Ms. Ziobron also stated she believes it is imperative to revisit this topic and will provide a copy of the study to the Commission.

5. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Peter Gillespie made a motion to approve the 12 August 2009 minutes as submitted. Heather Batzner seconded. Motion carried with Mrs. Maggi abstaining.

6. Public Comment

Jail Restoration Committee – Joanne Nesti stated she had previously been before the Commission in regard to the jail restoration and provided an update - funds in the current budget to replace the roof (\$150,000), funds in the 2010-2011 capital plan budget for asbestos and lead abatement (\$80,000), and the committee is currently working on the capital budget for the next five years.

Ms. Nesti stated the committee, which is advisory, would welcome any suggestions, input, opinions, and comments. Mr. Vynalek asked about scheduled meetings. Ms. Nesti stated there are no regularly scheduled meetings as it's difficult to get everyone together; however, the next meeting is Monday, 9/14/2009, 7:00 p.m., Thankful Arnold House, at which time there will be discussion concerning the Request for Proposals to architects for specs for the roof job and the capital plan.

Mr. Fortuna offered EDC's assistance to Ms. Nesti. A brief discussion followed in regard to other buildings within the state which have been restored and how their restoration projects could be used as examples for the jail.

Mr. Papallo asked about estimates for the roof replacement. Ms. Nesti stated there are none to date as it has not yet gone out to bid (noted the committee would like to be historically accurate). Mr. Papallo asked how the currently budgeted amount was arrived at. Ms. Nesti stated George Fellner, architect, did a report approximately five years ago regarding the jail and the amount was taken from there. Ms. Nesti also stated the committee will be looking for matching grants through historical preservation groups and societies, but did note the jail is a town owned building.

7. Old Business

a. Tylerville Subcommittee – Update

Deb Umba asked the EDC's time table regarding Tylerville. Mr. Fortuna stated the Commission has just gotten started noting there has only been one public meeting thus far regarding potential zoning regulations. Discussion followed. Mrs. Maggi stated the subcommittee will be holding a meeting next week (meetings held at Fireworks/Alan's Small Engine Service).

Mr. Fortuna stated an informational meeting was held and there's a list of people who attended with additional names being added. Mr. Fortuna also stated there are three topics to be covered at the next three meetings – 1) general visioning session (what do people see Tylerville being in the next 20 years); 2) the zoning regulations; and 3) infrastructure (sewer, water, streets, etc.). Mr. Fortuna stated Diane Stock has mentioned there is a group at UConn who may be able to assist with a survey.

Ms. West stated DEP has hired a consult, AeCom, to identify where the plume is and where it's coming from (believes they started testing this week). Mr. Vynalek stated he had read that all testing was to be in by 5/29/2009. Ms. West stated Chatham Health District has been doing quarterly testing (an on-going matter) and noted that a lot of people, roughly 40-50 percent, have not been responding to letters to schedule appointments for testing. Ms. West stated no one will be looking for zoning violations. They merely want to get a water sample. (Recording Clerk's Note: Ms. West sent an email informing the Commission that AeCom was hired to do a Phase I environmental study and not water testing as previously reported; and at the conclusion of the study AeCom will address alternative water supply systems to DEP such as public water or drilling wells.)

Further discussion followed regarding the testing – DEP is required to do quarterly testing, but has not been doing so because they're too busy and Chatham Health District has taken on that responsibility. Sharon Botelle asked what Chatham Health is testing for – sodium, trichloroethylene (TCE), herbicides, pesticides – and stated she has only had testing for TCE. Ms. West stated all of it. Mrs. Blaschik asked if AeCom will notify property owners with a letter as Chatham Health did. Ms. West stated she assumes a letter will be sent as they do not have the right to go on a property and take water. Mr. Vynalek asked if AeCom will provide recommendations after the testing is completed. Ms. West stated AeCom will provide DEP with information about where the plume is and what is the best means to remediate and then it's up to DEP to move forward from there.

Mrs. Botelle stated she had spoken to Pat Bow, DEP, and Mr. Bow indicated the money was there for the first round of testing. Paul DeStefano stated that's why it's important for EDC to be working on the Tylerville regulations. Mr. Vynalek asked if DEP will give any guidance as far as whether or not to bring fresh water into the area. Ms. West stated DEP will not.

Discussion followed in regard to bringing public water into Tylerville. If water is brought in, it eliminates the need for remediation by DEP leaving the contaminants in the soil. Ms. West stated DEP has been present during talks with the Connecticut Water Co. Discussion continued as to why the contaminants needed to be cleaned up (impact on the environment) and how the area drains to the Connecticut River. Mr. DeStefano stated he doesn't believe there has been enough pressure placed on DEP. Mrs. Blaschik asked if DEP or the property owner would be paying for the clean up. Ms. West stated it's her understanding it would be the financial responsibility of the property owner; however, DEP would need to prove in Court who the responsible party is. Mr. Papallo asked if there was a Statute of Limitations on something like this. Ms. West stated she didn't think so, but she didn't know.

b. Proposed Potential Sewer Project – Wright-Pierce Study – Higganum Center – Update

Mr. Fortuna stated he continues to compile information to hone in on the right dollar figure for the project. Mr. Fortuna also stated he is trying to obtain the recent DOT borings information in regard to the bridge work in the Center and will compile it with previous boring information from the streetscape project and others done further up the road.

Mr. Fortuna stated he will have a final report for the next meeting and a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen will need to be made.

Gail Powell stated she had read in the Middletown Press that Middletown is having difficult collecting their water fees. A brief discussion followed.

7. New Business

a) New EDC Projects/Initiatives/Discussion

Rossi Property - Mr. DeStefano stated Mr. Mingoello's self-contained sewage unit for an upscale apartment complex is still viable and there is active conversation taking place with the property owners. Mr. DeStefano stated Mr. Mingoello has spoken to Ms. West regarding this and asked if he had come back to EDC. Mr. Fortuna stated no and Ms. West stated Mr. Mingoello has not spoken to her other than he was interested in something.

Eco-Tourism Center – Mrs. Maggi asked if there was an update on the Eco-Tourism Center. Ms. West stated she had no information other than what was in the *Haddam Bulletin*. Discussion followed. Mrs. Maggi asked if the building could be used for the subcommittee meetings as it's a town owned building. Ms. West stated she will find out. (Recording Clerk's Note: Ms. West spoke to the first selectman, who has offered the use of the building to EDC; however, there is no water or heat.)

Tax Incentive Policy – Mr. Gillespie asked if there was an update regarding the tax incentive policy. Mr. Fortuna stated it was forwarded to the Board of Selectmen, but did not recall seeing it on their agenda. Mrs. Batzner will research.

Budget – Mr. Fortuna asked if the funds from 2008-2009 carried forward. Mrs. Batzner stated she didn't believe so, but will find out.

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Dave Papallo made a motion to adjourn. Ed Vynalek seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

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Recording Clerk

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 14 October 2009, 7:00 p.m.