

**TOWN OF HADDAM  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
TOWN HALL  
21 FIELD PARK DRIVE, HADDAM, CT 06438  
WEDNESDAY, 11 JANUARY 2023  
UNAPPROVED MINUTES  
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

**ATTENDANCE**

X	Kate Anderson, Chairman
A	Cortney Emschwiller Swokla
A	Mike Farina
X	David Law
X	Mark Lundgren
A	Robin Munster
X	John Pember (Left at 7:45 p.m.)
X	Doreen Staskelunas, Secretary
X	Bill Warner, Town Planner, AICP
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

**Guest: Mike Karam**

**1. Call to Order**

Ms. Anderson, chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:41 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

The pledge was recited.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

**MOTION:** David Law motioned to approve the 11 January 2023 agenda as submitted. Doreen Staskelunas second. Motion carried unanimously.

**4. Presentation – Bill Warner, Town Planner**

Ms. Anderson thanked Mr. Warner for attending the meeting and informed the Commission that his presentation is the one he previously presented to P&Z about potential areas for commercial development in Haddam (not many).

Mr. Warner stated he gave a modified version of the presentation in September 2021 to P&Z and explained there wasn't much to be concerned with as there isn't much land. At that time, Mr. Warner had identified the Killingworth Road site as a potential location for development; and when Dollar General arose, there was a lot of discussion about changing the regulations and implementing a moratorium. Mr. Warner stated it's important to understand what's available and what you're dealing with before changing the regulations. Mr. Warner stated he made a second presentation between the two Dollar General applications and talked about some changes in the regulations that should be addressed.

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Warner showed the Commission the zoning map and that development should be focused in Higganum Center and Tylerville (Village Districts) as that is where the regulations support higher density development. Mr. Warner pointed out the other commercial zoning districts scattered around town – Route 154, Route 81, and the marina. When zoning was created in the 1950s, these areas were already created (properties split commercial/residential) without much thought and they were left as they were. Mr. Warner noted Haddam was a very different place prior to the construction of Route 9. Route 9 has 30,000 cars per day, and it completely by-passed Haddam (funnels traffic away from Higganum especially).

Mr. Warner stated that 97.4 percent of the town is zoned residential (will never be any commercial development unless the zoning is changed) and 1.9 percent is zoned commercial (includes the Center and Tylerville). Mr. Warner stated there is no need to have a moratorium or overreact. Mr. Warner reviewed small/single ownership zones: Connecticut Yankee (CY), an Industrial Zone, which will not be developed in any way; GCI and Three Oaks Plaza are fully built out; Midway Marina is off the beaten trail (used fully as a marina); and Saybrook Road south of the 82 Connector there are a strip of lots that are zoned commercial (very steep slopes, not deep lots).

Mr. Warner stated other considerations that need to be taken into account include average daily traffic (ADT), rooftops, visibility, site work, and utilities. Traffic counts: approximately 12,000 cars per day go over the Swing Bridge, the same number on Killingworth Road leading to/from Route 9, and 6,000 cars per day Higganum Center. Mr. Warner stated rooftops are a big consideration for retailers and explained how they're calculated (radius around a potential site), the site should be very visible from the road, site work should be workable and utilities.

Three areas left for commercial development: Island Dock Road, Killingworth Road, and Saybrook Road north of Dunkin Donuts.

Killingworth Road - Mr. Warner reviewed the site where the Dollar General was approved as well as the front elevation of the store noting it's not a bad development plan. Mr. Warner spoke in regard to building and lot coverage – currently the town allows maximum 40 percent (building) and 75 percent (impervious surface) – applicant is at 15 percent and 51 percent total coverage with more than half of the site being lawn or landscaped. Mr. Warner believes any further development in this area would not be significant.

Mr. Warner stated the POCD indicates that P&Z should consider rezoning all of the parcels that are zoned commercial but are fully developed as residential. Mr. Warner also stated he was fairly confident that most people who own there will be opposed to rezoning to residential noting that most people who opposed the Dollar General bought in a commercial zone on a state highway for whatever their reasoning may be. Mr. Karam stated their thoughts may be different now with the approval of the Dollar General.

Island Dock (Hall's Power and barn) – Mr. Warner stated this is a very good site – flat parcel and visibility but doesn't have a lot of traffic going by or a lot of rooftops. Mr. Warner reviewed the site in terms of what could happen under the current regulations – 2.5 acres, 108,000 square feet, 75 percent impervious coverage and 40 percent building coverage – allowed 81,675 square feet total impervious and 43,560 square foot building. However, a 40,000 square foot building with 134 parking spaces required, 50,000 square feet of impervious would not fit on the site, but a 30,000 square foot building would. Ms. Anderson asked if that was in addition to the structures that currently exist on site. Mr. Warner stated no, everything would have to come down.

Saybrook Road north of Dunkin Donuts – Mr. Warner pointed out several lots that have 15-20 percent grade noting that they go straight up 15-20 percent grade as well as Larry's Garage, Higganum Veterinary Clinic, and the Union Hall. The one lot that has potential would be Larry's – 5 acres, 218,000 square feet, 75 percent impervious coverage and 40 percent building coverage - allow 163,500 square feet impervious and an 87,000 square foot building. Mr. Warner talked about a recent application in Middletown for a Big Y – 52,00 square feet plus 256 parking spaces - and how it would fit on Larry's site. The

only consideration would be traffic (low), but all other considerations are good. Mr. Warner stated the only two commercially (office and retail) viable sites are Island Dock and Larry's.

**Building and Lot Coverage** - Mr. Warner reported the current regulations are 75 percent impervious which is too much and this will be discussed further with P&Z. Mr. Warner noted Attorney Mark Branse had indicated that in most small towns they require a Special Permit (meet the requirements but allows the Commission more discretion to ask for more things); however, in Haddam it's a Site Plan Review (permitted as of right). Mr. Warner stated at present, retail is allowed as of right (Haddam requires a public hearing) but will be recommending that any new retail construction require a Special Permit. Mr. Warner also stated Haddam currently allows 40 percent building coverage and he will be recommending keep it at 40 percent or go down to 25 percent and total lot coverage down to 60 or 40 percent.

**Signage Regulations** – Mr. Warner explained what is currently allowable (neon, LED, internally illuminated; maximum height of 20 feet). Recommending Neon, LED and any internal illumination be prohibited (allow goose neck lights and up lighting as it's more fitting to Haddam), maximum height 10 feet, and free-standing signs shall be monument style. Also recommending light poles be a maximum of 15 feet and a buffer between a residential use shall be 30 feet.

Mr. Law asked if there has been any research done on what might be able to sit on the CY site. Mr. Warner stated Eversource is the parent company of CY and they're still storing fuel rods on the site.

Mr. Karam asked if the proposed amendments would be enough to deter a big box store. Mr. Warner stated big box is usually 60,000 square feet or more. Mr. Karam asked about another Dunkin'. Mr. Warner stated it would depend on the location; however, some proposals would require the need for more land.

Mr. Karam asked what R2A is. Mr. Warner stated it's a 2 acre residential zone (has found no distinction between R2 and R2A).

Ms. Anderson clarified that there are no other commercial zones in Haddam Neck other than CY. Mr. Warner stated correct.

Mr. Karam asked if EDC is to solicit for new businesses to come to Haddam, if there was a one sheeter of what would attract scalable businesses to the town and how could EDC outreach. Mr. Warner talked about a website page showing available sites and Subway looking for a new location in town. Mrs. Staskelunas asked about the area where CrossFit is located on Candlewood Hill. Mr. Warner stated it is not commercially zoned. It's residential zone non-conforming use.

Ms. Anderson asked if given the historic use of Larry's Garage, can it be assumed that there's contamination and would it be legally difficult to purchase. Mr. Pember stated if it's financed, a Phase I soil test would be performed. Mr. Warner stated petroleum is standard.

Mr. Karam asked if the Merchant House in Tylerville was commercial. Mr. Warner stated yes.

Mr. Lundgren asked if the lot south of new Dollar General was still developable. Mr. Warner stated there are two lots that are developable – the remainder of Lot 7 (2,000 square foot building) and the gravel lot. Mr. Lundgren asked if Haddam is feeling any pressure regarding affordable housing. Mr. Warner stated no pressure. Discussion followed.

Mr. Warner briefly spoke regarding his annual report.

**Community Septic System** - Ms. Anderson asked about the community septic. Mr. Warner stated he believes the design will be done in a couple of months; however, there are no failing systems at this time, and no one will pay to tie into a system. Mr. Warner stated the town can apply for grants when needed.

and if state money is received, the conveyance system could be constructed. Discussion followed in regard to the community septic being built, the need to identify who wants to tie into a system, and if businesses are forced into tying into the system, some of them could go out of business.

Ms. Anderson asked about the Kanaras' plaza. Mr. Warner stated the leaching field is closer to the building under the parking lot and two buildings could be built up near the road.

**Citizens Bank** - Mr. Karam asked if the former Citizens Bank had limited capacity. Mr. Warner stated the bank has a 1,000 gallon tank with poor soils. Mrs. Staskelunas asked about the lease on the building. Mr. Warner stated the Village Market property has been sold to Pete (new owner of the Market) and he has just purchased the bank. Mr. Warner also stated Pete tried to purchase Teri's Package Store (no sale). Noted that Teri's and the bank are a condo property sharing the parking spaces.

**Blueway Commons** - The apartments are looking nice.

**Bridge Road Apartments** - Are close to getting their building permit.

**Rossi** - RFP/RFQ for a licensed professional for has been completed. RFP/RFQ has also been completed for a developer. Mr. Warner noted that the site has been cleaned up quite a bit. The RFP/RFQ is for the front of Rossi with a note to consider potential development of the back portion of the parcel.

**Scovil** - Ms. Anderson asked about the remediation of Scovil. Mr. Warner stated it will go out to bid fairly soon. Ms. Anderson asked if Scovil and Rossi could go out at the same time. Mr. Warner stated he had thought about it and it would be ideal. Discussion followed regarding Scovil and Rossi being two separate bids, but the potential for cost savings if one consultant is awarded both bids; where the Scovil remediation is (everywhere; most is capping; biggest problem is road salt; geo-textile membrane in location of the pond); no update on tenants; and the goal is for the remediation to be completed this year.

**HES Community Challenges Grant** – Did not receive. Mr. Warner stated DECD wants a developer in hand. This site would be much better for a STEAP grant. Would like to start with an open house to let people view the building and discuss options.

**Affordable Housing Plan** - Mr. Warner stated the plan can be found online.

The Commission thanked Mr. Warner for his presentation.

**Recording Clerk's Note:** Copy of presentation on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office and in the Land Use Dept.

## **5. Public Comment**

There were no comments from those in attendance.

## **6. New Business**

### **a. Discussion on Volunteer Planning for Town Sponsored Event**

**Set Date and Time to Remove Streetscape and Gazebo Decorations – Discussion Continued** – The Commission will meet on Sunday, 15 January 2023, 10:00 a.m., Community Center, to remove decorations from the gazebo. Ms. Anderson will contact Chris Corsa, Assistant Director of Public Works, to see what time frame works for his crew to remove the streetscape decorations. Discussion followed regarding the light pole that was knocked down (new pole being purchased) and the light poles that were not working (electrician needed).

**Proposed Purchase of Decorations for Tylerville** – A Capital request for next fiscal year will be made as there are 18 light poles along the sidewalk. Ms. Anderson to speak to the Tylerville business owners to see if they would like – match what is in Higganum Center or something slightly different. Ms. Anderson will send them the link to the decoration website for their review.

Mrs. Staskelunas asked if a tree and additional garlands for the gazebo would be included in the Capital request. Ms. Anderson stated these items can be purchased as a general expense (motion to spend a set limit of money).

#### **b. Updates**

#### **Rossi Property, HES, Higganum Cove, Scovil Hoe, Haddam Center and Bridge Road Sidewalks, Blueway Commons, and P&Z Proposed Retail Building**

Items previously discussed under Mr. Warner's presentation.

#### **c. Budget and 2022/2023 Goals and Strategic Plan**

Ms. Anderson reported that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) has started the budget process and she was planning on putting in for \$7,000. Ms. Anderson noted that a lot of the Commission's funding typically goes towards Fall Festival, Tylerville Tree Lighting, Farmers' Market, etc. Ms. Anderson asked everyone to contemplate how funding should be allocated next year.

Copies of the latest budget runoff distributed to the Commission. The Commission reviewed expenses to date.

**Muckets** – Mrs. Staskelunas asked about the Muckets and if additional monies should be requested for a Mucket Fest. Ms. Anderson stated all of the Muckets have been paid for and she will work with Greg McKenna, Nutmeg Pharmacy, to deliver the Mucket that is designated for him.

**Wayfinding Signage** – Mr. Karam, POCD Implementation Committee (PIC) member, suggested that a separate line item be created for this topic especially since P&Z has recommended the lead on several Action Items be shifted to EDC. Ms. Anderson stated EDC has one line item and when an expenditure is going to be made a motion is made at a meeting; however, it would depend on the dollar value of the item. Mrs. Batzner did notify the Commission that there is a sign that was purchased during former Town Planner Liz Glidden's tenure and DOT would not allow it to go at the end of the 82 Connector (need to get clearance from DOT if there's intent to install a sign in their right-of-way).

**Large Banner Sign** – Ms. Anderson stated the River Days banner is amongst the missing. Mr. Lundgren asked if the Commission would like to replace the banner that goes over Route 154 for a town event such as Fall Festival, River Days, etc. Ms. Anderson stated with the money left this year they may be able to purchase another banner.

#### **d. EDC Membership Openings**

Ms. Anderson reported that she will be asking the BOS to appoint Mr. Karam to the Commission. Ms. Anderson noted that there still remains one (1) vacancy. If anyone is interested or anyone on the Commission knows of someone interested in joining, that they be encouraged to attend a couple of meetings to see what the Commission is about.

#### **e. POCD Action Item**

Tabled. To be placed higher on the agenda in February. Ms. Anderson asked everyone to review the POCD before the next meeting and noted that the POCD Implementation Committee (PIC) is meeting and reviewing the Action Items.

## **7. Old Business**

Ms. Anderson reported on the following:

### **a. Tylerville Construction Planning Updates – Continued Discussion**

**Swing Bridge** – DOT has installed live feed cameras and communication of closures has been good.

### **b. Articles for HK News**

As things are happening in town, EDC has been asked to do a quick write up and send it over to HK News for publishing.

### **c. Website Updates**

Will speak to the First Selectman's assistant about creating three (3) new pages to EDC's website for: River Days, Farmers' Market, and Fall Festival. The idea is for any standing event that's taking place in town will have a dedicated area for people to obtain information.

## **7. Chairman's Report**

Ms. Anderson reported that the Board of Education (BOE) is currently looking at developing a master capital plan as they've hired an architect who has completed a master facilities assessment and over the next 10 years the towns are looking at over \$20 million (base line improvements; not really upgrading anything). BOE undertaking a very complicated and difficult process to evaluate how they want to tackle the renovations. It's very early in the process. BOE will need a lot of help, extra sets of eyes, and a lot of input and it's expensive. Mr. Law noted that the BOE is at the threshold of having to tear the building down and yet they're proposing these patchwork repairs. Ms. Anderson stated it's probably more so for the high school has it's oversized relative to the student population and that's what the state bases their reimbursement on. Noted that the Central Offices is not eligible for reimbursement (not an area for students).

Mr. Lundgren suggested the BOE spend some time on their communications. Ms. Anderson stated she believes Superintendent Wihbey would like to have the full Capital plan done by the end of 2023. Mr. Lundgren asked what happened last year – nothing. Ms. Anderson stated the architects and the engineers will only move as fast the client wants them to. Mrs. Staskelunas stated all the schools need improvements with the high school being the worse. Ms. Anderson stated the BOE backed themselves into a corner by improving the field house (new), the auditorium (total renovation), and a building for the bus garage (new).

Mr. Law spoke in regard to demographics and Greater Haddam was the only area that had a number of growing families that contributed a plus number of students and HES is the school the BOE shutdown.

Mr. Lundgren stated Killingworth supposedly won't grow and Haddam is aging, so no matter what the BOE decides Haddam's percentage will grow each year (believes the residents will be looking at some major taxes in the next five years).

## **9. Approval of Minutes – 14 September 2022, 12 October 2022, and 14 December 2022**

The Commission tabled the approval of the 14 September 2022, 12 October 2022, and 14 December 2022 minutes.

**Recording Clerk's Note:** The 16 November 2022 meeting was cancelled.

## **10. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Doreen Staskelunas motioned to adjourn. Mark Lundgren second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Bunny Hall Batzner*

Bunny Hall Batzner  
Recording Clerk

**The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 8 February 2023,  
at the Community Center, 7 Candlewood Hill Road, Higganum, CT.**