

TOWN OF HADDAM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
ONLINE VIA GOTOMEETING
WEDNESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2020
APPROVED MINUTES
Approved as Amended at the 14 October 2020 Meeting

ATTENDANCE

X	Prem Aithal, Vice Chairman
X	Kate Anderson, Chairman
A	Cortney Emschwiller Swokla
X	Mike Farina
X	David Law
X	Mark Lundgren
X	Cindy MacNeil Sola
X	Robin Munster (Left 7:35 p.m.)
X	John Pember
X	Doreen Staskelunas, Secretary
A	Bob McGarry, First Selectman
A	Kristy Benson, Market Master, Higganum Farmers' Market
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Ms. Anderson, chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Mike Farina motioned to approve the 9 September 2020 agenda as submitted. Mark Lundgren second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Public Comment

Ms. Anderson reported there was no public in attendance and that she had not received anything via email.

Scheduling of In-person Meetings – Mr. Lundgren reported he had recently attended P&Z's in-person meeting at the Haddam Elementary School (HES) gym and felt it was handled very well and perhaps this is something the Commission would want to consider. Ms. Anderson stated she had planned to discuss this matter later in the meeting, but moved forward with discussion by asking Mr. Lundgren to explain how P&Z's meeting was handled. Mr. Lundgren explained the setup within the gym and the requirement to wear masks (speakers a bit muffled). Mr. Lundgren felt this was something EDC could do as they don't usually have a major audience. Mr. Farina suggested using the Community Center. Mr. Lundgren agreed. Ms. Anderson stated she would like to meet in-person as long as the positivity rate and cases for COVID remain low; however, she would like everyone's input as well. Discussion followed in regard to holding hybrid meetings (in-person and online); meeting outside (weather and online connectivity being issues); and risk mitigation (Commission meet in-person only and public attend via online). Ms. Anderson will speak to Mr. McGarry in regard to the Commission holding a hybrid (in-person/online) October meeting.

5. Old Business

a. Higganum Farmers' Market – Update

Mr. Aithal reported the markets have been well attended – 300 to 500 attendees every market, everyone has been respectful in terms of distancing, vendors have been happy, and food trucks present. Mr. Aithal stated one issue has been volunteers (same four core group) and would like more participation from others on the Commission. Ms. Anderson stated if anyone knows of anyone who would be interested in volunteering to contact them. Mr. Aithal spoke in regard to the time slots where volunteers are most needed (setup and breakdown). Mrs. Staskelunas stated the vendors have asked that the Market stick to the 3:30 p.m. start time to allow them time to setup and prepare.

Ms. Anderson reported the Market had been slated to run through 9 October; however, due to the Market being so successful, the vendors have requested the Market be extended. Kristy Benson, Market Master, has emailed vendors to get an estimate from all the vendors to see how they feel about continuing on noting daylight and temperature issues.

Ms. Anderson reported the 9 October Market will be Christmas in October as a lot of the vendors depend on holiday events during the season. There will also be a Kids' Day on Saturday, 10 October 2020. Kid and adult vendors operating at the same time and kids responsible for their own booths (worked out very well last time). Extra volunteers could really be used on these two days.

b. Mucket

Ms. Anderson reported she had two quotes from Icon Poly for the following: 2 – 3 foot statues with mounting brackets (height unknown) at \$594.00 each totaling \$1,188.00 plus shipping \$272.86 for a total of \$1,460.86 of which \$1,000 has already been paid leaving a balance of \$460.86; and 50 – 7 inch mini statues at \$39.95 each plus shipping to be determine for an estimated cost of \$1,997.50. One of the large statues to be donated to Greg McKenna, Nutmeg Pharmacy. Ms. Anderson stated Mr. McGarry is in favor of the donation, but will run it by the town attorney (awaiting final say on the matter).

Discussion followed at length in regard to: 1) where and how to sell the mini statues as EDC cannot accept funds and the creator of Mucket does not want anyone to profit off of them (funds to be donated to a charity, perhaps the food or fuel bank, the backpack program, etc.); 2) should EDC pay for the mini statues upfront; taking pre-orders; whether or not to order 50 mini statues at this time; the holding of a spring celebration (perhaps April) to unveil the Mucket; possibly displaying a mini Mucket at Nutmeg Pharmacy, with Mr. McKenna's permission, for pre-orders; and whether Icon Poly would be opposed to sitting on an order (spring is their busy season)

Prior to the vote, Mr. Aithal asked how long it would take to ship the large statues to the Commission. Ms. Anderson stated there is a 6 to 8 week turnaround at this time and it probably would be the same for the minis. Mr. Aithal stated he was wondering if a second mini Mucket could be purchased to give to the winner of the 2020 Pumpkin Run. Ms. Anderson stated as much as she liked the idea, she would not want to steal the thunder from the spring celebration; and asked Mr. Aithal if he would be willing to wait until the 2021 Pumpkin Run. Mr. Aithal agreed.

Mr. Farina felt purchasing a second Mucket may be a good idea and offered to amend his motion. Discussion followed in regard to ordering up to ten mini Muckets to start and then send in a bulk order.

MOTION: Mike Farina motioned to spend up to \$500 to pay off the balance of the purchase of two large Mucket statues. Mark Lundgren second. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: Mike Farina motioned to spend up to \$500 for the purchase of ten small Mucket statues plus shipping. Prem Aithal second. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Farina suggested someone dress up as a Mucket for the celebration. Mr. Law stated if one of the statues or minis arrives early, it could be shown at the kids Market. Ms. Anderson noted these statues

can be painted so they can be customized. Mrs. Staskelunas asked if Art Wiknik will be receiving a mini Mucket. The Commission agreed!

On a side note, Mrs. Sola reported Mr. McKenna informed her that the former HK Fitness Center space will become a True Value Hardware Store. Taylor and his brother, Corey, will be running the store. Mrs. Staskelunas asked about the Red Barn Hardware Store. Mrs. Sola stated Red Barn is only open on weekends and True Value will not be happening for a while.

6. New Business

a. Holiday Decorations

Ms. Anderson reported that Mrs. Sola had a meeting with Mr. McGarry in regard to possibly having Public Works take over the decorating of Higganum Center. Mrs. Sola stated she had spoken to Mr. McGarry sometime ago noting that all other towns have their Public Works or maintenance departments put up the holiday decorations, and will speak to Mr. McGarry again about the matter.

Mrs. Sola provided an update regarding the decorating: Welcome signs and the Haddam Green will be lighted and taken care of by the Garden Club. Would like to see HES's sign decorated and possibly EDC could include this with the Gazebo decorating. Have contacted everyone who decorated last year – Teri's Package Store, Hi-Way Package Store, Nutmeg Pharmacy (York Tree to decorate), Brewed Awakening and DaVinci (takes care of themselves), Rossi property (taken care of), Fork in the Road, Veterans' Museum. Volunteers from last year holding for this year. Mr. Farina suggested Mrs. Sola contact the fire department to see if they could help in the decorating and this may also help draw the community out.

Due to the pandemic, Mrs. Sola stated she would like to see the decorating be bigger and brighter. Mr. Lundgren asked about Tylerville. Mrs. Sola stated all of the shops in Tylerville take care of themselves and haven't needed EDC's assistance; however, she does check with them every year. Mrs. Sola also stated the Haddam Garden Club takes care of the Welcome to Haddam signs in Tylerville as well.

Mr. Law suggested Santa be at the Gazebo with a Letter to Santa box for children to see Santa and drop their letters off. Mrs. Sola and Ms. Anderson thought this was a great idea. Discussed holding a gazebo and tree lighting event with the high school choir and light refreshments – hot chocolate, coffee, and tea. Ms. Anderson will contact the fire department so as not to conflict with their annual Children's Party.

Mr. Farina asked how long the lights will be left on and suggested, if possible, they stay on past midnight. Mrs. Sola stated she would like the lights turned on 1 December 2020 and turned off 15 January 2021 and noted that the merchants pay for the electricity for the lights on their buildings and would prefer not pushing them on the matter. Mr. Law stated the streetscape and gazebo lights were on timers. A brief discussion followed in regard to putting the lights up prior to Thanksgiving (possibly the weekend before).

Matter to be discussed further at the October meeting.

Fork in the Road, 310 Saybrook Road, Higganum - Mr. Farina asked if anyone knew when Fork in the Road would reopen. Ms. Anderson stated she believes the caterer used by Fork in the Road is closed and that's why it has not opened. Mrs. Staskelunas confirmed that was the situation.

The Truck Bar, 66 Killingworth Road, Higganum - Mr. Lundgren stated Merle McKenzie, owner, has received his liquor permit and they are waiting for the State to allow them to open.

b. Goals/Tasks for 20-21

Ms. Anderson asked the Commission to think about what they would like to accomplish next year and to bring those ideas for discussion to the October meeting.

A brief discussion followed in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic having caused the loss of footing which reflects on what did or did not get done; picking up on the creation of a merchants' association, updating

the EDC website, getting businesses listed and linking them to the town's webpage, and more advertising in terms of a brochure.

Mrs. Staskelunas stated COVID threw everyone into a whirlwind and the Commission should reflect back on what was accomplished – the Farmers' Market being the most successful this year (appreciate Mr. Aithal spearheading this project and Ms. Benson being an amazing market master). Mrs. Staskelunas noted there is still the 90 day plan which the Commission hasn't had an opportunity to work on.

Mr. Law stated at this stage there need to be things that are visible – such as the farmers' market, the holiday lighting – as these are the things that create the buzz, get notice, and are more tangible for people to see that something is happening.

Mrs. Sola stated the Commission will have the lights in December/January, April/May Mucket celebration, and River Days in the fall (hopefully). Discussed holding an event during the summer. Mr. Law spoke in regard to promoting a classic car parade from Eagle Landing to HES with food trucks available.

St. Peter's Car Show, Sunday, 4 October 2020 – Mr. Farina reported St. Peter's will be holding their annual car show again this year.

7. Chairman's Report

Ms. Anderson reported on the following: **Town Planner's Report – Updated** – Emailed to everyone. **Rossi Property** – Their commercial appraisal is complete and has been given to the Town for its review. The documents are confidential and are not subject to FOI. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) will meet Monday, 14 September 2020, unclear if online or in-person, to discuss the matter during Executive Session. Final decision to purchase the property would need to go to a Town Meeting. **Adelbrook** – They are still interested in leasing HES. Noted there is an increase demand for their services. **New Business Activity** – Day Care Center, Tylerville, and Womens' Wellness Center, Haddam, are still moving forward. There is a conceptual plan for 48 apartments in Tylerville. **P&Z, Special Permit to Demolish Single Family Residence, 140 Dublin Hill Road** – P&Z met on Thursday, 3 September 2020, to hear this matter. The structure does have historic significance. P&Z denied the application. The owners of the property can come back before P&Z after the 180-day delay ordinance has been exhausted and that they have shown due diligence.

8. Approval of Minutes

Correction to the 13 May 2020 minutes: page 2, Local Businesses, second line – change "Kenya" to "Kenyon".

MOTION: Doreen Staskelunas motioned to approve the 13 May 2020 minutes as amended. Cindy Sola second. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: Mike Farina motioned to approve the 10 June 2020 minutes as submitted. Prem Aithal second. Motion carried with Mrs. Staskelunas, Mrs. Sola, and Mr. Pember abstaining.

MOTION: Mark Lundgren motioned to approve the 8 July 2020 minutes as submitted. Doreen Staskelunas second. Motion carried with Mr. Pember abstaining.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 14 October 2020.