

**TOWN OF HADDAM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY CENTER
7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM, CT 06441
WEDNESDAY, 23 MAY 2018
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

ATTENDANCE

X	Prem Aithal (6:53 p.m.)
X	Kate Anderson, Secretary/Treasurer
A	Stephen Bayley, Vice Chairman
X	Mike Farina
X	David Fleig
X	Cindy MacNeil Sola, Chairman
X	Lori Maggi
A	Rudy Sturk
A	Lori Tharin
X	Robin Munster, EDC Coordinator
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Sola, chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited.

3. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Anderson requested Infrastructure be added under Old Business. The Commission agreed.

4. Public Comment

Chip Frey, P&Z member, stated as a local businessman, as well as other local vendors are excited about Robin Munster being the EDC Coordinator, as she's done a wonderful job in a short amount of time and there is a lot of good talk taking place amongst the business community. Mr. Frey also stated there have been comments from the business owners at P&Z meetings that no one from P&Z comes to see them, as Mrs. Maggi can attest to, and P&Z has been trying to encourage them to speak to EDC.

Mr. Frey stated he was discouraged by some comments in the previous minutes and that everyone needs to understand that all commissions/boards (volunteers) are a team trying to make Haddam better. Mr. Frey also stated that meetings should not be used for one's own agenda or politics; and he hopes whoever is elected as chairman or vice chairman, pulls the plug on this type of stuff as this is not the place for that type of venting. Mr. Frey asked if you were a business owner looking for a new location and were aware of these types of discussions, would you want to come into this town.

Mr. Frey concluded by stating he appreciates everything everyone does again noting that everyone is a volunteer and should all work together as a team.

Mr. Farina stated he believes those that were present tried to defuse the situation as best as possible and that it was an uncomfortable situation. Mr. Frey stated the Commission has the authority to stop the conversation or to have someone removed whether by request or by the State Police.

5. Approval of Minutes

Corrections to the 14 March 2018 minutes: page 6, Item a. BOE Closing HES, first sentence – delete – “; and we know it’s going to be a sewage treatment facility” and page 6, Item d. Introductions, last sentence – delete - “Introductions took place after adjournment.”

MOTION: Kate Anderson moved to approve the 14 March 2018 minutes as amended. Dave Fleig second. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Maggi commented that she had not received FOI information as Selectman Schlag had offered at the 03/14/2018 meeting. Other Commissioners reported they had not received the information either. Mrs. Maggi asked if the Mission Statement was on the EDC Facebook page. Mrs. Munster stated it is not as she does not have a copy of the Mission Statement. Mrs. Sola asked if it was on the town’s website with Mrs. Munster stating no. Mr. Fleig noted the statement can be found on page 6 of the 03/14/2018 minutes. Mrs. Munster stated she did not receive approval from Lizz Milardo, First Selectman. Mrs. Sola stated she did send the information along to Mrs. Milardo for approval (copy of email provided to Mrs. Munster) and asked Mrs. Munster to check with Mrs. Milardo. Mrs. Munster will follow up on the matter.

7. Old Business

a. Infrastructure

Ms. Anderson reported the committee is planning to take the matter to referendum in November asking the townspeople if the town should spend X amount of dollars to install a sewer treatment plant. Ms. Anderson stated the committee is currently reviewing all the old reports as 80 percent of the information is already available. Ms. Anderson also stated Mike Fortuna is the chairman of the committee and he is very familiar with this topic. The current plan is to assess all of the options, develop a recommendation as to what the most feasible option would be (option could include not doing anything) as the committee is looking at cost, pricing, inflation, etc., and there will be public meetings/hearings/workshops. The Infrastructure Committee meets on the third Thursday of the month, 6:00 p.m., Town Office Building.

Mrs. Sola asked if this is something EDC can help with; and if so, if Ms. Anderson can find out what the committee needs and how EDC can assist. Ms. Anderson stated yes. Mrs. Munster stated having businesses come out to support the proposal would be helpful. Mrs. Sola asked if anyone is going to reach out to the businesses. Ms. Anderson stated it appears that Mr. Fortuna has talked to people and his impression is that everyone is on board. Ms. Anderson also stated Andy Becker, Rossi Project, came to the last infrastructure meeting and discussed what he’s done to date.

Discussion followed in regard to educating people and when the hearing(s) would be held (September/October) as well as the referendum (November) and the Scovil Hoe building. Mrs. Munster stated the town will not be taking the buildings (town has first option); the state will be selling it to a developer. Mrs. Maggi stated she wasn’t aware of this and believes a number of residents are also not aware of this; and asked how the town can control what happens to or what goes into the buildings. Mrs. Munster explained a developer will have to have an idea of what they would like to put into the buildings. Mrs. Munster stated the town needs to look at a seven year plan as everything seems to be falling into place – Haddam Elementary School (HES) closing, Scovil, Rossi, sewers, etc.; and if action isn’t taken now, it will never happen. The Commission agreed. Mr. Farina noted that water is coming to Tylerville and P&Z is working on Village District Regulations for the area (to come to public hearing sometime in June). Mrs. Maggi stated she was still confused about how the town can ask a potential developer what they can and cannot put in the building. Mr. Frey stated it’s in the Village District. Mrs. Munster stated the town has regulations and it’s still in the district. Mrs. Maggi asked if the Scovil Hoe is in the Higganum Village District. Mr. Frey and Mrs. Munster both said yes.

Mr. Farina stated that the organization that held the workshop/charrette seems to have connections to state agencies and knows where federal funds are available. Mrs. Munster stated there is another workshop scheduled – Thursday, 31 May 2018, 6:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m., Community Center, 7 Candlewood Hill Road, Higganum.

b. Mucket

Ms. Anderson reported the Commission will be voting on spending the money for the design fee as the design company cannot begin development until they receive the development fee; however, once the fee is received, things will move quickly with the Commission receiving prototypes.

Ms. Anderson stated the fund raiser yielded \$2,893.52; however, it will take 10 to 20 days to process release of the funds (hand over to EDC for release to the design company). The design development fee is \$3,190 and it covers everything start to finish. Ms. Anderson suggested the use of EDC funds paying for the design fee and the fund raiser pay for the mucket statues and shipping costs when they are ready, especially since the end of fiscal year is close. Mrs. Sola asked if the price includes the small muckets as well with Ms. Anderson responding yes. Ms. Anderson stated the company will design the large one and then scale it down in size. Discussion followed in regard to the fund raiser not covering the entire design fee amount and the need for approximately \$300 out of the EDC budget. Mr. Fleig asked if this will cover only the design or will it cover the prototype too. Ms. Anderson stated it will cover a three dimensional design model (big and small model included). Mr. Fleig asked the cost of manufacturing them. Ms. Anderson stated the design is being based off of a three foot statue - \$594 a piece including mounting materials (ready for placement) – and the shipping will be a few hundred dollars (\$500 was mentioned later in the discussion) as it's coming from Nebraska.

Mr. Aithal asked for a brief update which Ms. Anderson provided. Mr. Aithal asked if shipping costs could be lessened with multiple statues. Ms. Anderson stated yes, but more than 20 would need to be ordered. Mr. Fleig stated \$300 is needed to cover the difference between the fund raiser plus \$500 for shipping and handling. Ms. Anderson stated she is not thinking of ordering statues this fiscal year. Mr. Farina asked if there were sufficient funds to cover everything the Commission is hoping to do – mucket and snowflakes. Mrs. Sola stated yes. Ms. Anderson stated she there is \$3,600 remaining in the budget.

MOTION: Lori Maggi moved to approve the use of \$296.48 from the EDC budget for the Higganum Mucket. Mike Farina second. Motion carried unanimously.

c. Market on Green - Vote

Mrs. Munster reported the first market is scheduled for tomorrow night, 05/24/2018, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., 14 vendors will be present (only from Haddam), and outlined when the additional markets will be held through September. Mrs. Munster stated she will need help and any assistance would be appreciated. Discussion followed in regard to garbage – vendors told to “carry in, carry out” and two garbage cans will be available for patrons; bands entertaining at the markets; and if all goes well, consideration of holding a holiday market. Mr. Aithal suggested soliciting feedback from patrons and vendors.

Mrs. Maggi read a letter from Lori Tharin, EDC Commissioner, regarding the market. Although she could not attend, she would like to vote “yes” for the market as it's a wonderful opportunity for our town businesses to network and support each other as well as showing strength and commitment that our town is a great place to live and do business.

Mrs. Munster reported that since she has been speaking to the businesses, she has gotten a number of them to go to town hall to register their business names.

MOTION: Kate Anderson moved to hold a Market on the Green every fourth Thursday except for August, which will be the fifth Thursday, May through September 2018. Lori Maggi second. Motion carried unanimously.

d. Light Poles, Snowflakes

Mrs. Munster reported the proposed purchase of 13 – 2.5 foot star snowflake silhouette with 42 LED bulbs and mounting brackets at a cost of \$3,324. Mrs. Maggi asked where the snowflakes will be mounted. Mrs. Munster stated on the 13 streetscape light poles (Route 81). Ms. Anderson asked why they cannot go on the Eversource poles. Mrs. Munster stated the town owns the streetscape poles. Mrs. Maggi asked if any of the snowflakes will be going to Tylerville. Mrs. Sola stated the town has to own the poles. Mrs. Munster stated if lighting is included when the sidewalk is installed, then it could be done. Ms. Anderson asked if any business owners would be willing to hang a snowflake from their buildings. Mrs. Sola stated the next step for Tylerville is to concentrate on making sure town owned light poles are installed when the streetscape is being constructed. Mrs. Munster stated the snowflakes are the same as the ones hung along Main Street, Middletown. Mr. Fleig noted it's only \$255 per snowflake. Discussion followed in regard to life expectancy of the LED bulbs and the need for proper storage. Mrs. Sola stated she will speak to Mrs. Milardo about EDC using the small room to the front of the Community Center for storage of Christmas decorations, etc.

MOTION: Kate Anderson moved to approve the expenditure of \$3,324 for the purchase of 13 – 2.5 foot star snowflakes. Dave Fleig second. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Farina stated the next thing the Commission needs to try to get started again is the Christmas Gathering that Higganum Pharmacy used to hold. Mrs. Sola noted Greg McKenna needed to stop the event as he no longer has the space. It was suggested the use of the Community Center.

Ms. Anderson suggested incorporating the snowflake lighting along with a holiday market. A brief discussion followed in regard to one event each in Higganum and Tylerville. Mrs. Maggi stated it's unclear about the tree lighting in Tylerville at this time.

Mrs. Maggi stated she has been hearing a lot of squawking from our East Haddam neighbors that driving through Tylerville is terrible and it's an eyesore as they are going over the bridge into beautiful East Haddam village. Mrs. Maggi also stated some business owners are trying to pay attention to everyone's comments and are trying to spruce up their properties as best as they can afford. Mr. Farina stated there should be no comparison between the two areas as they are apples to oranges, each is unique, and everyone should do the best that they can. Mr. Farina also stated East Haddam is lucky they were left with that area; however, Haddam does not have that in Tylerville and we are working with what we have and we should be happy. Mrs. Munster stated do not feel as if you need to one up someone else. Discussion followed with Mrs. Maggi noting that her friend and business partner, Karin Blaschik, received a notice from East Haddam complaining about their structure.

7. New Business

a. Budget

Mrs. Sola reported the Commission will not be working on the budget until they receive the funds for the next fiscal year. Ms. Anderson reported the town meeting to vote on the 2018-2019 budget is scheduled for Wednesday, 30 May 2018.

Mrs. Maggi stated it was a unanimous vote to approve the water for Tylerville. Project to begin in 2019.

b. Holistic Wellness Center Opening in Higganum

Mrs. Munster reported she has heard the business has been registered, but has heard nothing further.

Mrs. Munster also reported that the following businesses have or will be leaving town shortly: Whole Harmony, Tylerville, and Red Neck Gourmet Donut Trailer, Higganum. Mrs. Munster stated the Rolling Donut would like to come to Haddam and she has attempted to contact the property owner where Red Neck Donut was with no response. If anyone can think of another location, please let her know.

c. EDC Surrounding Town Meeting/Gathering of Chairs

Mrs. Munster reported all chairmen are hot on the use of Eagle Landing and possibly moving Music on the River to Eagle Landing (easier access and more parking). All chairmen from Haddam, East Haddam, Chester, and Deep River will have to make a valid argument to the DEEP Commissioner.

d. CT Trail Day – Promote Haddam for Trails

Mrs. Munster reported this will be held the beginning of June and it will be on the Facebook page and the town website. Ms. Anderson stated it's scheduled for 2 and 3 June 2018.

e. Community Garden

Mrs. Munster reported she is not working on this.

f. Traveling White Board

Mrs. Munster reported there is no funding; perhaps next fiscal year. Mrs. Sola and Mrs. Munster explained the concept of the white board (3 feet by 2 feet easel; approximately \$150 on Amazon). Ms. Anderson stated sometimes when a job site is shut down, the company she works for has materials they are willing to give away and will look for a white board.

g. Small Business Week

Mrs. Sola asked when Small Business Week is held. Mrs. Munster reported it has already taken place.

h. Tylerville Regulations and P&Z

Mrs. Maggi stated she had requested this item be on the agenda as she feels EDC should be, at the very minimum, given updates as to the regulations in Tylerville. Mr. Farina reported P&Z has finalized the regulations with a hearing scheduled for Thursday, 21 June 2018, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 21 Field Park Drive, Haddam; and the regulations can be accessed on the Land Use web site. Mr. Farina also stated there was a lot of input from the merchants and residents, concerns were voiced and understood, and believes the consensus was P&Z will plan for the future, but will keep an open, realistic mind to what is needed now.

Mrs. Maggi stated she will no longer be attending P&Z meetings as she doesn't have the physical make-up for them; however, the P&Z Commission is phenomenal, they do a great job, and they are human beings trying to listen to everybody's input from everybody's own perspective while trying to apply it to the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Mrs. Maggi also stated some of the meetings got heated and she is thankful to the P&Z Commission.

Mr. Farina stated it's a passionate subject for everyone, especially if you own a business; but believes P&Z has reached the best compromise, but this does not stop P&Z from revisiting the matter at a later date and modifying the regulations. Mrs. Maggi stated she believes it's thought that because the water is coming in, all of sudden everything will be developed; and she doesn't believe it will happen overnight.

Mr. Frey stated other than the water, there is a grant to install a sidewalk (south side of Bridge Road) which is something the townspeople had indicated within the POCD they wanted – a walkable village; and this was something P&Z had to work around while encouraging businesses. Mr. Frey also stated the proposed regulations are similar to Higganum Village; and P&Z is trying to encourage the connection of Brookes Court and Mike Epright's property where P&Z would allow increased property coverage and narrower frontages (they would gain lots and some of their property would be more accessible). Mr. Frey stated he's encouraged that at least there's a plan.

Mrs. Maggi asked why the sidewalks are on the south side. Mr. Frey stated he does not know why and explained how Liz Glidden and Jim Ventres, Town Planners in Haddam and East Haddam, respectively, have filed for a federal grant for a sidewalk on the Swing Bridge. Mr. Frey made it clear that this may not happen, but at least an attempt is being made.

Mrs. Maggi asked Mr. Frey if Patrick Pinnell has a business interest with Tylerville. Mr. Frey stated no, that his job is planning and he's offered ideas/suggestions. Mrs. Sola noted he planned the actor housing in East Haddam.

Ms. Anderson asked if there is an update on funding for the Swing Bridge. There was no update. Mr. Farina stated there were some rumblings about roundabouts in Tylerville. A brief discussion followed.

i. Scovil Hoe Workshop – Follow Up

Mr. Aithal reported there were a number of breakout sessions, they are looking for feedback on what the town would like to see the buildings used for, and the presenters have a number of contacts throughout the state. Mr. Aithal showed a site map that was used at the presentation. Mr. Aithal will be attending the second workshop and will provide an update.

j. Election of Officers

Tabled until Wednesday, 13 June 2018.

k. Haddam Elementary School (HES) Closing

Mr. Farina stated even though the school/property belongs to the school board, the town should be exerting pressure looking for funding for senior housing or some utilization that would be an incentive as fill with the Rossi property. Mr. Farina stated why he brought up senior housing is due to there being a number of Haddam seniors who are looking to downsize and would like to stay in town. Mrs. Sola talked about senior housing being done at the former Woodrow Wilson High School. Discussion followed.

8. Adjournment

MOTION: Kate Anderson moved to adjourn. Mike Farina second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 13 June 2018.