

**TOWN OF HADDAM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY CENTER
7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM, CT 06441
WEDNESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2023
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

ATTENDANCE

X	Kate Anderson, Chairman
A	Kristy Benson Amarante
X	Curtis Browne
X	Cortney Emshwiller Swokla
X	Mike Farina
X	Mike Karam
X	Stacey Kinney
X	David Law
X	John Pember
X	Doreen Staskelunas, Secretary (Arrived 6:42 p.m.)
X	Bill Warner, AICP, Town Planner (Left 7:36 p.m.)
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Ms. Anderson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: David Law motioned to approve the 8 November 2023 agenda as submitted. Mike Farina second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Public Comment

There was no public in attendance.

5. New Business

**a. CT Main Street
Accelerator Program**

Ms. Anderson reported the application was successfully submitted on Friday, 3 November 2023, and that she has not heard anything to date, but as soon as she does she will let everyone know. Ms. Anderson also reported that the Higganum and Tylerville liaisons are Courtney Emshwiller Swokla, HK Health & Fitness, Higganum, and Bridget Marshall, Oh Fudge, Tylerville.

Mr. Browne stated if selected, CT Main Street will need to know the town accepts the offer by Monday, 27 November 2023. Ms. Anderson agreed. Mr. Browne asked about getting the whole team together prior to the 27th so everyone knows what to expect. Mr. Browne stated if the town does not win the program, he would like to see EDC take the same team and thoughts and see about moving forward on their own. Ms. Anderson stated that's a good point and if not selected, EDC still should use their CT Main Street membership. The Commission agreed.

b. Seasonal Events

Grim's Haunted House/Fall Festival – Ms. Anderson stated although EDC was not directly involved, the event was a great success. Have yet to hear what the final donation will be; however, Liberty Bank has teamed up with the Lions Club and will be matching 25 percent of all donations received. Once the final number is available, Ms. Anderson will advise.

Holiday Decorations – Confirm Date – The Commission will meet at the Community Center on Sunday, 26 November 2023, 10:00 a.m., to decorate the gazebo. Ms. Anderson noted that Public Works will be responsible for decorating the light poles. Ms. Anderson stated Bogue Farm will be donating a real tree with a tree stand for the gazebo. Ms. Anderson will reach out to them. A brief discussion followed in regard to having “presents” under the tree.

Ms. Kinney asked if the decorative grasses that are located by the Village Market will be decorated for the holidays too. Mr. Karam stated he would be relocating them for the winter. Ms. Anderson stated the businesses generally take care of decorating their own buildings and that there are some volunteers who help to decorate other areas within the Center.

Holiday Pop Up Market – Event begins Friday, 17 November 2023, until Sunday, 17 December 2023, at HES. Ms. Anderson stated nothing has been asked of EDC other than general support. Kristin Melnick has established the event as a non-profit and has additional help this year.

Tylerville Tree Lighting – Friday, 1 December 2023 – The Commission voted to donate \$500 to this event and the money has been deposited into their account. Tree lighting, refreshments, Santa, and presents for the kids are planned. A very nice event.

Mrs. Staskelunas asked if the Commission had specified what the \$500 was to be used for. Ms. Anderson stated no, that they probably use it for the food and the presents. Mrs. Staskelunas asked if it was for the decorations. Ms. Anderson stated no. A brief discussion followed regarding Santa.

c. Updates

Ms. Anderson reported on the following:

Rossi Property – The town continues to work with the developer that is still interested in the parcel - just going back/forth on some ideas. Mr. Warner stated there is a good solid concept plan in the hands of the attorneys to negotiate a purchase and sales agreement. Mr. Warner noted that the \$1.5 million in state funding is contingent upon the town getting a developer. Mr. Warner stated hopefully, by the end of the year, there will be more information regarding this matter as well as other projects within the Center. Mrs. Staskelunas asked if the townspeople will need to vote on this at a town meeting. Mr. Warner stated yes.

HES – The Board of Selectmen (BOS) interviewed three (3) developers – Rak Realty, Heritage Housing, and Elm Tree Communities (developer of Blueway Commons, Tylerville) - who submitted on the senior housing portion of HES. The grant money received required the town to go out to bid for that portion again. Ms. Anderson stated the interviews with all three (3) companies were very good interviews as was the information received. Mr. Warner stated the town will need to again negotiate with the selected developer and come up with a purchase and sale agreement; and after that's completed, a presentation can be made to the town. Ms. Anderson stated this will need to be voted on at a town meeting.

Mr. Warner spoke in regard to the close proximity Rossi and HES as well as the community septic being located between the two parcels and a community playground being proposed on HES. Mr. Warner stated he has arranged a summit of all the different consultants and developers that are involved in this matter to discuss how this can all be pulled together. Mr. Warner also stated that they are doing some work with the town garage which could also be very exciting. Mr. Warner stated that the Rossi property cannot support a septic system and that will need to be a part of the community septic system.

Mr. Karam stated he thought Rossi could not support housing and asked if it was just along a specific stretch of the property. Mr. Warner stated the town's consult has indicated that the area to the front could be very interesting.

Mr. Karam asked about the HES roof project. Mr. Warner stated it's complete and the sealant will be done in the spring. Mr. Browne asked if there would be any impact on the roof due to the lack of sealant. Mr. Warner stated no, and noted that the town's architect has been on site almost every other day as well as the material supplier who provides the guarantee are watching the work.

Higganum Cove – Mr. Warner stated the Cove is great. The overlook is being constructed – granite wall with footings and backfilling. There's been discussion regarding a half-roof on the overlook. Project is moving along nicely. Split rail fencing has been installed. Have applied for a \$10,000 Rockfall grant to match the existing \$8,500 state funding to create a pollinator garden and walking trail through the upper ruins. Mr. Farina asked about signage noting that Gateway does have funding. Mr. Warner stated interpretive signage was also included in the Rockfall application. One Eagle Scout project currently underway – as you go down to the river, have cleared out an overlook where benches and mulch will be installed. Mr. Warner noted that there has been no vandalism since all the work has been taking place.

Ms. Anderson stated she's aware the BOS is having the town attorney review the deed. Mr. Warner stated the Cove Committee would like to ask the BOS to 1) appoint them as a permanent committee (similar ordinances as Park & Rec which allows them to make rules) and 2) to restrict the deed so it becomes a permanent preserve. Mr. Law asked if the Cove Committee didn't want the Cove to become a Park & Rec property. Mr. Warner stated no, they want the Cove preserved and do not want anything active down there.

Scovil Hoe – Mr. Warner stated the tenant, the developer, and the engineers are working on where they want pavers, seating areas, and different types of things like that. Basically, doing the engineering for the final development for the parking which will serve as the cap. Once that's complete, the town will go out to bid to do the remediation. Mr. Farina noted there were a number of cars on site a week ago. Mr. Warner stated it is a good group with good vision for the site – create different store fronts (florist, bakery), things that contribute to weddings (wedding venue with a full kitchen which could be a restaurant too), would like to try to have a brewery. Mr. Warner stated they cannot have too many seats as the site is limited to 7,500 gallons. Mr. Warner stated it is Tom McDowell, Connecticut Wedding Group, and they were bought out by a wedding group out of New Jersey. Mr. Warner stated they are very excited about having an industrial look property.

Mr. Karam asked how much of the green will be used for the septic. Mr. Warner stated not much at all and they will not be affecting any trees. Mrs. Staskelunas asked how many systems would be going in. Mr. Warner stated the Scovil septic was always going out to the green.

Swan Hill – The Haddam Land Trust (HLT) had a cleanup day the other weekend. They put out a letter providing a status of the trails – acknowledge they have gotten overgrown and are trying to rectify the matter.

6. Old Business

a. Tylerville Businesses/Swing Bridge Construction

Grant Application Update - Ms. Anderson thanked the subcommittee for meeting prior to the regular EDC meeting and for moving this matter along.

Mr. Warner distributed copies of the motions (copy on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office and the Land Use Office) noting that the new motions are in bold print and the previous motions are in regular print. Mr. Warner stated with these motions everyone would be almost to \$20,000 with the exception of one and then the Commission would be done.

Prior to the vote, Ms. Anderson noted that the Commission had previously approved Oh Fudge for June, July, and August for a total of \$15,000 and that this would bring them up to \$20,000. Ms. Anderson stated she would imagine their losses are greater than what the Commission is covering and also imagines they are thankful for this opportunity.

MOTION: Kate Anderson motion to approve business interruption grant application submitted by Oh Fudge, 1588 Saybrook Road, in the amount of \$5,000 for the month of September. Mike Farina second. Motion carried unanimously.

Prior to the vote, Ms. Anderson noted that the Commission had previously approved an amount of \$13,586 for June, July, and August.

MOTION: Kate Anderson motioned to approve business interruption grant application submitted by Subway/JK Bridge Group LLC, 106 Bridge Road, in the amount of \$5,000 for the month of September. David Law second. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Warner stated this next motion is a little unique in that River's Edge submitted for July and August, have now submitted the June and have demonstrated a loss of \$5,000. Applicant has indicated a \$31,000 loss in September; however, their account is on vacation and out of state. Mr. Warner recommended the condition – "subject to submission of accountant's September certification demonstrating the loss to the town planner" be included in the motion and that would get them to \$20,000.

MOTION: Kate Anderson motioned to approve business interruption grant application submitted by River's Edge Home Center/J&L Milardo, LLC, 100 Bridge Road, in the amount of \$10,000 for the months of June and September subject to submission of the accountant's September certification demonstrating the loss to the Town Planner. Doreen Staskelunas second. Motion carried unanimously.

Prior to the vote, Mrs. Staskelunas asked if they had met all of their other criteria. Mr. Warner stated yes, noting that the loan agreements are being drafted by the town attorney. Ms. Anderson noted that they were previously approved for June, July, and August; therefore, with the September addition they will meet the maximum amount (\$20,000).

MOTION: Kate Anderson motioned to approve business interruption grant application submitted by Tony's Package Store, 95 Bridge Road, in the amount of \$5,000 for the month of September. Mike Farina second. Motion carried unanimously.

Prior to the vote, Ms. Anderson noted that they had previously been approved for \$15,000 for June, July, and August. They will meet their maximum limit (\$20,000).

MOTION: Kate Anderson motioned to approve business interruption grant application submitted by River Valley Provisions, 95 Bridge Road, in the amount of \$5,000 for the month of September. Stacey Kinney second. Motion carried unanimously.

HK Now Advertising - Ms. Anderson reported that she will be putting a pause on the half-page ad that is currently being run and will update it to reflect the Tylerville Tree Lighting event. After that the ad will be pulled. A brief discussion followed regarding a post card outlining alternating lane closures and some overnight closures. Ms. Anderson stated the businesses are still having significant losses and that Bob McGarry and Irene Haines, First Selectmen of Haddam and East Haddam, respectively, have been working with DOT to come up with some type of incentive program so the businesses could distributed a voucher to their customers to incentivize them to continue shopping at their businesses.

b. Budget - 2023/2024 Goals and Strategic Plan and 2024/2025 Budget

2024/2025 Budget - Ms. Anderson reported that budget requests for 2024/2025 are out and are due the end of November. The requests came with the additional request to keep the line items flat. Ms. Anderson proposed that EDC's request be just under \$6,150. Mr. Law asked if the Commission funds anything that has taken a hit due to inflation, fuel surcharges, etc. Ms. Anderson stated the Commission's expenses vary year to year depending on what is asked of the Commission.

2023/2024 Budget – Ms. Anderson stated the current runoff reflects recent expenditures and noted that the payment for the band at the Fall Festival should not have come out of EDC's budget. Mrs. Staskunas asked where it should have come out of. Ms. Anderson stated the Fall Festival has its own line item within the budget. **River Days - Fireworks** – Mr. Law asked Ms. Anderson if she had any further information regarding a potential move to the Haddam Neck Fairgrounds. Ms. Anderson stated she has received mixed feedback and has not approached the Fair Association. **Disruption Funding** – Mr. Karam asked Mr. Warner should the Commission contemplate allocating disruption funding for Higganum Center in preparation of the work that will be taking place with Scovil, Rossi, and HES. Mr. Warner stated no. **Potential Expenses for the Remaining Fiscal Year** - Ms. Anderson stated historically money has been designated to the farmers' market for signage, etc., and there has been discussion regarding an arts festival. Mr. Karam asked about painting the gazebo. Mrs. Batzner stated that's a Lions Club issue and they've been made aware. A brief discussion followed – perhaps a combined effort with different civic organizations during the spring. Ms. Anderson will reach out to the Lions president. **Wayfinding** – A brief discussion followed in regard to there being a small portion of funding within the CT Main Street program and additional signage should be a capital project. Mr. Warner suggested submitting a capital request this year.

c. POCD Action Items

Ms. Anderson stated the Commission seems to be making good progress on the Action Items. Ms. Anderson stated it won't be long before the updating process will begin.

d. 2023 Farmers' Market – Update

Ms. Anderson reported the season has come to an end; however, Bogue Farm received permission to continue on their own for a couple of additional weekends at HES. Since Mrs. Benson Amarante has opened her own business, making it will be difficult for her to continue running the Market as she has been, the thought has been to look for a group of individuals to run the Market next season. If anyone is interested in helping or you know of someone who would be interested, please let Ms. Anderson know.

e. Wayfinding Campaign

Mr. Karam stated he needs to obtain quotes for designing and building the signs. Will wait to find out how the Accelerator Program goes.

8. Chairman's Report

Ms. Anderson reported on the following:

Board of Education (BOE) Community Conversation – Thursday, 16 November 2023 another conversation regarding the master plan will be conducted. The BOE thought they would have been further along than they are. They may have narrowed the options down to three (3). Because they are not receiving a lot of community feedback they are holding additional conversations. BOE did hire an owner's representative who will act as an extension of them. Mr. Browne felt the architect gave a shot at defining the phases of the scope for each one and also started to put range of financial numbers. Ms. Kinney stated she feels there was so much push back regarding the closing of HES and now the BOE is looking for more. Ms. Kinney stated she could understand the frustration. Discussion followed.

9. Approval of Minutes – 13 September 2023 and 4 and 11 October 2023, and 1 November 2023

MOTION: Doreen Staskelunas motioned to approve the 13 September 2023 regular meeting minutes as submitted. David Law second. Motion carried with Cortney Emshwiller Swokla and Stacey Kinney abstaining.

MOTION: Mike Farina motioned to approve the 4 October 2023 special meeting minutes as submitted. David Law second. Motion carried with Cortney Emshwiller Swokla, Stacey Kinney, and Mike Karam abstaining.

MOTION: David Law motioned to approve the 11 October 2023 regular meeting minutes as submitted. John Pember second. Motion carried with Cortney Emshwiller Swokla abstained.

MOTION: Doreen Staskelunas motioned to approve the 1 November 2023 special meeting minutes as submitted. Cortney Emshwiller Swokla second. Motion carried with David Law abstaining

9. Review Next Meeting Date & Location – Wednesday, 13 December 2023, Community Center

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 13 December 2023, at the Community Center, 7 Candlewood Hill Road, Higganum, at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Farina announced that the Knights of Columbus sent a check to Social Services to purchase turkeys for approximately 30 families and they will be working on something for the Senior Center.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: Kate Anderson motioned to adjourn. Stacey Kinney second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bunny Hall Batzner
Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

**The next regular meeting is Wednesday, 13 December 2023,
at the Community Center, 7 Candlewood Hill Road, Higganum, CT.**

Motions for Business Interruption Loan Program – September (June) Sales figures.

Motion to approve business interruption grant application submitted by Oh Fudge, 1588 Saybrook Rd, in the amount of \$15,000 for the months of June, July and August with the condition 1. execution of a loan agreement prepared by the Town Attorney with collateral as deemed sufficient.

Motion to approve business interruption grant application submitted by Oh Fudge, 1588 Saybrook Rd, in the amount of \$5,000 for the month September.

Motion to approve business interruption grant application submitted by Subway/JK Bridge Group LLC - 106 Bridge Rd in the amount of \$13,586 for the months of June, July and August with the condition 1. sales tax reports be submitted and 2. a loan agreement prepared by the Town Attorney is executed with collateral as deemed sufficient.

Motion to approve business interruption grant application submitted by Subway/JK Bridge Group LLC - 106 Bridge Rd in the amount of \$5,000 for the month September.

Motion to approve business interruption grant application submitted by Rivers Edge Home Center/J&L Milardo, LLC – 100 Bridge Rd in the amount of \$9,889 for the months of July and August with the condition a loan agreement prepared by the Town Attorney is executed with collateral as deemed sufficient.

Motion to approve business interruption grant application submitted by Rivers Edge Home Center/J&L Milardo, LLC – 100 Bridge Rd in the amount of \$5,000 for the month of June.

Applicant indicates they have \$31,000 loss in September but accountant on vacation out of state. I recommend the following motion:

1 OF 2

EDC - 8 Nov 2023
Tylerville Grant Application
(2 pages)
8 Nov 2023 motions in
BOLD PRINT

Motion to approve business interruption grant application submitted by Rivers Edge Home Center/J&L Milardo, LLC – 100 Bridge Rd in the amount of \$10,000 for the month of June and September subject to submission of accountant's September certification demonstrating the loss to the Town Planner.

Motion to approve business interruption grant application submitted by Tony's Package Store – 95 Bridge Rd in the amount of \$15,000 for the months of June, July and August with the condition 1. a letter is submitted from accountant certifying the losses 2. execution of a loan agreement prepared by the Town Attorney with collateral as deemed sufficient and 3. adjustment of loan amount based on award from the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission as necessary.

Motion to approve business interruption grant application submitted by Tony's Package Store – 95 Bridge Rd in the amount of \$5,000 for the month of September.

Motion to approve business interruption grant application submitted by River Valley Provisions – 95 Bridge Rd , in the amount of \$15,000 for the months of June, July and August with the condition 1. a letter is submitted from accountant certifying the losses 2. execution of a loan agreement prepared by the Town Attorney with collateral as deemed sufficient and 3. adjustment of loan amount based on award from the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission as necessary.

Motion to approve business interruption grant application submitted by River Valley Provisions – 95 Bridge Rd , in the amount of \$5,000 for the month of September.