

**TOWN OF HADDAM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY CENTER
7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM, CT 06441
WEDNESDAY, 10 JANUARY 2018
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

ATTENDANCE

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| X | Kate Anderson, Secretary/Treasurer |
| X | Stephen Bayley, Vice Chairman |
| X | Mike Farina |
| X | Cindy MacNeil Sola, Chairman |
| X | Lori Maggi |
| X | Rudy Sturk |
| X | Lori Tharin |
| X | Larry Maggi, Selectman |
| X | Robin Munster, EDC Coordinator |
| X | Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk |
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1. Call to Order

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

2. Attendance

Attendance was taken.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Lori Maggi moved to approve the 10 January 2018 agenda as submitted. Steve Bayley second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Presentation by Jon Curtis, Regional Planner, RiverCOG

Mr. Curtis reported there are two different studies the RiverCOG has been working on: 1) GrowSmart - released in 2016, and 2) a Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (RPOCD) - currently working on and plan to have out in the fall of 2018. Mrs. Maggi asked Mr. Curtis if he was asked to make the presentation or if he's going from town to town. Mr. Curtis stated he was asked by Liz Glidden, Town Planner, to make the presentation. Mr. Curtis explained what RiverCOG is and what they provide to the participating towns, Haddam being one.

Mr. Curtis reviewed the GrowSmart report which covered aging population, stagnation/declining population, housing prices, employment sectors, education and health care, infrastructure (lack of), and natural and recreation resources to name a few. Recommendations that came from GrowSmart: 1) balance

development and conservation, 2) build on existing economic assets, and 3) hedge the future. Mr. Curtis reported that of the three recommendations, the GrowSmart Advisory Committee agreed to work on the following first: 1) create regional development entity and 2) develop makerspace for artisanal manufacturers. Mr. Curtis reported that due to the state budget crisis, things are on hold for the moment.

In regard to the RPOCD, Mr. Curtis explained there have been two kickoff meetings – asked people what they're seeing, what's important to them, and what do they want RiverCOG to focus on – as well as putting out a survey. Mr. Curtis reviewed the survey feedback – quality of life, employment opportunities, recreational opportunities, housing opportunities, taxes, and cost of living.

Mr. Curtis stated through workshops people were asked what their priorities were for the region - attracting/retaining young people, housing affordability, promoting region and regional identity, economic opportunity, addressing climate change, and improving transportation. Also mentioned was long term health care and protecting the region's natural environment.

Mr. Bayley asked if there would be any additional workshops. Mr. Curtis stated another meeting is scheduled for mid-March. At that time the existing conditions chapter will be complete and the preliminary plan goals set. Once the draft plan is completed, another big meeting or possibly two will be scheduled for late summer-early fall.

Discussion followed in regard to Haddam and East Haddam trying to work together (preliminary stuff at this time) and the state budget cuts affecting tourism in the area as well as the state. Mr. Curtis stated the people who run the Saybrook Point Inn are talking about forming a tourism coalition and will provide the information to the Commission.

6. Approval of Minutes

The Commission tabled the approval of the 13 December 2017 minutes.

7. Old Business

a. Farmers' Market

Mr. Sturk reported survey input has dwindled - a total of 70 responses to date with 57 yes (interested). Mr. Sturk stated out of the 20 or so vendors who have been contacted no one has given a hard yes. Most have something else going on and a couple of them have indicated adding another market in the area would be detrimental. Mr. Sturk also stated he wondered if the vendors could be included in other events. Discussion followed. Events considered: River Day – Saturday, 09/08/2018; Lions Duck Race – beginning of May (Mr. Maggi will confirm date); Lions Car Show – Sunday, 07/08/2018 (Mr. Maggi will speak to club members). Mrs. Maggi asked Mrs. Sola to send an email out to all Commissioners with the proposed dates.

b. Electronic Message Board Sign - Mr. Maggi talked about an electronic message board sign the Lions had wanted to donate to the town, but there was some negativity in regard to it. Mr. Maggi explained the look of the sign. Mrs. Sola suggested approaching the matter again and presenting a visual of the proposed sign. Mr. Bayley also suggested “selling” the sign as an emergency message system (potential for federal funds) as well as a community events sign.

c. Mission Statement

Mrs. Sola asked how the Commission felt in holding a workshop for two to three hours on a Saturday to develop a mission statement. Mrs. Maggi asked if it could be done via email and she would be willing to start the discussion. Mrs. Sola was agreeable. Ms. Anderson stated she felt it would be better being done in person and shouldn't take too long. Mrs. Sola stated in February under Old Business – Mission Statement will be the only item.

d. Trail and Small Business Empty Space on Website

Small Business Empty Space - Mrs. Munster distributed a copy of empty business space (main ones) and explained that she did a search online as well as driving through town. Mrs. Munster stated she did not include spaces where there was a small sign indicating "Office Space for Rent"; however, if the Commission would like these included she would do so. Mr. Bayley asked if the Merchant House is close. Mrs. Munster stated there are no listings. Discussion followed in regard to how to lure businesses to these empty spaces; listing the properties on the town's website with a link; and who is maintaining the website (Mrs. Munster will speak to Lizz Milardo, First Selectman, to make sure she can put EDC information on the site). Mrs. Munster stated she will speak to all the agents to keep the Commission aware of what's taking place so the site is up-to-date.

Trails – Mrs. Sola reported JoAnn Riccardelli, Selectman's Assistant, was able to contact the town's web master and the data can be migrated. Mrs. Maggi reported there are trails on the website; however, she would like to see it more simplified such as list the miles and the type of terrain. Looking at the website, Mr. Bayley stated there's only a link to HaddamTrails.org and it doesn't keep you on the town's website. Mr. Bayley also stated Dan Dachelet, former EDC member, would be able to make the changes that Mrs. Maggi is looking for; and noted the changeover is a process.

Website – Mrs. Maggi asked if there could be a list of businesses put on the website. Mrs. Munster stated it's being worked on and would discuss it further under her agenda item.

e. Christmas Lights in Center and Welcome Signs

Mrs. Sola reported Mrs. Maggi had taken care of the Tylerville welcome signs in terms of garlands and bows. Mrs. Maggi stated she couldn't take the credit as the Garden Club did the work. Mrs. Sola stated the Garden Club will be taking over all the signs next year and they would like to meet with her and Mrs. Maggi to discuss the matter.

Mrs. Sola reported she would like to introduce large garlands crossing Route 154 at each end of town and that four pre-lit garlands will cost \$5,128. Mr. Maggi asked about poles to attach the garlands too. Mrs. Sola stated she was hoping to attach them to the telephone poles. Mrs. Sola reported the town hall would like to see more streetscape during the holidays coming in at both ends of the town. Mrs. Sola stated she thought about purchasing two garlands this year and two next year; however, this matter can be readdressed in March. Mr. Bayley talked about the potential of budgeting a couple of hundred dollars to assist businesses with lighting or to light up additional spaces, especially since the businesses are paying for the electricity of the lights. Mrs. Sola stated the town's maintenance department will have to hang the garlands.

Mr. Maggi stated the Lions had to pay for the poles that they hang their car show banner on and also have to fill out a DOT permit yearly requesting permission to hang the banner across Route 154.

Mrs. Maggi asked if the Commission will be voting on the money for the garlands. Mr. Bayley agreed with Mrs. Maggi that the Commission should vote on the matter. Mrs. Sola stated yes.

A brief discussion followed in regard to removing the Christmas lights and garlands in Higganum Center – Sunday, 01/14/2018, 8:00 a.m.

f. EDC Coordinator

In response to Mrs. Maggi question regarding a list of businesses on the website, Mrs. Munster reported she's been working to make the process easier not only for new businesses but existing businesses and the town offices to welcome new businesses to town. Mrs. Munster stated she went to each department within the Town Office Building to ask what they do when a new business comes to town, noticed there was some disconnection, and held a meeting with all the departments. Mrs. Munster reported all

departments will need to sign off on a check list for each new business; and when available, the check list will be on the town's website.

Mr. Maggi asked about 106 Bridge Road not being included on the empty business space list. Mrs. Munster will check on this site. Mr. Maggi also asked about the Merchant House noting it would make a wonderful space for various home businesses such as candles, sweaters, etc., with office space upstairs. Mrs. Munster stated it would make a great makerspace. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Bayley asked Mrs. Munster if she would provide a written monthly report that can go with the minutes noting this was something he had intended to ask the other EDC Coordinator as well. Mrs. Munster stated she would.

Mrs. Sola reported that Mrs. Munster is filling in for this position voluntarily and has given her report.

8. New Business

a. Cove

Nothing new to report at this time.

b. Development of Bridge Road in Tylerville

Mrs. Sola reported the Shailer Banning House has been demolished and the property owner is going through the process of applying to construct a new structure. Mr. Maggi stated Lisa Wadge, the property owner, is willing to do what will make people happy.

Mrs. Maggi asked if there's been a time change for the moratorium. Mrs. Batzner stated the proposed moratorium is for 180 days. Mr. Bayley stated the public hearing is 01/18/2018 according to the Legal Notice.

Mr. Bayley stated there has been some discussion that a dollar store is being proposed; and asked if that was true. Mrs. Sola stated she's heard a General Dollar wanted to go in and the applicant has followed protocol according to the town. Mr. Maggi stated there is no way a national franchise will be kept out; and as long as Ms. Wadge meets the town's standards, it will go in. Mr. Farina stated as long as the regulations are followed, it would be difficult to deny; however, perhaps some compromise in architecture can happen. Discussion returned to the moratorium.

c. Business Draw to Haddam, Possible Incentives to Bring in Business 2018

Mrs. Sola reported she had received an email from Mr. Sturk in regard to the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC); and asked him to speak to the Commission in regard to it. Mr. Sturk stated CERC is a state agency that gives free training, one to two hours, in economic development and they will come to Haddam once the form is filled out and submitted. Mr. Bayley stated when he first joined EDC Mike Fortuna, former chairman, had spoken about this organization. Mrs. Sola will forward Mr. Sturk's email to all Commissioners. Mr. Sturk stated the website is cerc.com.

d. River Day in September and Other Events for Businesses

River Day – Saturday, 8 September 2018, with a rain date of Sunday, 9 September 2018.

Crafters' on the Green - Previously discussed. Mrs. Sola stated she had although thought about approaching the businesses to see if they would like to take part in the event in some way or another – perhaps some type of special. Discussion followed in regard to sending out a letter to the businesses and perhaps following up with a phone call.

e. Miscellaneous

Mr. Bayley asked Mrs. Munster if she knew what was taking place with the building north of Dunkin Donuts, Higganum. Mrs. Munster stated the Certificate of Occupancy hasn't been issued. Mr. Bayley asked about the new GCI warehouse, Route 81. Mrs. Sola stated she had no information. Mr. Bayley asked when the town meeting will be in regard to the Tylerville water project. Mrs. Munster stated everything is still on the same schedule and has not heard anything different. Mr. Bayley asked if any Haddam restaurants had been approached in regard to the Middlesex County Restaurant Week. Mrs. Sola stated no, she had approached them all last year and there was no interest, and didn't think to approach them this year. A brief discussion followed.

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Steve Bayley moved to adjourn. Lori Maggi second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

Please note change in meeting date to Wednesday, 21 February 2018.