

**TOWN OF HADDAM  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
COMMUNITY CENTER  
7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM, CT 06441  
WEDNESDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2017  
UNAPPROVED MINUTES  
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

**ATTENDANCE**

X	Kate Anderson, Secretary/Treasurer
X	Stephen Bayley, Vice Chairman
X	Mike Farina
X	Lori Maggi
X	Cindy MacNeil Sola, Chairman
X	Rudy Sturk
X	Lori Tharin
X	Lizz Milardo, First Selectman
X	Larry Maggi, Selectman
X	Liz West Glidden, Town Planner
X	Robin Munster, Treasurer
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

**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 Tharin moved to approve the 13 December 2017 agenda as submitted. Lori Maggi second. Motion carried unanimously.

**4. Public Comment**

Ed Schwing asked for Commission members to identify themselves by raising their hands, which they did. Mr. Schwing thanked them.

Mr. Schwing asked for an update concerning the demolition of the Shailer Banning House, 85 Bridge Road, Tylerville. Liz Glidden, Town Planner, reported she does not have an application at this time; and the house was demolished on Monday, 11 December 2017. Mrs. Glidden stated the owner had a demo permit for six months, but was subject to the demolition delay ordinance and had to wait the 120 days required by the ordinance. Mr. Schwing asked if there was a reason why the owner demolished the house this week. Mrs. Glidden stated she didn't know why the demolition was done this week; that she had met with the owner; and anticipates an application.

Mr. Schwing asked why the EDC Coordinator was let go after one month on the job or is she still employed. Mrs. Sola stated Lizz Milardo, First Selectman, could answer the question more so than her; but believes it was more than one month on the job. Mrs. Sola also stated the coordinator had done certain

tasks up to what was expected and at that point rather than not having anything further to do the town needed to let the position go or suspend it for the time until there were jobs that the Commission wanted to move forward with. Mrs. Sola stated the Commission is waiting for the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) to be completed as to what the Commission's job is and the Commission wants to adhere to that. Mrs. Sola also stated that further questions should be directed to Lizz Milardo, First Selectman.

Mr. Schwing asked if the coordinator still worked for East Haddam. Ms. Anderson stated she didn't feel it was the Commission's business. Mrs. Sola stated she doesn't know what East Haddam is doing. Mr. Schwing thanked Mrs. Sola.

## **5. Approval of Minutes**

Corrections to the 8 November 2017 minutes: page 3, first paragraph, first line – change “business” to “busy” and page 3, b. Lighting the Center Village, fourth line - change “disbanding” to “dissolving”.

**MOTION:** Steve Bayley moved to approve the 8 November 2017 minutes as amended. Lori Maggi second. Motion carried unanimously.

## **6. Old Business**

### **a. Mucket Statues - Update**

Due to a change in design – Mucket standing upright rather than lying down on his belly, Ms. Anderson reported there will be a slight increase in the development fee. The previous design development fee was \$2,865 and the new development fee will be \$3,190; a difference of \$325. Ms. Anderson also reported she is drafting a letter to Art Wiknik, owner of the patent of the Mucket design, to get written permission from him to use the design. Ms. Anderson stated Mr. Wiknik has indicated he is fine with the use of the design so long as nobody profits from the sale of the statues; and if there are profits, those funds are to go back to the town. Mrs. Sola showed the Commission a photo on her phone of the proposed statute. Ms. Anderson stated once the design is finalized, it should take four to six weeks for the statue to be completed and it should be ready in the spring. Mrs. Milardo asked Ms. Anderson if there were sufficient funds. Ms. Anderson stated she would need to recheck the figures, and if not, it would be a minimal difference.

### **b. Brochures**

Ms. Anderson reported the Commission had discussed the idea of printing a tri-fold brochure – one geared toward residents and another towards businesses; however, current discussion is for the residential brochure. Ms. Anderson explained the basic outline; holding a photo contest for the cover of the brochure; for the inside to include a brief history of Haddam and main attractions in Haddam; and the back to contain important phone numbers. Ms. Anderson explained that her background is marketing and has designed this type of project for her employer.

Mrs. Sola reported she had included this project in the five year capital plan. Ms. Anderson explained the long range capital plan and that the request is more for the branding of the Haddams. Ms. Anderson reported she has been in contact with Julia Balfour, East Haddam, a marketing/consulting company, and outlined for them what the Commission was looking for - to develop a logo and the hope is to bridge the two Haddams together. Mrs. Maggi asked for clarification as to who “we’re” is as well as “the Haddams”. Ms. Anderson stated “we’re” is all of EDC and “the Haddams” is both Haddam and East Haddam. Mrs. Milardo stated in 2016 there was a joint meeting and there was discussion of merging as the bridge ties the two towns together – tourism and economic development. Ms. Anderson stated she hopes that if Haddam can get the ball rolling, East Haddam will jump on board and join the project.

Ms. Anderson stated she requested a quote for a logo to be developed from Julia Balfour for both the residential and business brochures and the company has offered a 50 percent discount off of their

services. Mrs. Milardo stated this is not a capital plan (has been pulled out) and will need to go under EDC's operating budget; and although she is not opposed to the project, feels more needs to be done before money is allocated.

Mr. Bayley asked if there are any prospects of things changing in East Haddam as it doesn't seem like the Haddams have come any closer in the last twenty months. Mrs. Sola stated she has tried to contact Bob Casner, Chairman, East Haddam EDC, but deferred further comment to Mrs. Milardo. Mrs. Milardo explained East Haddam going through a number of election processes due to their first selectman resigning and a number of other issues taking place within the town – lost their momentum. Mrs. Milardo stated another joint meeting would be beneficial perhaps after review of the new POCD.

Mrs. Maggi stated she understands the point of the residential brochure, but asked for more information regarding the business brochure. Ms. Anderson stated it would depend on the direction the Commission would like to go, but her thought was "why should you bring your business to Haddam". Mrs. Milardo stated Middlesex County Revitalization Commission (MCRC) has this and a lot of the business owners are taking advantage of it and that information should be tied into the brochure.

### **c. Website**

Mrs. Sola reported she and Mrs. Glidden have been talking to Dan Dachelet, former EDC member, in regard to incorporating the trails onto the town's website. Mrs. Glidden stated there will be a tab that will link the town website and will confirm if it has been completed. Mrs. Glidden also stated Mr. Dachelet was going to continue with the domain name HaddamTrails.org one more month so the data can be transferred – hopefully in January.

### **d. Merchants Association**

Mrs. Sola reported coordinating this has been problematic and feels it should be put on hold for the time being. Mrs. Maggi stated she is still willing to work with anyone if they are interesting in moving this along. Mrs. Milardo stated a part of former EDC Coordinator Susan Waide's responsibilities were to get the Merchants Association up and running, but that was not the case and that's the reason why she is no longer holding the position. Mrs. Milardo also stated the business owners and the town need a liaison and that Robin Munster, Treasurer, has been helping with that as well as by updating the website and preparing for a kick off.

Mr. Farina stated EDC should be encouraging the businesses, but also needs to be protecting the town's interest. Mr. Farina also stated EDC will need to be walking a very tight rope. Mrs. Milardo stated some of the businesses placed an ad over the holidays outlining their services; Haddam has the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce; and Haddam hasn't always been business friendly and that needs to change. Mrs. Sola stated she feels the merchants feel the need for some type of support and that EDC can assist in doing this.

Mrs. Glidden asked if EDC has considered doing another Meet and Greet or making it an annual event. Mrs. Sola stated she has thought about it, but has not brought it to a meeting for a number of reasons.

## **7. New Business**

### **a. What is Economic Development?**

Mrs. Sola reported she feels economic development is basically bringing people from the outside into the community to add to local businesses that currently exist; and that EDC does not have anything to do with P&Z and Buildings Committee. Mrs. Sola stated she feels EDC coincides with them and work to the side with them, but EDC does not need to overstep their bounds. Mrs. Sola also stated she does not believe residents understand what EDC does and a mission statement will assist in this matter.

Mrs. Maggi asked if there was any why to get a copy of the Connecticut General Statutes as outlined in the town's Charter. Mrs. Glidden stated the statutes talked about number of members, etc., and there is nothing in the town's ordinances. Mrs. Milardo stated a mission statement will be very helpful, but now that the POCD is completed perhaps benchmarks can now be put in place.

Mrs. Maggi asked what will happen to a proposed mission statement. Mrs. Glidden stated there needs to be group consensus

**Farmers' Market Survey** – Mrs. Milardo asked Mr. Sturk about the survey he put out regarding a farmers' market. Mr. Sturk stated responses from vendors have been well – either already committed to another event or are looking for traffic to make it worth their while. Mr. Sturk stated the survey to the public has provided 60 responses in about a week – 80 percent would support a new market with the consensus being Friday is difficult and Saturday would be better for people. Mrs. Milardo stated more activities on the Green would be helpful; and if EDC can help kick start these events, she would appreciate it. Mrs. Sola talked about the small crafters event held on the Green and how well it was attended and received.

#### **b. Tourism**

Mrs. Sola reported she feels that tourism and events in town help to bring people into town which makes them use other businesses within town. Mrs. Sola stated she feels tourism is very important to EDC. Mr. Farina agreed and that there needs to be a way to reconnect with East Haddam. Mrs. Maggi noted she receives more business from East Haddam than Haddam. Discussion followed in regard to promoting buying local and not just on one day during the holidays; keeping events free of charge as much as possible; and the need to sell both villages but making it clear this is one town.

Robin Munster stated she has brought two friends into town and provided them with information as to where to shop; and they do shop in town. Mrs. Munster stated the brochure will be very helpful to others.

#### **c. Local Small and Home Business**

Not discussed.

#### **d. Winter/Spring Event for Small Business**

Mrs. Sola reported she would like to bring in a winter/spring event (possibly in March) such as a Winter Fest for one week and include all the businesses that would like to participate. Mrs. Sola stated it will be a rough start, but will improve each year.

Larry Maggi, Selectman and owner of Fireworks, suggested a one day business event and invite the residents so they can see what is available in town. Mrs. Glidden stated she felt this type of event would be helpful for home businesses.

Mrs. Sola asked the Commission to think about this, toss emails back and forth, and this matter will be discussed again in January.

#### **e. Town Events EDC to be Involved In**

During discussion about the EDC Coordinator, Mrs. Milardo returned to this agenda item stating that Robin Munster has been very involved with River Days over the years and has been helping EDC with this project. Mrs. Milardo returned to agenda item f.

#### **f. EDC Coordinator**

Mrs. Sola asked Mrs. Milardo if she would address this matter explaining that Mr. Schwing had asked questions earlier – why no longer with the town and what the thoughts are with moving forward. Mrs.

Milardo stated she would not answer the first question has it's a personnel issue and returned to agenda Item e.

Mrs. Milardo returned her discussion to this topic by reporting Mrs. Munster has been volunteering her time to help get some things going such as updating the website (input information, etc.) and has access as an administrator to the website. Mrs. Milardo stated she has a job description for a coordinator and the job will probably be posted again. Mrs. Milardo also stated it's unclear what East Haddam's position is as to whether or not they want to fill their coordinator's position again; and for the moment it may be best Haddam just focus on itself.

Mr. Bayley asked when the EDC Coordinator was terminated. Mrs. Milardo stated she didn't know and would have to look it up. Mr. Bayley asked why the Commission wasn't made aware they didn't have a Coordinator any longer. Mrs. Milardo stated she just didn't feel it was relevant at the time because things were getting done. Mrs. Sola stated nothing was happening with the EDC Coordinator and she didn't pay attention as suddenly everything was quiet. Mrs. Sola also stated the former coordinator was doing things that were costing the Commission money that wasn't necessary.

Mr. Bayley asked if the Commission will be notified when a new coordinator is hired. Mrs. Milardo stated yes. Mr. Bayley stated when a coordinator was hired the Commission was made aware of it; and when she's relieved of her duties, the Commission is not notified. Mrs. Milardo stated the Commission is being notified. Mr. Bayley again asked when the coordinator was terminated. Mrs. Milardo stated she would need to look it up. Mr. Bayley stated there is a lack of communication between the first selectman and EDC.

Ms. Anderson stated if there are questions/concerns, they should be asked and not sat on. Mr. Bayley stated he had asked questions at a few meetings as noted in the minutes. Ms. Anderson stated she was speaking in general and that everything should be out in the open. Mrs. Milardo stated that was one of the reasons for her attendance at this meeting as it was the soonest she was available to do so.

Prior to Mrs. Milardo leaving the meeting, the Commission thanked her for her attendance.

#### **g. Inventory Empty Businesses**

Mrs. Sola reported this falls under what was discussed previously about home businesses growing and moving into empty store fronts. A brief discussion followed in regard to typical home businesses and if EDC and the town can sit down with them to assist in moving into an empty store front. Mr. Bayley stated this is an important topic.

Discussion followed in regard to there being a number of empty business space and plenty of home businesses; the cost of rent and insurance for business space v. a business run in the home; business growth; and a new business probably being the one who will need the new store front. Mrs. Maggi asked if there is an inventory of empty business space. Mr. Bayley stated Mrs. Milardo had indicated she had a list. Mrs. Sola will ask Mrs. Milardo for a copy of the list and this topic will be discussed further in January.

#### **h. How to Tie the River into the Town**

Mrs. Sola stated this town is all river front and asked how Haddam ties into the river. Discussion followed in regard to the steam train, kayaking, etc. Mrs. Glidden suggested a wayfinding campaign. Mr. Maggi suggested possibly placing something under the Welcome to Haddam signs indicating river views. Mr. Bayley stated people do not know where the river accesses are. Mr. Maggi suggested getting an inventory of what the town owns along the river.

#### **i. Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)**

Mrs. Glidden reported the new POCD was adopted in December and will become effective in January, and the document can be viewed online and hard copies will be available. Mrs. Glidden stated there is an

implementation plan within the document and a POCD Implementation Committee (PIC) will be established through the Board of Selectmen (BOS). Mrs. Glidden also stated the PIC will consist of a member of every commission/board/committee. Mrs. Glidden distributed copies of the Action Plan. Mr. Bayley stated he felt the Action Plan for different committees was a good thing as POCD's tend to gather dust. Mrs. Glidden stated the PIC will meet at least twice a year for an information exchange.

## **8. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Steve Bayley moved to adjourn. Kate Anderson second. Motion carried unanimously.

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, 10 January 2018.**