

**TOWN OF HADDAM  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
COMMUNITY CENTER  
7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM, CT 06441  
WEDNESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2021  
UNAPPROVED MINUTES  
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

**ATTENDANCE**

X	Prem Aithal, Vice Chairman
X	Kate Anderson, Chairman
A	Cortney Emshwiller Swokla
X	Mike Farina
X	David Law
X	Mark Lundgren
A	Robin Munster
A	John Pember
X	Doreen Staskelunas, Secretary
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

**1. Call to Order**

Ms. Anderson, chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

The pledge was recited.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Add: Under New Business – d. Budget.

**MOTION:** Mike Farina motioned to approve the 13 October 2021 agenda as amended. Doreen Staskelunas second. Motion carried unanimously.

**4. Public Comment**

There was no one from the public in attendance.

**5. New Business**

**a. Grim's Haunted House – Weekend of 22 October 2021**

Ms. Anderson reported the event will be held at the Community Center on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 22-24 October 2021, rather than the former Haddam Elementary School (HES) gym due to public safety concerns. Trunk or Treat and the kids fair will take place on Saturday, 23 October 2021. Ms. Anderson noted that volunteers are being sought by the event coordinators.

Mr. Lundgren thanked the Haddam Lions for sponsoring Grim's Haunted House this year. Ms. Anderson stated event organizers will be accepting donations to get into the house and the fair; and in order to do so, they needed a non-profit to team up with. Also, Liberty Bank will match donations up to 25 percent. All donations will stay in town by going back to the food and fuel bank.

### **b. Swing Bridge Project Business Strategy Workshop – 18 October 2021**

Ms. Anderson reported this workshop is sponsored by the East Haddam Business Association and EDC and they are inviting all surrounding businesses to the event. The workshop will be held in the East Haddam Municipal Office Complex, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. The Middlesex Chamber of Commerce will begin the workshop by discussing DOT's Arrigoni Bridge Project and its impact on area businesses and what worked up there. SCORE representatives will be discussing how to identify, research, and quantify new markets. Exact Digital Media will be sharing how to use low cost, but effective, social media platforms to market to the newly identified markets. The workshop will wrap up with a Q & A session and will be taking suggestions for discussion at future workshops. All businesses in Middlesex County and beyond are welcome to attend.

Ms. Anderson stated there is no action necessarily needed from EDC; but did want to make sure everyone is aware and to keep in mind there are a number of construction projects coming to the Tyllerville area in the next couple of years. Anything that EDC can do to support those businesses will be helpful.

Mr. Lundgren stated he has spoken to a number of the Tyllerville business owners; and felt something the Commission could help with is contacting some of the businesses that may be abutting the back of Bridge Road to see if they have extra parking for fellow business owners and their employees. Mr. Lundgren stated he did pass this information on to Bill Warner, Town Planner. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Lundgren suggested asking Mr. Warner about the potential of tax abatements while the construction projects are taking place. Ms. Anderson stated there was also a suggestion of establishing a revolving loan account that would be subsidized by COVID Relief Funds (the first selectman is waiting for additional information as to what these funds can and cannot be used for).

Mr. Aithal suggested this be a standing agenda item under Old Business. Mr. Aithal spoke in regard to business appreciation.

Mr. Farina spoke about joint meetings that were previously held between Haddam's and East Haddam's EDCs and perhaps these meetings should be resumed. Mr. Aithal suggested business owners who are having issues to come to the Commission and let them know what's taking place.

**Midway Marine** - Mr. Law reported that Midway Marina (Blue Oar, a part of the property) is up for sale - \$5.9 million. Mr. Law spoke in regard to a municipal marina and voiced concern over what could happen (development) to the property. A brief discussion followed.

**Higganum Cove Committee** – Ms. Anderson reported there is a new committee pertaining to the Higganum Cove.

### **c. Holiday Lighting (Ceremony and Downtown)**

**Downtown** - Ms. Anderson reported that next month the Commission will need to decide on a date when to decorate the gazebo. Cindy Sola, is looking for someone to take over the coordination of the decorating of the Center, and currently has two people who are interested in doing so. Ms. Anderson also stated she is looking for someone with a bucket truck who can assist with installing the snowflakes and the bows. Mrs. Staskelunas asked if Public Works could do it again. Ms. Anderson stated she will ask, but note they had to rent a scissor lift to do the work last year.

**Ceremony** – Ms. Anderson reported in previous years there had been discussion about holding a tree lighting ceremony (tentative date 3 December 2021); and this year would like to tie in the tree lighting with one of the Pop Up Market dates. Ms. Anderson stated she has been speaking to the Cleveland's who know a Santa and she would like to have light refreshments, carolers, Santa, lighting of the tree, and then direct everyone over to the Pop Up Market.

Mr. Aithal recommended hot chocolate and Bittersweet tea be used to entice participants to venture over to the Market. Mr. Law suggested a drop off point for a letter to Santa. Ms. Anderson stated the Junior Women's Club does Letters to Santa.

Ms. Anderson will speak to the Carlsons to see if they will light the tree on the Green on the same day as the ceremony.

#### **d. Budget**

**Muckets** - Ms. Anderson reported the Muckets are coming! Two large and 10 mini muckets will be arriving next week. The Commission had previously paid \$1,000 towards the purchase of the muckets and the remaining balance is \$907.86.

Costs: Large mucket - \$594 each plus \$272 shipping. Mini muckets - \$40 each for a total of \$400 plus \$50 shipping.

One large mucket will be donated to Greg McKenna, Nutmeg Pharmacy, who has supported this project from the start, the other large mucket will go to the town (location to be determined), and the miniature muckets will be sold at Nutmeg Pharmacy with those funds going into a town project such as the food and/or fuel banks.

**MOTION:** Mike Farina motioned that \$907.86 be used from the Commission's budget to pay the remaining balance for the purchase of the Muckets. David Law second. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **6. Old Business**

##### **a. Farmers' Market – Last Market for the Season – Friday, 15 October 2021**

Ms. Anderson reported this Friday, 15 October 2021, will be the last Market for the 2021 season. Ms. Anderson stated Kristy Benson, Market Master, did a great job again; and that attendance at the Markets were usually in the high 200s and possibly may have been over 300 at the Kids Market. Ms. Anderson stated the fall has been a bit slower as they were competing with fair season. Ms. Anderson noted that when people come to the Market they are there to shop as they are always leaving with bags full of goodies. The 2021 season has been a great one!

Ms. Anderson reported that Ms. Benson will be conducting some focus/follow up groups and there has been some discussion in regard to changing the day (possibly Saturday) on which the Market is held during the 2022 season. A brief discussion followed in regard to the dates of area markets.

##### **b. River Days**

Ms. Anderson reported the event went well. The State of Connecticut lost the fireworks permit; however, thanks to the efforts of Fire Marshal Chris Gamache, all turned out well in the end. Thank you, Chris! Ms. Anderson stated now that Mike LeFleur, President, Haddam Lions Club, and she know what to expect they're ready for next year. They would like to get it back up to be a bit bigger than what it has been, but the State is very restrictive about what can take place at the Meadows; however, they are open to civic groups. Ms. Anderson stated that Youth and Family Services expressed interest in holding a family obstacle course next year. Ms. Anderson stated River Days will not be like it used to be; however, they are trying to find ways to add to it.

Mrs. Staskelunas asked about the date for next year. Ms. Anderson stated the event does not need to be held on a specific date, but did receive feedback that a number of people indicated they preferred the October date as it allowed for the back to school chaos to settle down and people aren't out as late due to the earlier start time for the fireworks.

Ms. Anderson stated perhaps in the future Haddam and East Haddam can work something out that will benefit both sides of the river.

##### **c. Pop Up Market**

Ms. Anderson reported Jan Verney is heading up a Pop Up Market at HES in late November-early December. Ms. Verney is looking for help with decorating the stairwell getting down into the gym, getting

the word out about the event, and help during the Market. Ms. Anderson will email the volunteer signup sheet if anyone is interested in helping with this event.

**Event Dates:** Saturday and Sunday, 11/27-28/2021, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday – 12/2-5/2021 and 12/9-12/2021. No hours available at this time. The Market will be held in the gym.

Mr. Farina suggested some sort of signage and lighting to let people know there is an event there and the building isn't just a school. Mrs. Staskelunas suggested using the school sign.

## 7. Chairman's Report

Ms. Anderson reported on the following: **Tylerville: Apartments at Brookes Court and Saybrook Road** – Project is still moving forward. Developer has obtained building permits. Start of construction to be determined based on cost of materials. **Tyler House (former Whole Harmony Tea Shop)** – Plans have been submitted to expand the house with a commercial kitchen that would be sufficient for a restaurant as well as one or two free standing buildings that could be office space or medical buildings. **Proposed Day Care Center, Brookes Court** – Due to the pandemic and other issues, this project has fallen through. **105 Bridge Road (former Eco-Tourism Site)** – Property has been sold and there's a proposal for apartments to be constructed on the site. Plans are not yet before P&Z. **Grand Re-Opening, Dunkin Donuts, Bridge Road** – Friday, 22 October 2021, 9:00 a.m.

**Higganum: Phantom Brewery** – Will be moving into the structure just north of Dunkin Donuts (where Steady Habit Brewery was planning on going). **Rossi Property** – Real estate contract has been extended again. There are five areas of concern – four can be remediated easily and one is located underneath a building. Currently working with the State on the matter. Prior to a potential purchase, this matter would need to go to P&Z, BOS, BOF, a public hearing and a town meeting. **Scovil Hoe Buildings (former State Garage)** – The town put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a developer because the state's DECD will contribute funding to help clean up the site, but the town needs a commitment from a developer. One proposal received. The developer has done similar mill restoration work and the proposal fits into what the community vision sessions had brought forth. **HES** – Listed for lease or for sale. Mr. Warner has received a couple of inquiries, but nothing promising. A brief discussion followed in regard to rental of the building. **Road Runner Café** – Open for business. **Higganum Hardware Store, Killingworth Road** – Open for business. Taylor and Jarrett have done a nice job. **Hi-Way Package Store** – New owner. **Village Market** – New owner.

**Haddam: Jail** – There is nothing new to report at this time.

**EDC – Member Opening** – Mrs. Staskelunas asked if there was still an opening for a new commissioner. Ms. Anderson stated yes, and that Tim Teran has expressed interest in the position; however, if anyone else is interested, please step forward.

## 8. Approval of Minutes

**MOTION:** Doreen Staskelunas motioned to approve the 14 July 2021, 11 August 2021, and 8 September 2021 minutes as submitted. Prem Aithal second. Motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION:** Mike Farina motioned to approve the 9 June 2021 minutes as submitted. Prem Aithal second. Motion carried with Mark Lundgren and Dave Law abstaining.

**MOTION:** David Law motioned to approve the 11 May 2021 minutes as submitted. Prem Aithal second. Motion carried with Mark Lundgren abstaining.

**MOTION:** Prem Aithal motioned to approve the 14 April 2021 minutes as submitted. Kate Anderson second. Motion carried with Mike Farina, David Law, Mark Lundgren, and Doreen Staskelunas abstaining.

Correction to the 10 March 2021 minutes: page 3, b. 2021 EDC Activities/Events Calendar, End Christmas Lighting Event – insert “of” between “End” and “Christmas”.

**MOTION:** David Law motioned to approve the 10 March 2021 minutes as amended. Doreen Staskelunas second. Motion carried unanimously.

## **9. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Kate Anderson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mark Lundgren second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Bunny Hall Batzner*

Bunny Hall Batzner  
Recording Clerk

**The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 10 November 2021,  
and will be held in-person at the Community Center, 7 Candlewood Hill Road, Higganum.**