

**TOWN OF HADDAM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY CENTER
7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM, CT 06441
WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2020
APPROVED MINUTES
*Approved as Amended at the 8 July 2020 Meeting***

ATTENDANCE

X	Prem Aithal, Vice Chairman
X	Kate Anderson, Chairman
X	Courtney Emschwiller Swokla
X	Mike Farina
X	David Law
X	Mark Lundgren
X	Cindy MacNeil Sola
A	Robin Munster
X	John Pember
X	Doreen Staskelunas, Secretary
X	Robert McGarry, First Selectman
A	William Warner, Town Planner, AICP
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Ms. Anderson, chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Cindy Sola motioned to approve the 12 February 2020 agenda as submitted. Doreen Staskelunas second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Presentation – Connecticut Main Street Center – Kimberly Parsons-Whitaker

Ms. Anderson introduced Ms. Parsons-Whitaker to the Commission and those in attendance. Ms. Anderson reported that the town has been a member of Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) for a couple of years, but has not been using it to its fullest. The Commission and public introduced themselves.

Ms. Parsons-Whitaker introduced herself giving a brief rundown of her credentials and gave a brief introduction of who CMSC is – how they work with and what they when working with communities. After tonight's meeting, will compare notes and talk about how to address the community at large.

Ms. Parsons-Whitaker began her Power Point presentation (copy on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office). CMSC helps to create places where people want to be, live, and enjoy themselves. CMSC also assists municipalities, downtown organizations, and small businesses and property owners to be more knowledgeable in how to play their part in being a healthy downtown. CMSC also helps communities understand how to bring in incremental and informative development that's appropriate to their community – in terms of scale, development, and being appropriate to the place. And other programs offer development and investment opportunities for developers.

Ms. Parsons-Whitaker outlined the six components of a vibrant main street – a sense of place, economic vitality, stewardship (community engagement), inclusiveness, sustainability, and connectivity as well as their corresponding elements. Noted that not every single piece works for all places, but some might. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker next outlined the four point approach – economic vitality, design, promotion and organization. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker pointed out that the Town of Haddam is very fortunate to have Bill Warner as our town planner.

The presentation continued with Ms. Parsons-Whitaker stating one place that communities get in trouble is the lack of an implementation plan which makes moving forward difficult. CMSC can assist with this. Items pointed out – building an action plan that's unique to Haddam, the need to manage main streets and downtowns in order to make them work, and how revitalization works (understanding your market, develop the vision, SWOT analysis – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, goal setting, work planning – projects, resources & partner, timeline, budget, and implementation and communication. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker outlined how Niantic implemented their plan.

Ms. Parsons-Whitaker stated she had reviewed the recent Higganum Center Study; and asked if a detailed market analysis had been done. Ms. Anderson stated a separate one was conducted approximately a year and one-half ago and will provide her with a copy. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker stated the two studies will need to marry together in order to make sense. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker then outlined a quick SWOT analysis and noted that Higganum Center needs a voice. Mr. Lundgren stated that it's difficult to get 10 percent of the people out to a meeting and doesn't believe the town has the resources to pay someone to manager Higganum Center; and asked what would be the next best thing. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker stated whether its recommendations through the study or from conversations through CMSC, the important thing is to get quick, easy, highly visible, inexpensive activities done to get people's attention.

Mr. Teran stated it's unclear to him as to whether the town has had clarity of vision noting that a lot of little things can be done, but the town would still be waiting to figure out what to do. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker stated that's why CMSC starts with vision.

Ms. Anderson asked if being sandwiched between very vibrant downtowns would be outlined within the SWOT. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker stated it would depend, but at least the town would be acknowledging this fact. Mr. Teran stated if the SWOT is what you do before writing your position and you have to ask what is going to make the town distinctively relevant, uniquely desirable. Mr. Teran also stated the town would need to look at the SWOT to see if it's comprehensive enough and then look at it relative to the competition and what makes Haddam different. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker agreed; stating that the market analysis will help with that.

Ms. Parsons-Whitaker reviewed the following: what people want – smaller, denser, more affordable, walkable neighborhoods, preferably close to transit, and interesting amenities; the benefits of membership to CMSC; education & tools to self-guide; and resources/expertise.

Mr. Teran spoke in regard to galvanizing private-public in order move forward. Mr. Farina spoke in regard to his involvement in revitalizing Coventry, CMSC assistance, and how the process worked. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker stated the town needs to look at the best opportunity of where to bring a main street to life and recognizing that two areas can be completely different (used Niantic – historical and Flanders – commercial as an example). Mr. Teran stated since Haddam has four sections – Higganum Center, Haddam Center, Tylerville, and Haddam Neck – would it be best to have a vision that is multi-faceted. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker stated Mr. Teran's question was a good one and admitted that she had never thought of it in that manner before. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker spoke in regard to the Clay-Arsenal neighborhood in Hartford and how they progressed.

Mr. Aronow asked what it costs the Town of Haddam to be a part of CMSC. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker stated their fee structure is based on a sliding scale – for a municipality it's based on population – and a basic membership fee would be \$700-\$800. Mr. Aronow spoke in regard to existing businesses being support-

ed by residents and the need to find a way to attract outside sources of disposable income. In response to Mr. Aronow's comment, Ms. Parsons-Whitakers stated CMSC is also a resource for developers to look at a place for potential opportunities.

Ms. Hickish spoke in regard to branding and asked where it would fit in this presentation. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker stated branding would fit in in marketing, special events, and retail activity. Ms. Parsons-Whitaker also stated branding can be fine, but it must be based on the market reality.

Ms. Parsons-Whitaker spoke briefly in regarding to a 2013 Sandy Hook market study, branding and destination study for Sand Hook Village, which she would like to share with the Commission. Mr. Teran stated he felt Haddam had more than enough market studies and that Haddam needs someone to put a stake in the ground and then create the program to make the study results real.

Ms. Parsons-Whitaker stated between tonight's meeting and the next step she would like to meet with Bill Warner, Town Planner. Ms. Anderson stated Mr. Warner wanted to thank CMSC for the letter of support for the charrette grant.

Ms. Anderson asked the Commissioners if they would like to talk about what has been presented. Mr. Farina stated CMSC was very helpful with changes that took place in Coventry, but noted that the Commission and the town will need to work with what they have – opportunities in both Tylerville and Higganum Center, residents need to be patient for growth, and perhaps the residents are satisfied with the status quo. Ms. Anderson stated she believes the town needs some outside perspective. Mr. Aithal stated the detailed market analysis is crucial. Mr. Law stated the town can have all the studies and talk to the businesses, but unless there's a theme what's the point. Mr. Law also stated the infrastructure needs to be fixed first.

Mr. McGarry stated the infrastructure needs to be built for the vision being talked about. Mr. McGarry stated a general idea is required in order to be sure the time and effort that's put into infrastructure is in the right place and at the time.

In regard to some of Mr. Teran's comments, Mr. McGarry stated Haddam really is four different towns – Higganum, Haddam Center, Tylerville, and Haddam Neck. Mr. McGarry stated Higganum Center is going to be his focus and that the town should take advantage of what came out of the charrettes and our ownership of the school. Mr. McGarry noted two pending projects coming to Haddam: a day care center at 6 Brookes Court, Tylerville, and a wellness/rehabilitation center, the former Marin Environmental building, at 7 Island Dock Road, Haddam Center. Mr. McGarry also noted that there are two developers talking about multi-family housing.

Mr. Aithal talked about Mr. McGarry's comment "how many of you agree on having the community septic" at the end of the second charrette and everybody agreed with it, therefore, the town should move forward. Mr. Farina stated once one thing takes off other things will follow. Mrs. Sola talked about the new blood on a number of committees/boards/commissions – new and younger ideas, different ages, and employment status.

Mr. Lundgren stated Merle McKenzie, owner of HK Fitness, had asked for Mr. Lundgren's support in regard to the proposed relocation of HK Fitness to the former GCI facility, 66 Killingworth Road, at the P&Z meeting, Thursday, 20 February 2020. Mr. Lundgren asked if he was allowed to do so as a private Citizen now that he's an EDC member. Ms. Anderson stated yes, as she's done it herself by stating that her comments are independent of the Commission.

The consensus of the Commission was to continue moving along with CMSC.

5. Public Comment

The public left at the conclusion of Ms. Parsons-Whitaker's presentation.

6. Town Planner's Report

Due to illness, Mr. Warner was not present; however, he had provided Ms. Anderson with a report which was broken down by villages:

Higganum Center – Charrette Agenda – Meet with CMSC (done) and making sure business/property Owners are involved (next meeting with CMSC). **HES** – Board of Selectmen (BOS) recently authorized Mr. McGarry to sign an agreement with a broker who is negotiating a deal specifically with Adelbrook. A lot of progress has taken place – leasing, discussing terms, retained a broker, emphasis using the charrette results to craft the terms. Making sure it would be o.k. for the town to have access to the buildings after hours to use gym, cafeteria, playground, etc. Mr. McGarry stated that is all being built into the terms and Adelbrook is fine with it as they want to be a part of the community. Mr. McGarry stated he and Mr. Warner allowed the Adelbrook folks to walk the building alone (their request) and afterwards indicated they wanted to discuss terms. Mr. McGarry believes this will be a good match. Adelbrook wants the entire building and are aware the town wants to do a community septic system on a separate piece of property. This will be a long term lease – five years with an automatic renewal. Mr. Law asked when they may open. Mr. McGarry stated it's unclear at this time, but should not take long. Mr. Aithal asked if the Farmers' Market would be allowed the use of the parking lot. Mr. McGarry stated Adelbrook does not have a problem with the Town using the grounds so long as it's after school hours. In regards to beautification of the building, Mr. Law stated the UConn Extension Service Master Gardener Program are interested in maintaining planters, etc., until someone else takes over. Mr. McGarry told Mr. Law to inform them to come speak to him. **Scovil Hoe Building, former DOT Garage** – An additional \$225,000 of Brownfields funding has been received. The DOT Commissioner signed documentation in December and the town is ready to proceed with final environmental studies and negotiation with DOT on acquisition. Believes there will be a RFP going out to do the environmental studies. **Community Septic System** – Conceptual plans submitted to the State. Dept. of Public Health issued very positive guidance document with DEEP concurrence last week. Mr. McGarry stated that he and Mr. Warner met with the US Dept. of Agriculture who has funds (grants and loans) available for rural communities (less than 10,000 people) for septic and other developments. Meeting tomorrow with the state, town engineer, health district. **Rossi Property** – Property critical to the town's success. Initial discussion on the value and the town's interest in acquiring the property. Ms. Anderson stated one thing Mr. McGarry has been adamant about is that a sale, lease, or transfer of property must go to a town vote and this process will be very open to the public – a lot of steps, meetings. Mr. McGarry stated for him the Rossi property is two issues – 1) should the town own the property and 2) should the town garage go there – these issues are separate and distinct. There is a lot more agreement in regard to this parcel being a critical piece right in the center of town and the town should control it; and the discussing of whether or not the town garage should move there can be held later. **Public Works** – Moving to Rossi is dependent on the purchase of the property. Cromwell just built a new garage at a cost of \$240 per square foot. Ms. Anderson stated in construction speak this is fairly expensive for a new building. Ms. Anderson also stated building a new town garage on the Arrigoni Sand Pit, Rutty Ferry Road, would be twice as expensive as renovating the building on Rossi. The numbers used at the P&Z presentation last year were based on Hebron building a new town garage a few years ago. Mr. McGarry stated the other issue when talking about a new location for the town garage is how many years did the town look for a new location for the transfer station, a number of parcels were presented and they were all dismissed and the transfer station just moved slightly to the north of its former location. **Citizens Bank** – Mr. Warner has spoken to Citizens and their lease is good until 2021, but they will sublet. Mr. Warner has the landlord's contact in Houston and needs to discuss potential connection to the community septic and believes it will be a good site for a restaurant. Citizens will not allow another bank in building. Also due to limited septic capacity there is no other business interested in moving in there. **Steady Habit** – Work is moving along with a potential opening date in April. **Former Hutch/Duffy's Pub** – The plan is for this to be reopened as a bar. **HK Fitness** – Mr. Lundgren reported that Merle McKenzie is planning to purchase the former GCI building, 66 Killingworth Road, and if all goes according to plan, there will be an empty store front where he is currently located. Mrs. Sola stated she wouldn't be surprised if Greg McKenna, Nutmeg Pharmacy, wouldn't expand into the open space. **CrossFit** – Ms. Anderson reported she had heard that CrossFit will be moving into the Kenya Lab buildings on Candlewood Hill Road. Ms. Anderson will follow up.

Tylerville – Proposed Day Care Center – 6 Brookes Court – A new day care, \$2 million dollar project, 108-118 children. This company currently operates several other centers and the building will be in harmony with the area. **Tylerville – Multi-family Zoning** – P&Z approved multi-family zoning within the village district. By special permit apartments can be constructed. Due to Gateway Conservation Zoning, height will be restricted. Mr. Farina stated the Gateway Commission is agreeable with the zoning language. **Tylerville Sidewalk Design Informational Public Meeting** – Thursday, 27 February 2020, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall, 21 Field Park Drive, Haddam.

Haddam – Haddam Center Sidewalks – In design phase, including signage, landscaping, benches, etc. Grant from Eversource to have Historical Society research key historical elements. Mr. Farina stated there are existing sidewalks. Mr. McGarry stated this is a maintenance/repair of the existing sidewalks with a slight extension. Sidewalk runs from Thirty Mile Island Cemetery to the UConn Extension Center. A brief discussion followed in regard to the crosswalk and the speed limit in the area. Also discussed was a traffic survey conducted from Land Road to HES. **Jail** – Very successful restaurant group very interested in the building; however, well and septic must be rectified first. **7 Island Dock Road, LLC – Wellness/Rehabilitation Center** – Plans done to convert from commercial to residential – approximately \$3 to \$4 million project. A 36 bedroom residential center, women only, voluntary, high end. Ms. Anderson reported that this was approved by special permit. Discussion followed.

Explore Connecticut Shoreline Website – Ms. Anderson reported that Mr. Warner and possibly Mrs. Munster are working to get EDC on the website. Hope to have a substantial update by the March meeting.

Village Court Property – Mr. Pember asked about the Village Court property, Saybrook Road, Higganum. Mr. McGarry stated the property is owned by Dr. Zaiantz, it is up for sale; however, there is a pollution problem that needs to be addressed. The Shad Museum, which is also owned by Dr. Zaiantz, will be transferred to the Haddam Historical Society and relocated (site unknown at this time).

Mr. McGarry stated there is a lot going on in the Town of Haddam and this is a good opportunity to get things done. Mr. McGarry also stated that it's just a matter of organizing some groups and getting some various committees to work together that don't historically and maybe a big difference can be made.

7. Welcome to New EDC Members – Robin Munster and Mark Lundgren

Ms. Anderson welcomed to the Commission Mr. Lundgren, Mrs. Munster, was unable to attend due to a family matter, and Mr. Pember, who will hopefully be official appointed at the next BOS meeting.

Welcome Mark, Robin, and John!

8. Old Business

a. Mucket – Update

Ms. Anderson reported that she reached out to obtain a quote for a statue and shipping and have not yet heard back. Ms. Anderson apologized for not have the information at this time.

Ms. Anderson also reported she had attended a Village Parks Society meeting and outlined to their membership the need for property owner permission to install a sign pertaining to the Mucket. The Society was not receptive to the installation of a sign at Kelsey Park (across from DaVinci, Higganum). A brief discussion followed in regard to installing the sign temporarily on Higganum Green until such time as the Town takes ownership of Scovil Mill; and then at that time install the sign in an area along the brook. Ms. Anderson stated the grant covers the sign and the materials to install the sign, but it would be up to EDC to actually install the sign.

b. Qigong

Mrs. Sola stated she believes the search for a new location continues, but classes are still being held at the Senior Center until the end of February. Mr. McGarry stated classes can continue at the Senior Center so long as they take place in the evening and do not interfere with Senior Center programs. Mrs. Staskelunas asked if there will be a cost to use the building. Mr. McGarry stated there will be.

c. Higganum Farmers' Market – Follow Up

Mr. Aithal and Mrs. Swokla reported they have 10 to 11 vendors and artisans at this time – Congregational Church – homemade bread; three farms – Wellstone, Bittersweet, and Sycamore; Foxglove Soaps; O'Fudge; and someone who would like to provide music (need to clarify if there is funding). Ms. Anderson stated a market master would need to be paid out of vendor fees and she has spoken to Gail Reynolds who highly recommended getting in touch with the Community Foundation, Main Street, Middletown. Ms. Anderson reported this foundation can help set up a tax exempt ID allowing for the collection of fees. Mrs. Sola suggested contacting Lynne Cooper for assistance. Mrs. Swokla stated the owner of Bittersweet Farm is a market master and if EDC can get everything together, she will run the market. Mrs. Swokla also stated she and Mr. Aithal are still looking for additional vendors.

Mr. Aithal reported he bought the rights to higgfarmersmarket.com.

Ms. Anderson stated Mrs. Reynolds had indicated that when she ran the market it cost about \$250 a year for insurance. Mrs. Swokla stated that would be about right.

d. Charrette Result – EDC 90-day Agenda

CT Main Street – Ms. Anderson stated one of the recommendations was to hold tonight's presentation.

Merchants' Association – Mr. Aithal asked about discussing the startup of the merchants association. Ms. Anderson stated Larry Maggi has offered to run a merchants association. Ms. Anderson also stated she will contact Jess Stone, Cold Stone Farm, who is a part of East Haddam's Business Association to discuss the process. Mrs. Sola asked if the proposed merchants association would be specific to Tylerville, Higganum or all businesses in town. Ms. Anderson and Mr. McGarry stated all businesses.

9. New Business

a. Budget

There was nothing new to report at this time.

b. Mucket Day Event as Presented by Mark Lundgren – Discussion

Mr. Lundgren reported he has received permission to use the name Mucket and its likeness from Art Wiknik. Mr. Lundgren also reported Mr. Law has informed him that he distributed handouts at the Park and Rec meeting and they were very hopeful it can be pulled off.

Mr. Lundgren stated if he receives permission to go forward with the event, he would like to do so under the umbrella of EDC due to liability insurance. Mr. Lundgren also stated he will need a treasurer (Mr. Pember volunteered) as he already has received two donations totaling \$1,000 - \$700 cash and a \$300 no interest loan. Mr. Lundgren stated a lot of money will be required in order not to go to the Town to ask for financial assistance. Mr. Lundgren stated the longest lead time will be the sprint triathlon due to the schedule. Also discussed was the need for making deposits as registration fees are received from the triathlon (advanced registration and pre-race registration).

Mr. Lundgren reported he already has a committee of four to run the triathlon, three to run the tractor parade. Noted that he'd not run a big band event for some time and would like to find out who set up the Middle school food truck event. Mrs. Staskelunas stated she believes it was the PTO. Mrs. Swokla will be reaching out to the PTO in regard to the farmers market and will ask about the food truck event.

Mr. Lundgren reported he has 10 events and for his estimates and goals he's using increments of 100 and explained. The sprint triathlon held in the Town of Chester had to be limited to 100 participants due to its popularity. Mr. Lundgren stated the sooner he can get it going and scheduled as well as getting Little City Campsites on board the better. Mr. Lundgren asked for help in setting up a Facebook page for his event (Ms. Anderson offered her assistance).

Mr. Lundgren stated he is working on a headliner for entertainment – Eric Herbst of DizzyFish and work the other entertainers around him. Mr. Lundgren spoke in regard to obtaining a set of drums, two microphones, and three amps in order to get entertainers to play approximately 60 to 90 minute sets.

Mr. Lundgren spoke in regard to the need of a government liaison to coordinate state police – bicycles, runners, and tractors on the road an DEEP so entrance and exit of the reservoir at the end of Hull Avenue can be used (volunteers are available to cut back the brush in that area). A brief outline of when events would be held was given.

Mr. Lundgren explained that he chose 15 August 2020 due to lead time as well as August being the driest month of the year. Ending time is early to allow participants time to get home while it's still light.

Mr. Lundgren stated he would like the following events promoted through the Mucket Day event – 5k Butterfly Run, the Haddam Neck Fair and 5k race, HK Pumpkin Run, and River Day.

Discussion followed in regard to prizes for the triathlon and tractor parade; looking for grants through Eversource, AARP, United Way via Youth and Family Services, Gateway Commission, Liberty Bank, etc.; for the triathlon – some bike shops have been contacted and will speak to HK Fitness and CrossFit; tractor parade – will speak to the two local retailers.

Mr. Lundgren opened the discussion up for questions/comments/ideas. Mrs. Staskelunas told Mr. Lundgren that she felt he had a good plan – already have committee members, a vision, and funding. Mrs. Sola asked if there would be a small fee to be in the tractor parade. Mr. Lundgren stated yes, maybe \$3. Mrs. Sola suggested \$5. Mr. Lundgren stated he would be willing to be the project manager, unless someone else is interested, and each event will have a lead member. Mr. Pember asked if the event is supposed to break even or generate revenue. Mr. Lundgren stated he doesn't want it to be a profit maker, but perhaps \$1,000 to cover the event next year. Mr. Pember stated he has an accounting background and offered his services. Mrs. Sola asked where the Mucket fits in seeing this is a Mucket Day Event and if the statue could be unveiled. Mr. Farina suggested the Mucket be on the first tractor to lead off the parade. Mrs. Sola stated further discussion is required and suggested a separate meeting specific to this event be scheduled. Mr. Lundgren stated he would like to put the word out for volunteers outside of EDC. Mrs. Sola suggested Rob Bradway be contacted in regard to this event.

MOTION: Doreen Staskelunas motioned for EDC to sponsor the Mucket Day activities on 15 August 2020. Cindy Sola second. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Lundgren asked Mr. Pember to contact Barbara Bertrand, Finance Director, to see about setting up an account for this event. Mr. Pember will contact Mrs. Bertrand to get the particulars on this matter.

A brief discussion followed in regard to setting up a special meeting for this event with a specific agenda.

MOTION: Prem Aithal motioned to hold a special meeting on Tuesday, 25 February 2020, 6:00 p.m. Doreen Staskelunas second. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Aithal asked that the event be called Mucket Madness.

c. River Days

Ms. Anderson reported the event has to be the first Saturday in September -5 September and this is subject to budget approval (no guarantee of 2020-2021 budget approval). Mrs. Staskelunas asked if the event is lost if the budget isn't approved. Discussion followed in regard to having previously discussed donation cans for fireworks at River Day.

Mr. McGarry stated if River Day is conducted on Saturday, 5 September, it will be conflicting with the Haddam Neck Fair. Ms. Anderson will reach out to DEEP to see if there's any wiggle room as there may be a new coordinator at DEEP. Mrs. Sola stated RiverQuest has a boat that will be coming up to view the fireworks.

Discussion followed in regard to originally think River Day was to be held on Saturday, 12 September; and seeing if the event can be moved to 15 August to coincide with the Mucket Day event.

10. Chairman's Report

Ms. Anderson thanked everyone who helped to take down the holiday decorations in the very cold temperatures and thanked Mr. Law and his son for decorating the gazebo as it was very well received.

Ms. Anderson reported the BOS has reviewed the budget will be forwarding it to the Board of Finance (BOF) and noted that she had not requested as much funding for the upcoming year as the Commission had this year as the bulk of the funding was for the EDC coordinator which is no longer viable.

11. Approval of Minutes

The Commission agreed to table the approval of the 13 November 2019 and 8 January 2020 minutes.

12. Adjournment

MOTION: Prem Aithal motioned to adjourn. Courtney Swokla second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bunny Hall Batzner
Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

A Special Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 25 February 2020, 6:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 11 March 2020.