

**TOWN OF HADDAM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
VIA GOTOMEETING
WEDNESDAY, 13 JANUARY 2021
APPROVED MINUTES
*Approved as Amended at the 10 February 2021 Meeting***

ATTENDANCE

X	Prem Aithal, Vice Chairman
X	Kate Anderson, Chairman
A	Cortney Emschwiller Swokla
X	Mike Farina (Arrived 6:35 p.m.)
X	David Law
X	Mark Lundgren
X	Cindy MacNeil Sola
A	Robin Munster
A	John Pember
X	Doreen Staskelunas, Secretary (Arrived 6:45 p.m.)
A	Bob McGarry, First Selectman
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Ms. Anderson, chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Dave Law motioned to approve the 13 January 2021 agenda as submitted. Mark Lundgren second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Discuss Establishment of a Haddam/Tylerville Merchants Association

Ms. Anderson reviewed a short press release she would like to see posted in the local papers as well as Facebook. Once there are responses to the release, EDC can begin to create a data base of businesses, contact person(s), and viable emails. Next step would be the need to conduct a meeting with those who have expressed interest. Ms. Anderson reported that Bill Warner, Town Planner, has indicated other towns are also trying to collect this type of information.

Mrs. Sola asked if Larry Maggi was still interested in spearheading this association. Ms. Anderson stated to the best of her knowledge Mr. Maggi is still interested, but there needs to be someone who will assist in collecting the information.

Ms. Anderson asked the Commissioners what they saw as EDC's involvement in this association – offer someone from EDC to gather the information and get them set up or passing the association to someone not from EDC to take it and run with it. Mr. Law stated it may be best to wait to see who is interested. Mr. Law asked if the parameters have been set (Haddam businesses only or businesses that are just over the town lines). Ms. Anderson stated those questions should be addressed by the merchants themselves.

Mrs. Sola suggested Mr. Maggi be asked if he has someone who can assist him collect the information as she believes the people on EDC who volunteer all the time are tapped out. Ms. Anderson asked if there are no volunteers outside of EDC, would EDC be willing to take on this initiative. Mr. Law stated he felt EDC should. Mrs. Staskelunas stated she did not feel the Commission had the capacity to do so. Mr. Farina stated the town can organize a meeting, but the businesses should be involved/responsible for the association. Mrs. Sola, as a business owner, stated she feels it's important for the association to be formed; however, as an EDC member/volunteer, she's overwhelmed and perhaps EDC should speak directly to Mr. Maggi about this matter. Discussion followed at length about the same handful of members continually volunteering and the lack of a volunteer base. Also discussed was perhaps prompting the purchase of gift cards/certificates in order for businesses to stay viable. Mr. Aithal stated in light of the pandemic, a number of the businesses in town do not have the time to attend a meeting as they're trying to keep their businesses afloat. Mr. Aithal also stated he doesn't see a merchants association occurring until we come out of the pandemic and everyone gets vaccinated.

Mr. Law stated EDC does not know what businesses are in town and perhaps the first step would be to create a business directory to see what is out there. Ms. Anderson agreed and that the association will be what the merchants make of it; as far as EDC goes, the association is going to be a communication vehicle. Discussion followed at length in regard to the manner this is marketed in terms of sharing relevant and timely information between the merchants and the town; the need to collect the pertinent information (via Google); shopping local; and the need for a merchants association.

Ms. Anderson take care of the following: 1) Speak to Mr. Maggi to see if he's still interested in setting up the association and how involved he would like EDC to be. 2) Set up a form for businesses to fill out.

Mr. Aithal asked Mr. Lundgren if he could provide contact information he has from the Mucket Madness event. Mr. Lundgren agreed.

5. Public Comment

There was no one from the public in attendance.

6. Old Business

a. Holiday Decorations

Ms. Anderson thanked Mrs. Staskelunas and Mr. Law for taking down the decorations on the gazebo and Public Works for putting up/taking down the decorations on the light poles. Ms. Anderson reported someone will need to take over coordinating the decorating in Higganum Center (not necessarily from EDC), as Mrs. Sola will be stepping down. It was suggested a release be put out in the local papers. Discussion followed at length in regard to implementing a plan for next year (work begins in August/September); the purchase of garland, snowflakes, and bows for Tylerville (will obtain number of light poles from Mr. Warner); the need for a coordinator(s); the need for volunteers (Mr. Aithal will ask if high school students could assist – community service hours); the need to replace/purchase decorations (bows and garland); encouraging others in town to decorate their businesses/houses/properties; and a formal tree lighting ceremony.

b. Holiday Market – Update

No update was given.

c. Mucket

Ms. Anderson reported the muckets have been paid for and should be delivered in a few weeks.

7. New Business

a. Budget

I. Remaining for 2020-2021 and Request for 2021-2022

2020-2021 - Ms. Anderson reported the Commission still has quite a bit of money left (approximately \$5,000) and briefly discussed recent expenditures. Ms. Anderson suggested the Commission discuss how to spend the remaining funds at the February meeting. Ms. Anderson will have quotes for the holiday decorations at that time.

2021-2022 - Ms. Anderson reported the EDC budget request went in to the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Anderson stated First Selectman McGarry had asked that budgets not be increased; therefore, this year's request is the same as last year's - \$7,000. Ms. Anderson stated she and Mr. Aithal discussed future expenditures and those were briefly outlined. Noted that River Day has its own separate budget.

b. 2021 EDC Activities/Events Calendar

Ms. Anderson thought the Commission could brainstorm what will be coming up in 2021 and that the establishment of a calendar may help in distributing the volunteer work load. Some activities/events discussed: Farmers' Market – June-October, River Days – September, tree lighting ceremony – new event and need to be planned from scratch, holiday decoration setup – November, Mucket Day late summer, and Shred It Recycling Day – new to the Commission, no date yet, and to be held at the Community Center.

Mrs. Sola and Mrs. Staskelunas felt volunteerism should be a requirement of being a part of the Commission. Ms. Anderson stated if this doesn't meet someone's expectations and a member needs to step down, it's understandable and would not be taken personally.

Ms. Anderson will email everyone the list of activities and would like everyone to think about which events they can volunteer for. Ms. Anderson stated if there is an event that anyone is interested in seeing take place, to bring that thought to the February meeting for discussion. Mrs. Staskelunas asked if there is anything related to the charrettes that should be considered and supported. Ms. Anderson stated she had planned to put out a Facebook post to all the town committees/organizations as to what events they may be holding or would like to see. Ms. Anderson stated due to the pandemic, she sees the Commission's directing being more of a support group to community events. Mr. Aithal stated that would be consistent with what Mr. Warner has been saying. Discussion followed at length.

Mr. Law asked if there was a list of commercial spaces available if a business where interested in moving to town. Discussion followed in regard to Mr. Warner having that information.

8. Chairman's Report

a. Bill Warner's "2020 Year in Review" Report:

<https://www.haddam.org/land-use-department/pages/year-review-2020>

Ms. Anderson reported Mr. Warner compiled a comprehensive "Year in Review" report and the link has been included. Copy on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office and the Land Use Dept.

Ms. Anderson reported on the following: **Goodspeed Tattoo**, formerly located in Tylerville, filed an application to move to Higganum Center. A P&Z hearing was held and the application was approved. The new language in the regulations is specific to this business only. The tattoo shop will move into the former location of the Fork in the Road, 310 Saybrook Road. Discussion followed.

9. Approval of Minutes

14 October 2020, 19 November 2020, and 9 December 2020 Minutes – The Commission agreed to table the approval of the minutes.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: Doreen Staskelunas motioned to adjourn. Cindy Sola second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

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Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 10 February 2021.