

TOWN OF HADDAM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
TOWN HALL
21 FIELD PARK DRIVE, HADDAM, CT 06438
WEDNESDAY, 18 JULY 2018
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
Subject to Approval by the Commission

ATTENDANCE

X	Prem Aithal, Vice Chairman
X	Kate Anderson, Chairman
X	Mike Farina
X	David Fleig
A	Cindy MacNeil Sola, Chairman
X	Lori Maggi, Secretary
A	Megan Mularski
A	Lori Tharin
X	Robin Munster, EDC Coordinator
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Ms. Anderson, chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited.

3. Approval of Agenda

Add: Under Old Business: Haddam Elementary School (HES).

MOTION: Lori Maggi moved to approve the 18 July 2018 agenda as amended. Dave Fleig second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Approval of Minutes

The Commission agreed to table the approval of the 13 June 2018 minutes until the August meeting.

Ms. Anderson thanked everyone for accommodating the change in date and location in order to hold the July meeting.

7. Old Business

a. Mucket - Update

Statuses - Ms. Anderson reported the town still needs to sign an agreement from the company dispersing the fund raising monies. Due to vacations, this still has not happened. Mrs. Munster stated she needs to look to see what information is required.

b. Vendor Fair on the Green, 1 July 2018 - Update

Mr. Farina and Mr. Fleig stated there were a number of people who attended early on and those attendees and vendors all appeared to be having a good time. Mr. Farina also stated there was a good flow of traffic, people were buy stuff, and the entertainment was good. Ms. Anderson stated it appears the morning is the busiest time of day and traffic drops off during the afternoon. A brief discussion followed in regard to having a few more vendors offering drinks/food – part of the social event.

Mrs. Maggi asked for clarification regarding this market and the Market on the Green. Mrs. Munster made it clear this event is completely separate from the Market on the Green events; and that this particular market was a shift from the car show. Mrs. Maggi asked if these types of fairs will continue. Mrs. Munster stated the next vendor market is scheduled for River Day – to be held in the morning, but nothing else has been scheduled. Mrs. Maggi asked if EDC has a calendar that can publicize these events. Mrs. Munster stated yes, and all the events are listed. Ms. Anderson stated the EDC calendar is separate from the town's calendar. A brief discussion followed in regard to the need for updates in terms of officers and members (the first selectman's assistant needs to take care of this) and other farmers' markets in the area.

c. Market on the Green – Update

Mrs. Munster reported the next Market is scheduled for Thursday, 26 July 2018, with 25 vendors as well as the band, Butter Jones, who will provide entertainment. Due to the number of vendors, set up will begin at 4:00 p.m.

Mrs. Munster also reported that additional vendors will be attending the August market. Mrs. Munster spoke in regard to various vendors who will be present during particular markets such as Killustrate, HK Recreation, and CrossFit. Mrs. Munster stated she will publicize the market. Mr. Farina offered to hang posters/fliers at St. Peter's.

d. Yoga on the Green – Update

Ms. Anderson and Mrs. Maggi stated the event went well with a total of ten people present which they felt was a good turnout as it was the first event. Ms. Anderson stated attendees were all women and the age bracket was wide ranging. Mrs. Maggi stated the instructor was very accommodating to all the different stage levels.

Mrs. Munster stated the next event is scheduled for Wednesday, 25 July 2018. A brief discussion followed in regard to extending the event further out into the fall and winter and the possible use of the Community Center. Ms. Anderson stated the instructor does a similar thing down in Chester and that she will teach if only one person shows up; and that she is very excited about this event and thrilled to be in town. A brief discussion followed in regard to publicity and sharing the information via Facebook, etc.

e. Lions Club Duck Race and Rollin' on the River Car Show – Updates

Mrs. Maggi reported the Lions were holding their meeting tonight and could not provide specifics, but would be happy to do so at the next meeting. Mrs. Maggi did state she attended the car show and that the weather was wonderful, there were a large number of cars, and the food and band were great.

f. River Day, Saturday, 8 September 2018 – Craft Fair, Market at meadows, Fireworks – Follow Up

Mrs. Munster reported the DEEP application is being processed and that she will need to file the ballistics application for the fireworks at the end of July beginning of August.

g. Haunted House, Friday and Saturday, 26-27 October 2018 – Follow Up

Ms. Anderson stated she spoke to Mrs. Sola and that the Park and Rec Commission may be a willing to volunteer to hold the event. Mr. Fleig stated he has received two confirmations and is waiting to hear from some others, but believes it will work out. Mr. Fleig clarified that the Park and Rec Commission is different from the Park and Rec Authority. Mr. Fleig stated Park and Rec has been trying to find a way to get a little more involved in the community noting that the number of people attending Family Fun Night was starting to decline (focused on a small percentage of the population) and River Day seemed a bit more complicated.

Mr. Fleig stated things have changed in regard to Park and Rec – soccer is primarily down in Killingworth, there isn't a child over 12 years of age playing Little League baseball any longer, the Brickyard, Dublin Hill, is really used for men's softball which went from 15 to four teams – and this has happened over the last four years. Mr. Fleig also stated this is why Park and Rec is trying to find a way to reinvent themselves.

Mrs. Maggi asked Mr. Fleig why he felt there has been such a decline. Mr. Fleig stated when he was president of Little League two years ago there were 350 participants and this year there's 192. The obvious reason is there are less people moving into town (looking at the enrollments by grade the younger enrollment has really shrunk), sports are year round (lose some to that), and lacrosse (took some of the athletes immediately). Mr. Fleig stated the year he left Little League there were 101 enrolled in T-ball and this year there were only 24; and the sustainability in this is with the younger kids as the older kids have just opted out of playing a sport.

Scarecrow Contest - Mr. Aithal stated he was tasked to speak to Mr. Granucci, HES and HK Middle School art teacher, and apologized for having not done so. Mr. Aithal stated if the Commission still was interested in him speaking to Mr. Granucci, he will follow up on the matter.

Trunk or Treat – Mr. Fleig stated if Park and Rec can assist in making these events (Haunted House and Trunk or Treat) better, they're happy to help. Ms. Anderson stated from the first year to the second year Trunk or Treat grew. Mr. Farina stated other organizations have participated in the event. Mrs. Maggi reported that the Lions and Fireworks Hearth and Home will not be participating this year.

Haddam Elementary School (HES) – Ms. Anderson stated the Board of Education (BOE) has approached the town with a formal request to purchase HES; and asked if anyone attended the Board of Selectmen's (BOS) meeting and could provide an update. Mrs. Maggi stated there is nothing the BOS can do, but they will talk about it more after additional information has been received (costs for remediation, funding, etc.). Mrs. Munster stated the BOE has requested the BOS look at the structure for the possibility of usage (would need to go to a town referendum) and there is no turning back in regard to keeping HES open. Mr. Fleig asked if the property is up for sale. Mrs. Maggi and Mr. Munster stated no, not at this time. Discussion followed in regard to who owns the property (Regional School District #17), whether or not a remediation study had been conducted (no), and that a developer had expressed interest in the property.

7. New Business

a. Budget

Ms. Anderson reported the new fiscal year began 1 July 2018 and that the Commission has \$5,500 in their budget.

i. Sandwich Board

Ms. Anderson reported she found a sandwich board sign (Standard Swinger) on Amazon for \$163.99 that includes all the letters and numbers. A photo of the sign was available for review on a phone. A brief discussion followed in regard to where the sign would be placed (Higginum Green), where the sign could be stored (Community Center), purchasing an additional set of letters and numbers, and sand bags for additional weight at the base to hold the sign upright.

MOTION: Mike Farina moved to approve the purchase of one (1) Standard Swinger sign including letters and numbers up to \$200. Dave Fleig second. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Haddam Park & Rec Commission Collaboration

Previously discussed under Haunted House.

c. Buildings Committee 12 July 2018 Meeting Update

Ms. Anderson reported the Building Committee held a meeting last week, that she, Mr. Aithal, and Mrs. Munster attended and gave a brief explanation of the presentations given by Fuss and O'Neill and Camoin - the potential costs, renderings, and Tax Incremental Financing (TIFs). Mr. Aithal distributed copies of a document from the Town of Groton which summarizes TIF (copy on file in the Town Clerk's Office with the minutes) and discussed the information. Mrs. Maggi asked for further explanation as to where the TIF funding would come from. Ms. Anderson, Mr. Aithal, and Mrs. Munster explained further. Discussion followed at length.

Ms. Anderson reported the Buildings Committee has a meeting with the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Thursday, 19 July 2018, and an update will be provided at the next EDC meeting. Mrs. Batzner clarified this meeting is not a Building Committee meeting.

d. EDC Accomplishments

Ms. Anderson asked the Commission to think about what has been accomplished and bring back their thoughts to the August meeting.

e. Goals for Upcoming Year

Ms. Anderson asked the Commission to think about the goals they would like to accomplish this year and bring their thoughts to the August meeting.

Business of the Month - Mr. Farina asked if EDC could sponsor a business of the month or something similar. Mr. Farina explained why he would like to do this noting a number of businesses that give back to the community. Commission members felt this was a good idea and potentially teaming with Haddam Now and the Haddam Bulletin. To be discussed further at a later date.

Social Media Comments - Mrs. Maggi stated she is very disappointed and hurt by Sean Moriarty's comments on Facebook approximately one week ago regarding EDC. Mrs. Maggi also stated Mr. Moriarty would like to be appointed to this Commission and she would not support that appointment. Discussion followed in regard to a part of the EDC's mission is to sponsor and support events/businesses; several people approaching Mrs. Maggi as to why EDC canceled their meeting; proper procedure in canceling a meeting; negative comments regarding the Commission; and as Commissioners not commenting on social media. Ms. Anderson stated she has not been approached in regard to any new members joining EDC and noted the number of accomplishments that have taken place since Mrs. Munster became the EDC Coordinator. The Commission agreed and that members need to encourage residents to attend a meeting and provide input (it was noted that Mr. Aithal reached out to Mr. Moriarty who declined at this time).

8. EDC Coordinator's Report

Mrs. Munster reported on the following:

Haddam Merchant Association – The merchants are very interested in starting the association and the East Haddam Business Association has offered their assistance in setting the new association up. Mrs. Munster made it clear she is just the vehicle to get the association going and will not be involved in it.

Dino's Property – Property is up for sale (\$325,000) not the business. Mrs. Munster asked the realtor to speak to the executor of the estate in regard to putting another donut truck on the property and the executor is not interested.

Rollin' Donut – They are very interested in coming to town and are attempting to find a location for them. Discussion followed in regard to possible sites and sites already considered.

Higgies – Will not be opening at this time.

River Valley Provisions and Sibley – No longer in negotiations to buy/sell the property.

EDC Facebook Page – Please share postings from the page to increase traffic as this will allow more people to be aware of what is going on. Ms. Anderson asked if the page is purposely set up to not allow people to post comments to the page. Mrs. Munster stated yes, it's about consistency in sharing information.

H-K Recreation Department – Meeting held with Robyn Brennan, Director of Recreation, in regard to their summer camp closing early leaving a gap of approximately three weeks before the start of school and there being no place for the kids to go. Mrs. Munster was told RDS17 has requested they close early to allow for cleanup prior to the start of school. Mrs. Munster stated she can understand it; however, there are other recreation departments who use schools and stay open longer. Discussion followed at length.

Merchant House – Spoke to the owners and they are contemplating update/renovating the structure and either renting or selling to the right person.

Whole Harmony – The business has relocated to Essex as it's all about manufacturing at this time; however, they are not opposed to returning to Haddam in the future with a tea shop.

Brookes Court Property and Island Dock Road Property – Spoke to Tower Investments who are interested in purchasing the Brookes Court property and putting in senior housing. A brief discussion followed in regard to the existing house on Brookes Court. Mrs. Munster also stated Tower Investments is also interested in the Island Dock Road property.

Village Court Property, Route 154 – Sale pending sign posted. Unclear what is happening.

Property Across from Village Market – There is activity taking place and part of the structure will be rented.

Lower Connecticut River Valley Meeting – A meeting of a member of the EDCs from Chester, East Haddam, Haddam, Deep River and now Essex to share information and coordinating more economic development amongst the towns. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 19 July 2018, at the Essex Steam Train. Discussion at the June meeting included: a visitor's guide that Chester publishes and their willingness to coordinate with other towns, the use of Eagle Landing for the music festival currently held in East Haddam and involving the train and 9 Town Transit, a multi-town river stroll, and a workshop - Fundamentals of Economic Development, Thursday, September 20, 2018, 6:30 p.m. at East Haddam's new Town Office Building. Mr. Aithal talked about a palm card where businesses advertise and if a person visits the places (checked off) there's some "prize".

Jail – Have contacted some businesses who are interested such as steak houses and breweries. Noted that Haddam cannot support a high end restaurant and that it must be a destination location. A brief discussion followed in regard to a remediation plan and the costs associated with it.

Steady Habit Brewery – Haddam will be losing them as they will be moving to East Haddam. This will probably not happen for another year. Haddam needs to look for another brewery. Mr. Aithal asked if Steady Habit has considered a tasting room at the Jail. A brief discussion followed.

New Massage Business – The owner of Personal Fitness Solutions is putting in a new massage business, separate from his existing business, at 415 Killingworth Road.

GCI Property, Corner of Route 82 and Lake Avenue – A meeting is schedule with Jeff Polke, business/property owner, as he will have a rentable property available soon.

Business Open House for Properties Available – Perhaps EDC can sponsor an event to show what properties are available.

Mr. Farina congratulated Mrs. Munster on her work as did the rest of the Commission.

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Lori Maggi moved to adjourn. Prem Aithal second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 8 August 2018.