

**Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
May 3, 2007**

Attending: D. Mathiasen; R. Scherrer; D. Sloan; P. Stricker
Guests: P. Govert; M. Harris; Goodspeed – H. Kittner; D. McMahon

Mr. Scherrer called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

MINUTES

The minutes of the April 12th meeting were reviewed and Mr. Sloan stated the following correction should be made:

- Page 2 of the minutes, second paragraph under item 3, change “Professional DT” to “Commercial Record”.

MS. MATHIASEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE APRIL 12, 2007 MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. SLOAN AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

OLD BUSINESS

Economic Development Coordinator Position

Mr. Scherrer advised that First Selectman Parker had provided him with a copy of the job description for the Land Use Administration position to use as an example when drafting EDC’s proposed coordinator job description. In particular, he stated that the language describing the position’s reporting structure should be the same. He noted that the coordinator’s job description should state that the position takes functional direction from the First Selectman and policy/administrative direction from EDC.

Mr. Scherrer noted that the position is currently still in the budget and Ms. Mathiasen reviewed the Town’s budget approval process. She advised that there have been discussions about cutting the budget and/or sending it to a referendum. There was a general discussion regarding which budget items had increased and the objections to the proposed budget.

Ms. Stricker advised that Melissa Ziobron has expressed interest in the coordinator position.

Town Office Site – Project Status Report

1. Getting Additional Feedback From Developers

Mr. Scherrer stated that he and Mr. Gionta had met with Mr. Pinnell to discuss the Village projects. He stated that Mr. Pinnell agreed to provide EDC with the names of developers who might be interested in the Town Office Site and he also concurred with the opinion that local developers would be the most productive source. He noted that Mr. Pinnell offered some interesting thoughts on how to straighten out the curve in the road in front of the Town Hall Offices. Mr. Scherrer also reported that Mr. Pinnell stated he would think about possible candidates for the EDC coordinator position.

Mr. Scherrer advised that Ms. Wheeler had provided him with the name of a developer in South Glastonbury that he and Mr. Gionta plan to meet with in the near future. He also noted that he had contacted CERC and expects to talk with their real estate advisor during the week of May 7th.

Ms. Mathiasen stated that she will work with Mr. Gionta to coordinate communications with any new developers. She also noted that she had sent a status update letter to the developers who previously expressed interest in the project. There was a general discussion about the reason for the low level of interest in the project. Ms. Stricker noted there may be a perception that the Town will not move forward with the project. Mr. McMahon suggested that if the Town took steps to evaluate re-use options for the old Middle School, it might help change that perception. Ms. Stricker agreed but advised that the creation of the committee for that purpose appears to have stalled. Mr. Scherrer noted that Mr. Gionta may have some information about the status of the committee and agreed to follow-up with him; Ms. Stricker agreed to follow-up with Mr. Parker and Ms. Snow.

Mr. Sloan recommended placing an ad soliciting developers in the Commercial Record. He advised that the Commercial Record is a CT publication for the construction trades that has a weekly circulation of approximately 16,000 readers. Ms. Mathiasen agreed to contact them and get more details about placing ads in their publication.

In response to a question from Mr. Scherrer, Ms. Mathiasen advised that she had not received any additional feedback from the e-mail she sent to the Town's Boards and Commissions. Ms. Sticker recommended that the Town ensure the site is environmentally clean before it is marketed.

In response to a question from Mr. Sloan, Mr. McMahon advised that the Goodspeed plans to sell the Stonecroft, Selden, and Williams Chevrolet properties, and three other houses. He noted that the Goodspeed has entered into a three-year lease on the Williams Chevrolet property, but the leasee understands the property is up for sale and that the lease can be terminated with 1-year notice. He further advised that the Change of Use petition for the property is on the Planning & Zoning Commission's Agenda for May 8th.

2. Goodspeed Property Tour Agenda

Mr. McMahon stated that the tour of the Goodspeed properties is scheduled for May 14th at 6:00 p.m. He noted that they are scheduled to meet with the Historic District Commission on the following evening. Ms. Mathiasen distributed copies of a draft Memo inviting all of the members of the Town's Boards and Commissions to participate in the tour. Ms. Kittner recommended adding a cut-off date for RSVPs and Ms. Mathiasen agreed to do so.

Mr. Scherrer advised that he had discussed the tour with Mr. Parker and they both feel it is important that representatives from all the Boards and Commissions participate in the tour. He and Ms. Mathiasen agreed to call the Chairman for each of the Boards/Commissions encouraging their members' participation.

3. Other

In response to a question from Mr. Scherrer, Mr. Sloan advised that there is nothing new to report on the Johnsonville project.

Events/Tourism:

4. Update Tourism Brochure

Ms. Mathiasen advised that the Tourism Brochures should be updated for a spring distribution. She stated she will bring a sample to the next meeting so that the Commissioners can provide their input and the brochures can be re-printed in June.

5. Website Update

Ms. Mathiasen noted that she and Ms. Stricker had gathered materials for the website updates and will be implementing the updates in the near future.

Business Support:

6. Business Updates

The following business updates were noted:

- Mr. Scherrer advised that Dutch Oil is planning to construct a large metal building at the rear of their new site and noted that there is a concern that the Planning and Zoning Commission may have some objections to the use of a metal building. He stated that Dutch Oil has met with the Fire Marshal and EPA to go over their plans and their meeting with P&Z is scheduled for May 22nd. Mr. Scherrer recommended that representatives from EDC attend the meeting.
- In response to a question from Mr. Scherrer, it was noted that none of the Commissioners know the new owner of the Wine and Spirit shop that is opening in the Village. Ms. Stricker agreed to stop by to welcome them to the Village and drop off an EDC business card.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Adding EDC Member

Ms. Mathiasen noted that she has not received any recommendations of anyone with a Planning and Zoning background that might be interested in joining the Commission. Several of the Commissioners and Mr. Govert advised that they had spoken with a number of people about the opening, however, none of the candidates had filled out an application. Ms. Mathiasen stated that the open position would be posted in the July Newsletter. She also suggested that the opening be mentioned at the next Democratic and Republican Town Committee meetings.

2. EDC Representative on Open Space Committee

Ms. Mathiasen advised that former Commissioner Thomas had represented EDC on the Open Space Commission. Since his resignation, EDC has not been represented and she suggested that attending the Open Space meetings could be one of the responsibilities of the new Commissioner.

3. Mail Received

Ms. Mathiasen reported that she had received an e-mail from Kris DiErrico advising that she has a 2 bedroom apartment available for rent above the Burgundy Book Store. The monthly rent is \$1200.00 without utilities.

4. Other

Ms. Mathiasen circulated a copy of an article from the Regional Standard about the April 5th joint Boards and Commissions meeting.

Mr. Scherrer reported that CERC had provided him with information on an EDDI database that contains demographics, contact, and other information for a number of area towns. He noted that EDC would have to populate the database themselves if they want East Haddam represented. Mr. Sloan observed that the Warren Group has a similar database that already contains much of the same information.

Mr. Govert advised that the Goodspeed and the Williams Chevrolet property are on the May 8th Planning and Zoning Meeting Agenda and stated that First Selectman Parker requested representatives from EDC attend that meeting to support the projects. Mr. Govert expressed concern about a statement made by Mr. Thomas in the draft minutes from the April 10th Planning & Zoning meeting indicating he will not vote on the Williams Chevrolet property until the Goodspeed submits its overall plan. He further advised that Mr. McMahon had had a proactive meeting with Mr. Parker and Mr. Ventres to gain a deeper understanding of the process the Goodspeed will have to work through to gain the approvals necessary for their projects.

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO DISCUSS, MR. SLOAN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. MATHIASEN AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Wheeler
Recording Secretary