Meeting Minutes

Town of East Haddam
Redevelopment Agency
September 24, 2026

1. Call to Order

Chair William DiCristofaro called the meeting to order at **7:00 PM**. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Members Present: William DiCristofaro, Randy Dill, John Cotter, James Curtin, Cameron Hendry, Jeff Miller, and Daniel Cobleigh.

Members Absent: Andrew Lord, Jacquelin Nowell, and Scott Brown.

Other(s) Present: Harvey Thomas and Thomas Sevigny.

Additional Attendees: Tommy Boston, VHB; Joe Balskus, VHB, participating remotely; Jim Ventres, Land Use Administrator; and Matthew Conroy.

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion: To approve the **August 27, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes** as presented.

Dill/Miller

Passed unanimously.

3. Committee Reports

a. Executive

William DiCristofaro reported that the planned developer roundtable was cancelled because prospective developers were unavailable or unwilling to participate in that format. Tommy Boston and Jeff Miller nevertheless obtained valuable feedback through individual developer conversations, which would be discussed under Master Planning.

b. Environmental

John Cotter reported that Amy Vaillancourt of VHB advised that the environmental report was being transmitted to the Agency. He would forward the report to members upon receipt. Further discussion was deferred until a subsequent meeting.

c. Finance

Nothing to report.

d. Community Engagement

Additional public outreach remained deferred pending further progress through developer outreach and the Master Planning process.

e. Legal

Nothing to report.

f. Master Planning

Tommy Boston presented VHB's Phase 2 update, including the traffic and mobility study, reconciliation of Concept B with the Appendix 6 Design Guidelines, developer feedback, and the proposed solicitation process.

Traffic and Mobility Study

Joe Balskus reported that traffic counts had been collected in August during the active summer season. VHB was organizing the data, validating existing conditions, and developing traffic models to evaluate redevelopment scenarios.

The study would examine traffic volumes, intersection operations, queuing, access, and pedestrian and bicycle conditions. Alternatives included three northern site-access options, a southern right-in/right-out entrance on Route 82, and roundabout versus T-intersection configurations. VHB would also consider the 2004 Fuss & O'Neill plan.

Members discussed site constraints, grades, sight distances, truck movements, pedestrian crossings, and potential improvements required for the northern access alternatives. Mr. Balskus explained that a roundabout would require further engineering evaluation to determine whether it could fit the location and provide sufficient safety and operational benefits.

Jeff Miller expressed concern that extensive roadway improvements could delay redevelopment. Mr. Balskus explained that improvements could potentially be phased and that a roundabout was not necessarily required for redevelopment to proceed. He also discussed CTDOT's review of proposed access and the importance of early coordination.

In response to a question about modeling tools and artificial intelligence, Mr. Balskus explained that VHB would use CTDOT-accepted analysis tools and engineering judgment. The presentation identified Synchro and VISSIM as the modeling tools.

Initial analysis results were expected around mid-October, with a full presentation planned for **November 12, 2026**. Chair DiCristofaro emphasized that the Agency would use the study findings to evaluate alternatives before determining a preferred approach.

Concept B and Appendix 6 Design Guidelines

Tommy Boston presented VHB's evaluation of Concept B against the applicable Appendix 6 Design Guidelines. Concept B earned **33 of 38 possible points, or approximately 87%, across 19 criteria evaluated at the concept stage**.

The presentation identified strengths in village scale, open space, pedestrian connections, site organization, and distributed parking. Some detailed design elements could not yet be evaluated at the conceptual stage.

Jim Ventres explained the background and purpose of the existing Village District guidelines and their accompanying photographs. Members discussed using those existing standards and VHB's evaluation framework to communicate expectations to developers and assess future proposals.

The Agency requested a clearer, more accessible presentation of the guidelines and scoring methodology, including explanatory graphics where appropriate. Mr. Boston agreed to prepare materials for distribution.

Developer Information Package and Supporting Studies

The Agency discussed assembling a coordinated information package for prospective developers. Proposed materials included the Appendix 6 guidelines and evaluation framework, environmental reports, water-supply analysis, wastewater-capacity analysis, and the traffic and mobility study.

Mr. Boston reported that the wastewater analysis would consider potential bedroom counts using the range of development contemplated in the market study. A groundwater analysis was also underway. Members emphasized the need to provide reliable information about infrastructure capacity, site conditions, and the responsibilities of the Town and developer.

In response to questions about subsurface conditions, Jim Ventres discussed the presence of ledge and existing environmental sampling records. Relevant available information would be included in the developer package.

Developer Outreach and Feedback

Tommy Boston and Jeff Miller summarized their individual and joint conversations with prospective developers. Several developers expressed interest in receiving the forthcoming solicitation.

The feedback supported retaining village character, historic compatibility, walkability, public gathering spaces, riverfront connections, and realistic parking and access arrangements. Developers sought flexibility to test the mix of uses, building sizes, development sequence, and public/private responsibilities.

The Town-owned properties at **1 and 7 Main Street** were identified as a practical starting point. Mr. Miller reported interest in additional contiguous property to provide greater development flexibility, along with requests for clarity regarding water, wastewater, site readiness, and the Town's role.

Multifamily rental housing was discussed as a potentially viable first phase that could help support later commercial activity. Developers raised concerns about whether two-story development would be financially feasible. Chair DiCristofaro emphasized the importance of maintaining the Agency's long-term vision for the property while considering market feedback.

Members also discussed developer skepticism about the feasibility of a small lodging component, particularly given seasonal demand. Nearby theaters and wedding venues were identified as potential demand generators, but the scale and feasibility of lodging remained matters for further market testing.

Solicitation Approach and Schedule

Mr. Boston outlined a proposed request for developer proposals and qualifications. The approach would ask respondents to propose a financially viable initial development for 1 and 7 Main Street and a longer-term concept for the broader study area.

Concept B was discussed as a flexible framework communicating the Town's priorities while allowing respondents to test development economics, uses, phasing, and implementation. Developer outreach would continue during preparation and release of the solicitation.

Mr. Boston proposed beginning drafting with the Agency and its legal representative. He identified **late January or February 2027** as a tentative release target.

Members discussed providing a public update through the Town's website, newsletter, or another briefing, with further public engagement after proposals were received.

Jeff Miller suggested arranging a discussion with the Connecticut Municipal Development Authority regarding funding priorities, potential property acquisition, and estimated needs. Mr. Boston agreed to assist with coordination.

Mr. Boston anticipated that the supporting studies would be completed for presentation at the **November 12, 2026** meeting.

No motions or formal votes were taken under Master Planning.

4. Bills

a. Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C.

Motion: To approve and pay **Invoice 477739**, dated **September 9, 2026**, in the amount of **$200.00**, for legal services provided by Richard D. Carella concerning Agency authority, the ordinance, and state law.

Miller/Curtin

Passed unanimously.

b. Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. — VHB

Motion: To approve and pay **Invoice 0524959**, dated **September 15, 2026**, for Project **R043662.000**, in the amount of **$14,013.18**.

The invoice covered property records research, utility assessment, traffic and mobility work, developer outreach, and reimbursable printing expenses.

Curtin/Cotter

Passed unanimously.

5. Old Business

No additional Old Business was discussed in open session.

6. New Business

No additional New Business was discussed in open session.

7. Next Scheduled Meetings

The next regular meeting was scheduled for **October 8, 2026**.

Chair DiCristofaro stated that the **October 22, 2026** meeting would be cancelled and that notice would be published. VHB's completed studies were scheduled for presentation at the **November 12, 2026** meeting.

8. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9. Executive Session

Motion: To enter Executive Session at **8:04 PM** to discuss **real estate matters**.

DiCristofaro/Cotter

Passed unanimously.

Jim Ventres, Matthew Conroy, Thomas Sevigny, and Harvey Thomas were invited to participate.

Motion: To return to regular session at **8:38 PM**.

DiCristofaro/Curtin

Passed unanimously.

No actions were taken.

10. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at **8:39 PM**.

Cobleigh/Cotter

Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

William DiCristofaro
Chairman