

Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
June 12, 2012

Present: Dick Gada
Ed Shapiro
John Jensen
Joan Bengtson

Also Present: Mark Christiansen
Mark Nickerson
Carol Cave
Chris Barrett
Marvin Schutt
Brian Schuch

A. Preliminary Business

1. Call to Order. Acting Chairman Gada called the Economic Development Commission Regular Meeting of June 12, 2012 to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes. Mr. Gada asked for corrections, additions or deletions to the May 8, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Economic Development Commission.

MOTION: Mr. Shapiro moved to approve the May 8, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Economic Development Commission, as presented.
Seconded by Mr. Jensen. (4-0) Unanimous

3. Delegations.
 - a. Visitor's Center-Carol Cave. Ms. Cave, representing the East Lyme Information Center, reported her budget for the Information Center is \$1,050, with no increase from last year's budget.

She asked for suggestions from this Commission on how to get a better volunteer base. It has been posted on the East Lyme channel, at AHEPHA and the Senior Center. Mr. Barrett suggested asking high school students who need community service to volunteer. Ms. Cave replied because there are transient individuals who use the Tourist Information Center, they have hesitated to use student volunteers. Mr. Jensen has contacted ELBO, called Dave LeBrie and Smith Acres and left messages that volunteers are needed at the Tourist Information Center. To date he has had no reply. Ms. Cave added we have reached out to the Chamber. Mr. Sheridan informed her next year the Chamber plans to hire someone to help the Norwich and East Lyme Information centers. Mr. Schutt suggested asking the Rotary and the Lions for volunteers. Mr. Christiansen felt possibly a youngster and their parent could work together so that the youngster gets community service. Mr. Barrett felt older scouts and their parents could help. Mr. Schutt stated the Historical Society use upper classmen as tour guides, and they do a very nice job. Mr.

Gada agreed to discuss this with Mr. Lombardo, Superintendent of Schools, and the Rotary. Ms. Cave reported the Information Center budget in the amount of \$1,050 includes telephone, electricity, thank you baskets and cleaning supplies.

MOTION: Mr. Shapiro moved to fund \$1,050 to operate the Tourist Information Center for this year. This sum to be taken from fiscal year 2012/2013 budget. Seconded by Ms. Bengsten. (4-0) Unanimous

b. Samuel Smith House—Chris Barrett. Mr. Barrett reported the Samuel Smith House was built in 1685. He stated he is in favor of protecting the aquifer. This property has an eight hundred foot strip on Bridebrook. If it were to be developed we could have a problem. We have applied for a 5013c. Bylaws have been written. This property has a lot of potential. If the Town purchased it, we would have three historical homes in Town from different periods. This would draw people into Town. Mr. Barrett suggested that this Commission tour the house and property. Mr. Christansen stated this house is on 17 acres. Mr. Barrett reported after we obtain the 5013c we plan to apply for a grant.

Mr. Jensen asked what is the condition of this house? Mr. Barrett replied it is in descent shape. Mr. Jensen asked what does the Historical Society think about this house? Mr. Schutt stated it supports the Town purchasing it. Mr. Jensen asked what is the Town's position on it? Mr. Nickerson replied it is negotiating a sale price. The Town has invested in appraisals and legal fees. Mr. Shapiro asked what would the Town like to use it for? Mr. Barrett replied it could be used for teaching history. There are Indian graves on the property. It could be used for archeological digs. Mr. Barrett felt it was a worthwhile piece, because the aquifer would be protected.

Mr. Christansen, a member of the Conservation of Natural Resources, stated we have tested various brooks. The cleanest brook was Cranberry Meadow and the most polluted was Pattagansett. Mr. Jensen suggested that the house be toured by a residential realtor to obtain the realtor's opinion on its value. Ms. Bengsten felt the two casinos would be very interested in this property. Mr. Barrett distributed information on the Samuel Smith House. Ms. Bengsten felt there could be a trolley run to and from the three historical houses in Town. She felt we are preserving history. It would be a great field trip for students.

MOTION: Mr. Jensen moved to support the purchase of the Samuel Smith House and its 17 acre parcel. Seconded by Ms. Bengsten. (4-0) Unanimous.

c. POCD-Chapter 4 Economic Development-Brian Schuch. Mr. Schuch, an architect and member of the Planning Commission, reported he and Gary Goeschel attended a seminar and it was reported that Connecticut is an expensive place to do business. There are limited solutions to compete. One-third of Hartford places of business are not rented. Last year was the first time CL&P sold less electricity than the year before. Mr. Shapiro stated CL&P now has competition.

A Subcommittee of the Planning Commission will work on Chapter 4 of the POCD. We would like this Commission's goals reflected in Chapter 4. Mr. Shapiro stated this Commission's goals are Main Street and the Yale Charette. Mr. Gada added the Mobil Station is noted in the Yale Charrett. Mr. Shapiro felt restrooms are needed. Ms. Bengsten asked if a train station has been considered.? Mr. Gada stated Mr. Formica is considering it at another location. We do not have the land for business parks and we need to concentrate on our tourist attractions: the Boardwalk, beaches and recreation. People want to relax. Mr. Shapiro felt dining places as well as a boutique are needed. Mr. Gada stated a Thai Restaurant is coming to Town. He felt we need a grocery store on the Niantic side of Town.

Mr. Schuch asked over the last twenty years what was the largest economic development in Town? Mr. Gada replied 38 Hope Street, to allow for affordable housing. Mr. Jensen stated the Gateway project. Mr. Schuch asked how the Waterford bridge affected Main Street? Mr. Shapiro replied it hurt retail when the bridge was out. Mr. Schuch asked about the northern part of Town? We now have the car dealership and Rite Aid. Mr. Jensen added McDonald agreed to move and allow CVS to move in. Mr. Christiansen felt the Boardwalk is an improvement. Mr. Schuch stated we are also getting a large beach. We will have an area for fishing. Mr. Gada felt we will need lifeguards, litter removed and the new beach cleaned, as well as off-site parking. Mr. Schuch reported he is personally interested in a train stop in East Lyme. Ms. Bengsten stated Camp Niantic is expanding. Over the next five years Niantic Center School will close, and the property will be available. Mr. Jensen felt the regulations sprawl have a negative affect on new businesses. We need fewer regulations and more common sense regulations. It frustrates the smaller business person. We need codes and regulations, but he feels it has gone too far. Mr. Schuch stated the seminar addressed issues where towns are starving for development. We would like to address that in Chapter 4.

Mr. Christiansen felt open land is the most tax efficient revenue generated in this Town. For every tax dollar paid to the Town for industrial land, the Town spends .25. For commercial land for every tax dollar paid to the Town, the Town spends .39. For residential subdivisions for every tax dollar paid to the Town, the Town spends \$1.11. We have a lot of land in the north end of Town that is zoned for residential; it could remain as agricultural farm land or open space or become residential. He asked that agriculture be promoted. Mr. Jensen stated this is the reason we stand behind agriculture. Mr. Schuch stated we have talked about transportation. Mr. Shapiro reported there was a plan to be able to walk from Niantic to Flanders.

Mr. Shapiro stated David LeBrie advertises what East Lyme has. His Bed and Breakfast has doubled in size, and he gives individuals staying there a list of activities in East Lyme. Mr. Gada added Mr. LeBrie has a year round business. It was recommended that Mr. Schuch visit his business. Mr. Gada felt if we have more we could be a year round destination too. People find time for recreation. We do well from April to December. Mr. Jensen felt residents now go to malls rather than shopping locally.

Mr. Schuch plans to give this Commission a draft of Chapter 4 at a later date.

4. Public Comments. There were no public comments.

B. Reports

1. Ex-officio Report. Mr. Nickerson had to leave early.
2. Chairman's Report. There was no Chairman's Report.
3. Presentation of Bills. The Recording Secretary presented a bill for three hours of secretarial work for the Economic Development Commission from May 8, 2012 to May 12, 2012.

MOTION: Mr. Jensen moved to pay the bill from the Recording Secretary for 3 hours of secretarial services from May 8, 2012 to May 12, 2012. Seconded by Mr. Shapiro. (4-0) Unanimous.

MOTION: Mr. Jensen moved to pay the bill from the Recording Secretary for 3 hours of secretarial services for the June Meeting. (4-0) Unanimous.

C. Old Business

1. Agri-Business Committee. Mark Christiansen reported the fifteen mile Trail Ride to be held on October 21 will be located on his farm, with parking at Mr. Kalal's farm. It has been advertised in the Steed Read. He asked for authorization to release funds for brochures and advertising in the Steed Read. We plan to charge \$30 per rider. Youngsters will receive a discount. Food is included in the ticket price. Mr. Gada asked if there now was a ruling on signage. Mr. Christiansen spoke to Mark Salerno, and they will work on signage.

MOTION: Mr. Shapiro moved to authorize the Agri-Business Committee to drawn down \$280 to advertise the October 21 Trail Ride. Seconded by Ms. Bengsten. (4-0) Unanimous.

Mr. Christansen reported during Celebrate East Lyme we will have a hand out on visiting the following farms: Scott's Orchard, Old Orchard Farm, and Five Cs Horse Farm. He will encourage an egg farmer to participate. Heifer International has become involved.

The Agri-Business Committee sent in a pre-qualification application for the Small Farm Preservation Program. The Town will need to qualify on six items. The due date to send the application to the state is May 31. We are also considering applying for a Viability Grant.

2. Budget. The entire Town budget passed by Referendum.

D. New Business

1. Open Discussion. Commission members felt it was important for a quorum and continuity to have good attendance from all members.

E. Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Shapiro moved to adjourn the June 12, 2012
Regular Meeting at 8:40 p.m. Seconded by
Ms. Bengsten. (4-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary