



**TOWN OF MADISON  
CONNECTICUT 06443  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

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Approved February 11, 2010

Note: action items are underlined and owners of the action items are **bolded**.

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Madison Economic Development Commission held on Thursday, January 14, 2010, 7:30 p.m. at the Madison Town Campus.

Present: Commissioners Peter Thomas, Jim Ball, Mark Casparino, Ryan Duques, Ann Foley, Hank Yaggi, Joan Walker

Also present: Filmore McPherson, First Selectman; Marilyn Ozols, Planning Officer; Art Sickle, Technology Director; Eileen Banisch, Chamber of Commerce; Tom Banisch, Keith Mirante, Joe Bierbauer, observers

Peter Thomas called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

1. Public Comment. In response to a question by Mr. Beerbower, Mr. Thomas noted that the last time there was a budget estimate for a downtown sewage treatment system was several years ago and the estimate was \$5.8 million and there has been no recent update of the estimate. Mr. Thomas explained that financing for a sewage treatment system would involve a different bonding arrangement since hook up and usage fees would be paid by the users of the system providing revenue to the Town for the bond including fees. In response to a question, Mr. Thomas recommended that future discussion of this item on the EDC agenda include representation from people involved in the original study.

Mr. Beerbower commented on a need he sees for the Town to establish priorities when there are two large projects, including a downtown sewage system and the purchase of the Griswold property, under consideration. He noted that the Griswold property would also provide a revenue stream to the town.

Mr. McPherson commented that if the Griswold property is approved, the peak debt service will be two years at \$5 million per year or 7%. He noted that there is a regulation that caps debt at 10% so there is still room under the cap. He noted that this will all be addressed at the public hearing on the 5 year plan.

Peter Thomas, Chairman  
Hank Yaggi – Vice Chair  
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Mr. Beerbower commented that with the current economy, he believes there is a need to think, plan ahead and make decision about taking on more debt in a weak economic environment. It is unlikely that the Griswold property would be developed in the near future. Mr. Banisch noted that the permit has a three year deadline for completion.

Mr. Thomas noted that a decision on the Griswold purchase will be finalized at the referendum on January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Beerbower recommended that the Bradley Road Vision Plan, which includes the issue of sewage treatment, be included as an item on the agendas for the Economic Development Commission meetings. Mr. Thomas noted that there have been presentations on the Bradley Road Vision Plan and he believes the next important step is the Town Summit.

Mr. Duques commented that the Commission will need the backing of the local businesses for the plan to work effectively.

Mr. McPherson advised that Mr. Davis recently bought the laundromat property which is made up of two parcels. He does not have any definite plans for development of this property at this time. Mr. McPherson requested that the EDC provide some guidance to Mr. Davis for options for development of this property. Mr. Thomas commented that it is important that adequate planning take place for the Commission to begin to encourage specific development. It will be important that all appropriate groups get together on the same plan to deal with the sewage issue on a community basis.

Mr. Casparino commented that he believes this would be a good time to sit down with Mr. Davis and talk with him about appropriate ideas. Mr. Thomas agreed that it would be a good idea to meet with Mr. Davis after the Commission has been appropriately prepared.

Mr. Ball commented that the Commission had talked about having David Kadamus and Glenn from Plaimetrics attend the Commission's February meeting.

Mr. Yaggi commented that, while the Commission meets once a month formally, he believes there is a need to have other effective ways to exchange information.

Mr. Thomas commented that much of the Commission's ability to follow-up on some of the important issues discussed need follow-up which could be provided by the proposed EDC staff person which is a high priority. He asked Mr. McPherson about the next step in the process of obtaining approval of the EDC staff person. Mr. McPherson noted that the request for the funding for the EDC staff will be considered at the Board of Finance next Wednesday and he recommended that a member or members of the EDC attend this meeting. Mr. McPherson also recommended that an EDC member attend one of the budget hearings and he agreed to advise the Commission which hearing would be most beneficial for members to attend.

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In response to a question by Mr. Yaggi, Mr. McPherson noted that the Human Resources staff will be putting together the job description for the EDC staff person. Mr. Yaggi also questioned if assistance was being provided by the Town's legislative representation in Hartford and Mr. McPherson noted that he is in contact with Madison's State representative.

2. Approval of minutes. On motion made by Mr. Duques, and seconded by Ms. Foley, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of December 10, 2009 as submitted.

3. Website discussion/Art Sickle. Mr. Sickle showed the Commission members the existing Economic Development web site noting that he understands that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed to update the site. The only recent updating that has occurred is adding the meeting agendas and minutes. He noted that access to the EDC website can be obtained directly or from the Town web site. In response to a question by Mr. Duques, Mr. Sickle noted that he is not aware of any Departments that have used outside professional people to develop or maintain their web page. He is aware that in the past volunteer services have been utilized, however, his office has staff that can update the site once information and input is provided from the Commission. There are some rules about using outside parties to post because of security issues so he would recommend using his office staff before looking to the outside.

Mr. Sickle recommended that a few EDC representatives met with him to discuss ideas for the web site. As noted at the last EDC meeting, Mr. Duques and Ms. Foley will serve as the sub-committee to work with Mr. Sickle.

Mr. Thomas asked if a temporary contact link could be established until a staff person with an e-mail address is able to be set up. Mr. McPherson agreed to look at options for a temporary e-mail contact until a staff person is on board.

Ms. Walker noted that the school has a list serve and she questioned if there is a Town list serve that could be utilized by the Commission? Mr. Sickle noted that the Town has an information line that is available for residents to sign up to receive notices. Mr. Banisch recommended that a link for residents to sign up for the Town list serve be included on the EDC web page.

4. Discussion of EDC Commissioner Assignments and implementation plans. On motion made by Ms. Foley, and seconded by Mr. Casparino the Commission voted unanimously to move past agenda item #4 and #5 since Ms. Ozols was in attendance.

6. Update by Marilyn Ozols on current proposals being presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Ms. Ozols noted that the largest applications currently before the Planning and Zoning Commission are the variance for the new design for the Senior Center and Ambulance Garage. There will be a public hearing next Thursday and these projects will be on the agenda but they will be continued to the third Thursday of February since they need to go back to the IWC and ACCA.

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Mr. Ball noted that there was a delay with the ZBA review and he is hopeful that the Senior Center will be able to be moved along at a good rate. Ms. Ozols clarified that there have been no delays in the approval process and noted that the projects are moving along so well in the process that the hearing was scheduled before the plans were complete. If the plans are submitted, the approvals will be completed in February.

Mr. Casparino noted that at the last meeting he and Mr. Yaggi had agreed to work together on getting groups together to discuss ways to help businesses learn to move through the approval process. He noted that Ms. Ozols provided him with a copy of a handbook from the Town of Guilford which outlines their approval process. He agreed to forward a copy of the document to the Commission members to review and agreed that copies should also be provided to appropriate Town departments for their review. He believes that this would be a good document to use as a base to develop a Madison handbook.

Mr. Casparino requested that Ms. Ozols also provide members with a copy of the Design Standards for Wall Street noting that she could forward a copy to the Commission Clerk for distribution to the members.

Ms. Banisch agreed that this would be a good document to use to develop a Madison handbook and having a draft available for reference at the next meeting would be helpful.

7. Discussion of Grant possibilities as forwarded to the Commission by Commissioner.

Mr. Thomas noted that Mr. Moore is working on the Main Street Initiative and grants but these issues are tied into the staff person. One of the first steps is to coordinate the 10 interviews. Mr. Thomas agreed to put together more information on the Main Street Initiative and forward it to Mr. McPherson. This item will be included on the agenda for the next Commission meeting when there should be an update on the status and timetable of the staff person. In response to a question by Mr. Banisch, Mr. McPherson noted that he is confident that this position will be approved and he believes it is important that approval not be delayed.

Mr. McPherson noted that the Town will be receiving another grant for the Madison Town Center Project. He noted that it will be important to communicate with area businesses so that the work to move the utilities underground will cause a minimum of disruption to their business. He will be looking to the Chamber of Commerce for assistance with this item.

8. Discussion on coordination of Main Street initiative. The next step in the Main Street initiative was discussed in item #7 above.

9. Discussion of EDC's potential involvement in the new Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. McPherson noted that work on the new Plan of Conservation and Development will begin shortly. The plan is to update the plan internally and he will contact the EDC as assistance is needed.

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10. Discussion on revision of the EDC's Mission Statement. Mr. Thomas recommended that discussion on the revision of the EDC Mission Statement be delayed until the next regular meeting.

11. Election of Officers. Mr. Thomas noted that he had taken over as Chairman in December 2008. Since that time there has been a significant transition of members but there is currently an active membership in place. There is agreement that the Commission as a whole needs to continue to become more proactive in dealing with relevant issues.

Mr. Thomas noted that he would like to nominate Mark Casparino to serve as the new EDC chairman noting that he will need the active support of all members to be able to carry out the Commission's aggressive agenda. It is important that the Commission continue to work together in a non-partisan basis.

Ms. Walker noted that she is new to the Commission, like Mr. Casparino, but questioned if the experience provided by Mr. Thomas was more important to consider in electing a Chairman. Mr. Duques commented that there is a level of experience that is able to be provided by the other Commission members. He also commented that all members should be expected to be active participants in the Commission's activities. Mr. Ball commented that he has great regard for Mr. Thomas and sometimes changing in mid-stream is not always the best idea. No matter who is elected as Chairman, Mr. Ball believes Mr. Thomas deserves the Commission's appreciation for his efforts as Chairman. Mr. Ball noted that, in the interest of bi-partisanship, he will serve as Vice Chairman if asked. Ms. Foley commented that Mr. Thomas has been a good leader and while she is disappointed that he will not continue to serve as Chairman, she welcomes Mr. Casparino's energy. Mr. Casparino recognized Mr. Thomas' efforts as a leader noting that he will continue to be an active participant as a member.

On motion made by Mr. Thomas, and seconded by Mr. Yaggi, the Commission voted unanimously to elect Mark Casparino as Chairman of the Economic Development Commission.

A motion was made by Ms. Foley, and seconded by Ms. Walker, to nominate Jim Ball as Vice-Chairman of the Economic Development Commission. The motion was defeated with Ms. Foley, Ms. Walker and Mr. Ball voting in favor of the motion and Mr. Thomas, Mr. Duques, Mr. Yaggi and Mr. Casparino voting against the motion.

A motion was made by Mr. Casparino, and seconded by Mr. Duques, to nominate Hank Yaggi as Vice-Chairman of the Economic Development Commission. The motion was approved with Mr. Thomas, Mr. Duques, Mr. Casparino and Mr. Yaggi voting in favor of the motion and Ms. Foley, Ms. Walker and Mr. Ball opposed.

On motion made by Mr. Thomas, and seconded by Mr. Casparino, the Commission voted unanimously to nominate Anne Foley as Secretary of the Economic Development Commission.

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5. Discussion of attendance requirement and report to be submitted to Board of Selectmen. Mr. Thomas noted that he will submit the EDC commission member attendance report to the Selectmen's Office.

12. Old business. There were no items discussed under old business.

13. New business. **Mr. Casparino** noted that he and Mr. Yaggi had met on December 29 with some local merchants including 4 people from three businesses. He agreed to forward his meeting notes to Commission members. He noted that the meeting opened up a discussion line with merchants and they developed a number of good ideas that could help improve the environment for merchants. They would like to see the development of a marketing plan. Other ideas discussed include the development of a tag line, the development of a Madison as a destination program, discussions with landlords, signage on I-95 to help direct people to the Town, improving Town upkeep of the Main Street area, and the distribution of Town maps at Hammonasset State Park.

Ms. Banisch noted that the Chamber of Commerce will be putting together a tourism map to be widely distributed. She noted that there was a merchant's meeting and one major problem is the lack of restaurants and there is a feeling that this is one of the first steps to be addressed. This involves further discussion of the sewage issue. Ms. Banisch noted that the Chamber of Commerce meets the second Wednesday of the month at 8:00 a.m.

Mr. Beerbower noted that as a member of SCORE he and other SCORE members with a variety of business experience are available to provide volunteer assistance to local businesses.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2010, 7:30 p.m. at the Madison Town Campus.

Terry Holland-Buckley  
Clerk

Peter Thomas, Chairman  
Hank Yaggi – Vice Chair  
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