



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

Approved March 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, February 11, 2010, 7:30 p.m. at the Madison Town Campus.

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

Also present: Filmore McPherson, First Selectman; Marilyn Ozols, Planning Officer; David Kadamus, former EDC Chairman; Vince Dussich, Rita Unsile, Job Evaluation Committee; Eileen Banisch, Chamber of Commerce; Peter van Strum, SCORE, Tom Banisch, Bob Newman, observers

Mark Casparino called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Approval of January 14, 2010 Minutes. On motion made by Mr. Ball, and seconded by Ms. Foley, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2010 meeting as submitted.

a. **Action item review.**

Mr. McPherson provided an update report on the new Director of Land use Operations and Planning position. He noted that he and representatives from the Commission had attended the January 20 Board of Finance meeting where funding for this position was considered. The Board of Finance took action to approve a special appropriation request for funding for this new position for the balance of FY 2009-2010.

Mr. McPherson provided an update report on his agreement to look at options for a temporary e-mail contact until a staff person is on board. Mr. Casparino noted that Eileen Banish with the Chamber of Commerce has agreed to serve as the contact person and suggested that Chamber of Commerce phone number be included on the website. Mr. Duques requested that the EDC and Chamber charters be evaluated before this was identified as a requirement. In addition, M.r. Duques also advised that the Town Technology Director has indicated that an e-mail account for the EDC could be set up so that incoming e-mails are forwarded to a Commission member. The Commission members agreed that this e-mail account should be set up with all correspondence

Mark Casparino, Chairman
Hank Yaggi – Vice Chair
Anne Foley – Secretary
Joan Walker

Jim Ball
Ryan Duques
Peter Thomas

being forwarded to Mr. Casparino for his response and or appropriate action. Mr. Duques agreed to advise Mr. Sickle. Mr. Casparino agreed to follow up with Mr. McPherson regarding what the charters allow.

Mr. Casparino noted that he and Ms. Ozols will be providing members with a copy of the Design Standards for Wall Street.

Mr. Casparino reported that Ms. Ozols continues to work on revising a handbook on the development process for businesses. The plan is to have this document available to hand out by May 1. Mr. Duques will be looking at adding EDC information that would be useful for businesses. Mr. Thomas recommended that the EDC members be given an opportunity to review this document before it is distributed to the public. On motion made by Mr. Thomas, and seconded by Ms. Foley, the Commission voted unanimously to direct that the handbook on the development process for business being revised by Ms. Ozols be distributed to commission members for review and comment prior to release to businesses. Therefore, the commissioners should expect to receive an electronic copy of this document by May 1, and will supply their comments back to Ms. Ozols by May 15.

In response to a question by Mr. Yaggi about meeting with Guilford EDC representatives, Mr. Casparino noted the Mr. Steinmetz of SCORE is working on setting up a meeting with the Guilford commissioner(s).

2. Bradley Road Vision Study – History and Potential Next Steps. Mr. Kadamus, Chairman of the Economic Development from 2002 through 2008, was present to give an historical overview of the Economic Development Commission for the period 2002 through 2008. Mr. Kadamus noted that in 2002 the Commission focused on defining a mission statement, identifying pressures and issues and setting targets for economic development. The Mission Statement developed stated that “The Economic Development Commission has the responsibility to monitor economic conditions, research trends that affect town revenue and expense profile, to make recommendations to strengthen and diversify the town’s tax base, and to assist in enacting approved actions – all the while preserving the special quality of life in Madison.” A graphic, which compared the Town revenue profile, was reviewed which showed that 74% of revenue came from residential taxes, 12% from commercial taxes, 9% from personal property and 5% from non-tax sources. A profile of tax revenue showed that 49% of tax revenue is generated south of I-95 with the area north of Route 80 providing 10% and Mr. Kadamus noted that this information guided the Commission into focusing on how to create opportunities in these areas. A graph of income levels showed that Madison has more middle income households than other comparable communities and this information is applicable to quality of life issues in Town. The Commission agreed to focus on smart development that helps control taxes but allows for economic diversification.

Mr. Kadamus noted that, to identify opportunities, the EDC studied streets in Town to define the greatest variability in assessed value per acre with a theory that the streets with the greatest

Mark Casparino, Chairman
Hank Yaggi – Vice Chair
Anne Foley – Secretary
Joan Walker

Jim Ball
Ryan Duques
Peter Thomas

variability identified potential under-development. Roads that were identified included Bradley Road, Cottage Road, Dudley Lane, Longshore Land, Meigs Avenue, New Road, Old Toll Road and Samson Rock. The EDC developed near term goals and objectives which included targeting commercial development and redevelopment opportunities such as the Village District, Route 1 East Gateway Entrance, Route 1 West Gateway Entrance and Route 80 in North Madison. Residential development opportunities to review included the Griswold Airport, higher use opportunities South of Route 95, and development incentives for undeveloped acreage. With the initial focus on Bradley Road the Commission developed a list of objectives which included correcting the imbalance in development in the downtown area, integrating the new railroad station, creation of a vision to encourage investment in town, greater consistency in zoning regulations, the use of Tuxis Pond as an asset to development and public use and addressing the problem of parking in the downtown area. Mr. Kadamus noted that a large issue brought out by the Commission's study was the need for a common waste water management plan for the downtown area and potential treatments sites and a potential layout as well as cost estimates were developed.

Mr. Kadamus reviewed the effort of the Commission in the spring of 2008 to conduct a survey of property and business owners to assess their opinions on development of downtown Madison, to understand opinions on regulation and improvements, to gauge plans for expansion and to define areas of improvements. The survey was conducted by the University of Connecticut Center for Survey Research and Analysis and was completed by 84 one on one phone interviews. The results of the survey indicated that property and business owners supported the development of the downtown area but development should preserve the atmosphere of the area. It also indicated that a system of common waste water management is needed and property owners are willing to pay for this improvement. It was also agreed that parking needs to be improved, opening Tuxis Pond to recreational activities would be a benefit and the creation of a Downtown Development Authority was strongly supported. To move forward the Commission worked toward incorporating the "Downtown Development Plan" into the Plan of Conservation and Development and began to work with the Planning and Zoning Commission to clarify and standardize building regulations to provide greater predictability of approval for development. They also began to communicate findings from Milone and MacBroom regarding wetlands and Tuxis Pond, update the study on waste water management, investigate the creation of the Downtown Development Authority, continue to work with CT DOT to finish the development of the rail station and pursue a parking strategy.

Mr. Casparino commented that this historical information will be very helpful. In response to a question by Mr. Casparino, Mr. Kadamus noted that he believes the update of the Plan of Conservation and Development to include the Downtown Development Plan, and working with the PZC to standardize building regulations are the top priorities. Mr. Kadamus commented that he believes the next large future project is to do a build out study. Mr. Casparino requested that Mr. Kadamus work with **Mr. Yaggi** on developing steps to begin the implementation of an action plan. Mr. Casparino noted that perhaps Ms. Walker might also be interested in working on this project and that he'd contact her to this end. Mr. Kadamus agreed to provide guidance and assistance to the Commission.

Mark Casparino, Chairman
Hank Yaggi – Vice Chair
Anne Foley – Secretary
Joan Walker

Jim Ball
Ryan Duques
Peter Thomas

Mr. McPherson commented that he believes it is important that the new staff have an opportunity to review this presentation once they are on board.

Mr. Yaggi requested that an e-mail version of Mr. Kadamus's presentation be distributed. Mr. Casparino agreed to receive a copy of the presentation and distribute it to members of the commission.

3. Public Comment. There was no discussion under public comment.

4. Discussion of 2010 Plan.

a. **Citizens – Communication Plan**. Mr. Casparino noted that he and Mr. Yaggi had met with Mr. Beerbower and Mr. Steinmetz, representing SCORE to discuss action items. There was a recommendation that the Commission only take on two major projects for the upcoming year. One of the top priority items would involve the development of a communication plan to make the public aware of EDC specifics. Mr. Yaggi recommended the development of a CD to have available as an educational tool. Mr. Casparino commented that he believes the first step is to develop a plan for goals to be accomplished and how these goals can be accomplished. Mr. Duques commented that the Commission should establish what is needed to develop a communication plan, determine the subjects to be covered and then develop the most effective method of communication. He believes that most people in Town know little or nothing about the EDC so it will be important to define the Commission in the communication plan. Mr. Ball suggested a “what you should know” theme to go through the process of developing a commercial space. Mr. Thomas commented that while it is important to open the door to people to understand the Commission it will be important to first develop a message and lay the foundation for what the Commission plans to accomplish. Having staff on board will play an important part in the Commission being able to move forward.

Mr. Duques noted that he had been contacted by Representative Deborah Heinrich regarding the development of a Committee to work on the Madison waste water issue.

Mr. Casparino commented that he believes drafting of a communication plan is a key item and he will work with Mr. Mirante to begin development. He requested that Commission member contact him with any input during the process.

Mr. Casparino noted that Mr. Ball and Mr. Thomas are continuing to work as liaisons to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Ball suggested that it would be beneficial to re-institute inner-Commission meetings. Mr. Thomas commented that he believes the Main Street project will prove to be an important component of communication. Mr. Thomas agreed to contact Ned Moore to get the process ready to move forward as soon as the staff person is on board. Mr. Thomas also noted that there is a need to coordinate with the Finance Director on budget issues. He reviewed the EDC line items included in the budget noting that there might be a need to review the project priorities.

Mark Casparino, Chairman
Hank Yaggi – Vice Chair
Anne Foley – Secretary
Joan Walker

Jim Ball
Ryan Duques
Peter Thomas

Mr. Casparino noted that Mr. Ball had agreed to continue to work as the primary liaison to neighboring towns and at the statewide level.

Mr. Dussich commented that the job description of the Economic Development/Land Use Director position is currently in the review process. The draft has been developed and this initial draft was general to the land use part but is now balanced to cover both land use and economic development issues. Mr. Thomas noted that the job description has this staff reporting directly to the First Selectman. Mr. Thomas requested that members review the draft job description and e-mail comments back to Rita Umile, Human Resources Manager.

Mr. Casparino requested that Mr. Thomas verify that there is a strong economic development statement in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

b. **Property Owners** – Planning and Development Handbook. Mr. Casparino advised Ms. Ozols that the Commission members had voted to review the Planning and Development Handbook before it is distributed

Ms. Ozols noted that the Wall Street Design Standards are going to the Planning and Zoning Commission in April.

c. **Merchants** – Potential Upside of Griswold Land. Mr. Casparino recommended that the Griswold Land issue be discussed at the next Commission meeting.

5. Update by Marilyn Ozols. Ms. Ozols reviewed applications before the Planning and Zoning Commission as follows:

- a comprehensive remodeling of the conference building at the Mercy Center to be considered at the March 18 PZC meeting
- an application to expand to commercial at Prestige Park
- an application to enclose the drive-through at 1343 Boston Post Road to create additional space
- Town Ambulance facility was approved
- Town Senior Center was delayed
- Public Works salt storage will be considered at the march 18 meeting

Ms. Ozols noted that work on the Plan of Conservation and Development continues with a review of the history of the last 10 years, public information meetings, and the development of priority issues before moving forward. She noted that the PZC will be contacting the EDC to request a representative to work on the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Ms. Ozols noted that the R-2 zoning hearing has been closed with the vote scheduled for next week. The proposed four zoning districts would provide more flexibility and would go into effect this spring.

Mark Casparino, Chairman
Hank Yaggi – Vice Chair
Anne Foley – Secretary
Joan Walker

Jim Ball
Ryan Duques
Peter Thomas

Ms. Ozols noted that the Route 1 Commercial sub-Committee District will be winding down their charge.

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

7. New business. Mr. Duques noted that he and Ms. Foley had met with Mr. Sickle regarding the web site. Mr. Duques reviewed the existing home page and submitted recommendations for relatively minor changes to address wording and dating issues without changing the content. Ms. Foley is performing a review of the other pages and is also working on some updates. A full redesign with Mr. Sickle will be worked on at a later date when all members will be asked to review and provide input.

On motion made by Mr. Thomas, and seconded by Mr. Ball, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the modifications made by Mr. Duques to the Economic Development Commission web site home page as recommended.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

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

Terry Holland-Buckley
Clerk

Mark Casparino, Chairman
Hank Yaggi – Vice Chair
Anne Foley – Secretary
Joan Walker

Jim Ball
Ryan Duques
Peter Thomas