



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

Approved 4/8/10

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

Present: Commissioners Mark Casparino, Jim Ball, Ann Foley, Joan Walker

Also present: Filmore McPherson, First Selectman; Marilyn Ozols, Planning Officer; Eileen Banisch, Chamber of Commerce; Eric Steinmetz, Guilford Economic Development Commission and SCORE, Tom Banisch, Andy Bauen, observers

Mr. Casparino called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

1 Minutes. February 11, 2010. The Clerk noted that Mr. Thomas had provided a few changes to the minutes of February 11, 2010.

Item 4.a, first line should note that Mr. Yaggi, not Mr. Thomas met with SCORE
Item 4.a, second to the last paragraph, spelling error in the name "Rita Umile, Human Resources Manager"

On motion made by Ms. Walker, and seconded by Ms. Foley, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 11, 2010 as amended.

2. Public Comment. There was no discussion under public forum.

3. Discussion of the 2010 Plan.

a. For the Citizens/Town

i. **Communication Plan Draft.** Mr. Casparino noted that he is working on the draft Communication Plan but it is not yet ready for publication. The Communication Plan needs to be developed by the Commission to serve as a guide that for sending out important messages.

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He will distribute the document to the Commission members for review once it has been further developed.

Mr. Casparino provided a copy of a “Downtown Game Plan” provided by David Kadamus. He noted that he talked to Mr. Kadamus who agreed with the importance of communication to increase awareness of the public about the activities of the EDC.

Mr. Ball commented that he agrees with the importance of communication. He noted regional communication was expanded with a meeting with representatives of Guilford that provided an opportunity to communicate with another Town’s Economic Development Commission. He believes that, in general, the EDC does not receive the same level of attention as other boards and commissions and effective communication is one way to bring an appropriate level of attention to the Commission especially in this economic climate. One issue that needs attention in the short term is to provide assistance with filling vacancies in retail space. At this point, residential construction has all but stopped. Mr. Steinmetz noted that Guilford has developed a monthly newsletter that includes a list of vacancies. He noted that, while they work with the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber has different goals since the Chamber of Commerce is concerned with their membership and the EDC is concerned for all businesses in Town. Mr. Ball commented that he is impressed with the number of hits the Guilford EDC and Chamber of Commerce web sites receive. He is also impressed with the commitment made by the Guilford First Selectman to meet with any entity that is interested in a development project in Guilford. Mr. Steinmetz noted that the new First Selectmen’s platform for the November election included support for economic development. He was pleased that both the First Selectman and one of the Democratic Selectmen attended the meeting which shows bipartisan interest in economic development in Guilford. Mr. Ball noted that during the meeting with Guilford, there was discussion about working together on an educational forum on development, conservation and economic development.

Mr. McPherson provided an update on the train station parking garage and up and over noting that the project will not be moving forward anytime soon because the State does not have the funding available. The wetlands in the area further complicate the up and over project since new wetlands will need to be created to make up for the wetlands that will be utilized for the project. This is a complex project that will take time and money to be able to move forward. He noted that the current parking lot is being well utilized.

Mr. Casparino requested that Commission members forward any ideas regarding communication on the communication plan to him. He suggested that at the next meeting the Commission members continue a discussion on communication with a focus on specific topics that should be addressed. The Handbook is the first item to get out to the public and the goal is to have this document ready for May 1.

Mr. Casparino noted that the other important communication factor is the website which Mr. Duques and Ms. Foley have been overseeing. Ms. Foley noted that Mr. Sickle is focusing on the

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Board of Education web site now so will not be able to work on the EDC web site until this work is completed. They have only been able to complete a few minor changes thus far. There is a “contact us” link on the web site which provides a easy way for public communication with the Commission. Mr. Casparino noted that Mr. Duques had brought up the need for more major changes in the interior of the web site to make it more current.

Mr. McPherson advised of an opportunity to enhance the web site, noting that a company has approached the Town with a proposal to develop video clips that could be accessed from the Town website. They would provide four to six 1 minute video presentations on the Town that would be placed on the web site and funded by advertisements around the videos. The Chamber of Commerce supports this idea and the Board of Selectmen is reviewing the proposal. He urged Commission members to go to mayor.tv.com to review other work done by this company.

Mr. McPherson noted that Madison will be receiving a South Central Connecticut Council of Governments grant for \$35,000 to study transportation and transit on the super block which includes the intersection of Route 1 and Route 79, to Wall Street and the rail station. He noted that the COG controls all transportation dollars for the state.

ii. **New Economic Development/Land Use Director status.** Mr. Casparino noted that funding for the new Economic Development/Land Use Director is included in the proposed FY 2010-2011 budget and the vote on the budget will be held on May 18. He encouraged the Commission members to provide support for the budget which includes funding for this position. Ms. Foley recommended that an article be placed in the paper explaining the new position and its benefits and encouraging support for the budget so that the necessary funding can be provided. **Mr. Casparino** agreed to talk to Ms. Burland, Chairman of the Board of Finance, to request her guidance on appropriate action the Commission can take to encourage budget support and he will get back to the Commission members with her recommendation.

iii. **Bradley Road Vision Study** Mr. Casparino noted that at the last meeting the Commission members had requested that David Kadamus provide information on the steps moving forward with the Bradley Road Vision Study. He provided a copy of a Downtown Game Plan provided by Mr. Kadamus. The Commission members review his input and made recommended changes. Ms. Walker recommended that the train station items be moved from an A priority to a C priority since the Commission now knows that this project is 2-3 years away. Mr. Ball recommended that the waste water management update study and the Update of the SEA study for the waste water management system be moved from a B to an A priority since this item is an important catalyst for development in the downtown area. Ms. Walker recommended that sub-committee to work with the Planning and Zoning Commission to clarify and standardize building regulations be moved from a B to an A priority. Mr. Casparino noted that the incorporation of the Downtown Development Plan in the Plan for Conservation and Development has been completed so this item can be marked “done”. Mr. Ball recommended that the build out options study be moved from an A to a B priority since this is a long range project. Ms. Walker recommended that the downtown property recently purchased by Mr. Davis should be an A priority to begin to learn more about his plans. The Commission members agreed with all of the

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recommendations made to amend the Downtown Game Plan provided by Mr. Kadamus. Ms. Walker agreed to take on a leadership role relative to the study, with the caveat that a Republican commission member serve as co-lead for this initiative. Mr. Casparino will follow up with fellow republican commission members to this end.

b. For the Property Owners

i. **Planning and Development Handbook status.** Ms. Ozols noted that the target date for the Handbook is May. Mr. Casparino requested that the Handbook be sent to the EDC members for review when it is ready.

Ms. Ozols noted that the expansion of permitted uses at Prestige Park were approved at the February Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. The market plan drive thru for the bank was also approved at this meeting. She also noted that there will be a public hearing regarding the Public Works project in March. Ms. Ozols noted that the Wall Street sub-Committee Project is on hold until next year since the request for funding was denied.

In response to a question by Ms. Walker regarding the regulations relative to the outdoor tables at Starbucks, Ms. Ozols noted that there are no specific regulations for outside tables and any outdoor seating is generally looked as a part of the total seating which is tied to the required parking spaces. Ms. Casparino suggested that there be some discussion on a process to make approval of outdoor seating an easier process. Ms. Ozols agreed to bring up this topic for discussion at a PZC meeting.

The Commission members discussed ideas for better utilization of the rail road parking spaces for parking for the dining area at the Bradley Mall. Ms. Ozols noted that any parking assigned to a specific location needs to be permanent and railroad parking cannot be deemed permanent. One option to consider would be to arrange for an easement. Mr. McPherson agreed to contact DOT and/or Amtrak to discuss options for Town use of the parking area. Ms. Banisch, as the Chamber of Commerce representative, also agreed to talk to the businesses involved about the ideas of shared parking to allow for outside tables.

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

6. New business. Mr. Ball noted that there will be a Smart Growth Conference on March 18 from 2-8 p.m. in Hartford and the fee is \$75.00. The conference is sponsored by 1000 Friends of Connecticut. They will be presenting information on and discussion legislation action on bills related to smart growth to include zoning, clean water, parking historic preservation, and culture among other issues. Mr. Ball noted that he plans to attend.

On motion made by Mr. Casparino and seconded by Ms. Walker, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the expenditure of \$75.00 for Mr. Ball to attend the Smart Growth Conference on March 18.

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Ms. Banisch reported on a Chamber of Commerce Regional Committee for the area from East Haven to Old Saybrook. They have established a Tourism Committee that includes two representatives from each Town that is working on a number of good ideas for the Connecticut Shoreline area to attract tourism “between the two bridges”. Joining together as a group could make this area eligible for State funding. There have been two meetings of the groups. Mr. Banisch commented that one of the goals is to encourage people to come to the region for tourism activities and visit a number of towns in the region.

Ms. Walker noted that now that the Town has purchased the Griswold property, there will be an effort with the Audubon Society to develop a birding festival to bring people to Madison. Ms. Banisch recommended that the Audubon Shop be invited to become involved with this event.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2010, 7:30 p.m. at the Madison Town Campus.

Terry Holland-Buckley
Clerk

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