



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

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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, May 13, 2010, 7:30 p.m. at the Madison Town Campus.

Present: Commissioners Mark Casparino, Jim Ball, Ryan Duques, Ann Foley (arrived 8:00 p.m.), Joan Walker, Peter Thomas (arrived 8:20 p.m.), Hank Yaggi (arrived 8:20 p.m.)

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

1 Minutes. April 8, 2010. On motion made by Ms. Walker, and seconded by Mr. Ball, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 8, 2010 as submitted.

Mr. Casparino noted that Eileen Banisch had sent a list of unique Madison qualities and this list had been forwarded to Commission members.

Mr. Casparino requested that Mr. Duques provide his three votes for his top priorities for the Bradley Road Vision Study.

Mr. Casparino commented that, as follow-up to the April meeting, one of the issues he would like to Commission to focus on tonight is development of the RFP for development of the web site to be able to secure the funding in the current fiscal year's budget.

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 urged Commission members to encourage people they know to support the budget at referendum. Ms. Walker

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commented that the Finance Office did a very good job defending the budget being submitted.

- ii. **New Economic Development/Land Use Director status.** Mr. Casparino noted that there is no update on the status of the Economic Development/Land Use Director position until after the vote on the budget.
- iii. **Bradley Road Vision Study** Mr. Casparino reviewed the prioritization votes provided by the Commission members on the next steps for the Bradley Road Vision Study. Mr. Casparino clarified, that at this point, the standardization of building regulations with the Planning and Zoning Commission will not be moving forward. This item was included because of a concern that there is a perception that the regulations are not enforced on a standardized basis. Mr. Duques questioned if the EDC could have an appropriate role in working with the PZC to overcome this perception Ms. Ozols commented that she believes the regulations are currently very clear but if a specific issue that the developer wants to include is not addressed, they determine that the regulations are not clear. Mr. Duques expressed concern that the confusion might have to do more with the process than the code which is very standardized. Ms. Ozols noted that exceptions can be considered through use of the variance process which is approval to do something that is outside of the regulations. She noted that there are only a few variances in the downtown district.

Ms. Walker commented that there is a perception that Madison is a tough Town to deal with but the regulations are viewed as consistent.

In response to a question by Mr. Ball, Ms. Ozols noted that the sub-Committee will complete their work on the commercial districts on each end of Town this summer. Ms. Walker recommended that the Commission wait and look to the recommendations of the sub-Committee for fixes and a road map on how to proceed moving forward. Once this is completed it might be appropriate to consider the development of another sub-committee to meet with local businesses to obtain input on any issues they have with the zoning regulations that they believe discourage growth. Then the sub-committee could come back and make recommendations for flexibility on specific regulations in an effort to encourage growth.

Mr. Duques commented that one area that is a major restraint in the downtown area is the waste water issue. The EDC members would be an appropriate group to champion the development of the appropriate steps to tackle the waste water management system issue. He noted that Representative Heinrich had expressed interest in assisting with this issue and he agreed to follow-through with her. The other related issue is the development of a Downtown Development Authority. He noted that a large number of the landowners had agreed to be supportive of the

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approval process for a Downtown Development Authority so getting the property owners involved is the first step. Ms. Ozols recommended that all related information be gathered, organized and understood before approaching property owners. She also recommended that an updated cost analysis be completed.

Mr. Casparino commented that the key to both the waster water management and downtown development authority proposal is to be able to communicate the need and benefits of these programs to the public in an effective way. He recommended that the Commission focus on a limited number of issues to work toward accomplishing this year.

The Commission members were in agreement that the Waster Water Management issue is the number one priority with the Bradley Road Vision Study and a plan should be developed for moving forward.

Mr. Thomas commented that another important aspect of the Bradley Road Vision Study that Mr. Kadamus felt strongly about, is the improvement of the Tuxis Pond area. The original idea was to start small with items such as expanded walking paths and platforms, and then develop this into a larger project. One of the keys to moving forward is to build a consensus based on an agreement that Tuxis Pond is a beautiful resource in the downtown area and its renovation can become a focus point. One issue that will need to be considered is looking at a possible trade off of wetlands if there is any encroachment. Mr. Ball noted that the First Selectman has been looking into this issue. Mr. Thomas commented that another related issue that should receive focus is the establishment of a downtown development authority. There is commercial space in the downtown area that is under-utilized and working on development of this area presents a possibility of promoting commercial development without increasing the amount of property involved.

Mr. Duques agreed commenting that the Town needs to make sure that Tuxis Pond is cared for now if is to be viewed as a focal point of development in the area in the future. Ms. Walker recommended that the High School be asked to become involved with any clean-up effort. Ms. Ozols commented that parking is another related issue that needs to be addressed and she recommended that a parking sub-committee be developed to work on this important issue. She agreed to forward the Glendenon report, which discusses parking issues in this area, to the clerk for distribution to the Commission members

Ms. Walker recommended that the Commission arrange for an appropriate presentation of the plan to the property owners. Mr. Duques agreed that the Commission should invite landowners to come to a meeting to discuss these issues.

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After discussion, on motion made by Mr. Walker, and seconded by Mr. Ball, the Commission voted unanimously to move forward with a Tuxis Pond improvement initiative, to include a clean-up and further development of walking paths, as a project.

Mr. Thomas recommended that all members revisit the plan for Tuxis Pond posted on the web site to become more familiar with the issues and be prepared for a more detailed discussion at the next meeting. Mr. Thomas also reported that Mr. Kadamus is still interested and willing to assist with Commission with its future efforts with the Bradley Road Vision Study.

Ms. Walker suggested the idea of inviting the property owners to attend the next EDC meeting to advise them of the Commission's current efforts. Mr. Thomas commented that last month Ms. Banisch expressed an interest by the Chamber to put together a forum and he suggested that the EDC become involved in this initiative as a way to better communicate with businesses, provide input on the forum agenda and be able to respond to what they indicate they need and to help the Commission establish priorities. It will also be important to have the Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission and the general public involved.

Mr. Duques commented that the Commission should be aware that the property owners and business owners might have two different views and priorities. Ms. Walker commented that there will need to be a balance between the needs of the retailers, landowners, and public especially with the current changing economy.

Mr. Casparino summarized the Commission's input that Tuxis Pond, Waste Water Management and a Downtown Development Authority priority projects under the Bradley Road Vision Study. The Commission members should learn more about these issues and put together all pertinent information and then move forward with a meeting with the landowners and business owners. Before the next meeting the **Commission members** should become familiar with the Tuxis Pond issue as presented in the Bradley Road Vision Study. **The Commission** will also begin working on the development of a timeframe and agenda for a forum with the Chamber of Commerce with a proposed October date. In addition, **the Commission** will begin to look at the process for developing a revised cost estimate for a Waste Water Management system. It would be beneficial to begin to put a project together now so that if funding becomes available the Commission is ready to move forward. Once the Town budget has been approved the Commission will have a better idea of the available budget and then can begin to look for other possible funding sources as needed. All information gathered from these efforts will be used to develop an agenda moving forward.

b. For the Property Owners

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- i. **Planning and Development Handbook status.** Ms. Ozols distributed a preliminary draft of the Planning and Development Handbook for EDC member review. Members were requested to provide their comments and input by two weeks before the next regular meeting. The next step will be for Ms. Ozols to obtain input from other appropriate individuals and then run the document past Town Counsel. Due to the need for input from other town commissions, the date for completion of this document was moved to July 15, 2010.
- ii. **Website status.** Ms. Walker noted that the website sub-committee had met and come up with ideas on how the web site can be envisioned. An RFP for the development of the site was developed and members were provided with a copy. Ms. Walker will provide a copy to the vendors who had been recommended by Commission members for consideration. The RFP is due back on May 31 and presentations will be made the first two weeks of June.

Mr. Casparino recommended that Mr. Sickle be advised of the process that is occurring and Mr. Thomas recommended that Mr. Sickle be included in the group who will interview the respondents to the RFP.

c. For the merchants

- i. **Regionalization.** Mr. Ball noted that he has been in contact with Mr. Joel Galvin, who is a commercial developer, who will forward information regarding available Madison properties to market them on a regional basis. A long range effort that would be beneficial would be to put together a prospective on Madison to use in marketing properties. The web site could be a very effective tool in getting information out.

Mr. Thomas commented that, in general, retail space in the Center is successfully rented, however, there are some vacancies in the fringe areas. Mr. Thomas also advised of a possible effort to consolidate post offices on a regional basis.

Mr. Ball suggested that he request the State Representative from Hamden, who is actively involved with Smart Growth, attend an EDC meeting in the future to discuss this initiative which can serve to improve the local business climate.

- ii. **Madison Center Project status.** The CL&P is beginning to install the utility poles in the back area of the Madison Center area. The utilities in the front will be placed underground. There is a meeting of the Madison Center Committee on May 19 at 10:00 a.m.

4. Update by Marilyn Ozols. Ms. Ozols reported on the following items:

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- a certificate of occupancy was issued for the new classroom building at the Grove School.
- there is an application by the Gove School to convert a dormitory to a welcome center.
- the application for the Town Garage was approved.
- an Eagle Scout project was approved.
- the Island Avenue School project will be considered next week.
- the Phase 1 scope for the Plan of Conservation and Development is ending and the next step will be a Town wide informational meeting
- the R-2 zoning goes into effect Monday
- the Wall Street draft is completed and will be forwarded to the EDC
- the Route 1 Commercial District sub-Committee is moving forward

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

6. New business. Ms. Walker recommended that the individual who is successful with the RFP for the web site perhaps team up with Mr. Sickle in determining how to best increase the positives and decrease the negatives that appear regarding Madison during a general search of the Town on the web.

On motion made by Mr. Yaggi, and seconded by Ms. Foley, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 10, 2010, 7:30 p.m. at the Madison Town Campus.

Terry Holland-Buckley  
Clerk

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