



Town of Madison, CT

Economic Development Commission

Approved May 9, 2019

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission held on April 11, 2019, 7:30 p.m. at the Town Campus

Present: Commissioners Ryan Duques, Jim Ball, Matt Bloom, Anne Foley, Lisa Miksis, Ed Pellegrino, Mark Steffen; Tom Banisch, First Selectman; David Anderson, Town Planner; Pam Green, Beach and Recreation Commission

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

1. Approval of minutes of regular meeting, March 14, 2019. On motion made by Ms. Foley, and seconded by Mr. Bloom, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 14, 2019 as submitted.
2. Public comment. Pam Greene noted that she is on the Beach and Recreation Commission. She was interested in discussing ways to expand activities. Mr. Duques recommended that she meet with Mr. Bloom who is working on a project to develop an aggregate list of recreational properties and facilities.
3. Academy Building: Update. Mr. Banisch noted that, at a special Board of Selectmen meeting last night, a determination was made to not pursue a referendum on the Academy School project in May. The proposed referendum was to be in two parts with one question regarding approval to pursue an Academy School project and a second question regarding approval of bonding for a project. The plan now is to continue to investigate possible uses for the Academy School. The Town is working on prioritizing bonding projects that are currently on-line or under planning. The Board of Finance is looking to obtain more information on school needs before moving forward with the idea of possibly developing a community center.

Mr. Duques noted that the final plan recommended by the Committee did not include an operational public/private partnership.

Mr. Anderson noted that the Town continues to pursue communication with Dave Salinas and Eric O'Brien who are looking for a space for a project. They are currently looking at 12 properties in the state and they are interested in submitting a proposal for the Academy School. This proposal would include a facility with co-worker shared staff space, a business component and a health and fitness wellness component.

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Mr. Duques noted that, at the March meeting the Economic Development Commission had voted to express its agreement with the concept of utilizing the Academy School for community service uses utilizing a public/private partnership to create a sustainable Community Center model that facilitates needed community oriented services that fulfill multiple community needs and that also includes a private component so the project does not rely on taxpayer funding alone to support the purchase price and operating costs of the development and maintenance of this facility. In addition, the Economic Development Commission had encouraged the Town to conduct a utilization study to determine the current community space available and additional community needs that require space. He had followed-up with Mr. Banisch and Beach and Recreation staff and generated a list of 28 unique community spaces in Town. There is concern that there is a lack of general education and knowledge of the space available in the Town with contact information available so the public knows who to contact to book a space.

Mr. Duques noted that he had been in contact with a software company named Skeeta, that manages spaces. With this program the Town would input the available spaces with information on capacity and rules for each space. The software would manage the spaces, facilitate their rental and fees and generate reports for a subscription fee of \$950 per year. The information generated from reports would be helpful in understanding the spaces available and how they are being utilized. The system appears to fairly simple to use and provides helpful reporting.

In response to a question by Ms. Foley, Mr. Duques noted that if any staff time was needed to coordinate the facility use, he is confident that the software program would pay for itself in savings from other staff time invested in booking facilities and providing information.

In response to a question by Mr. Duques, it was recommended that Board of Education spaces be included as available spaces that are managed by Board of Education staff.

After discussion, on motion made by Mr. Duques, and seconded by Mr. Bloom, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of Selectmen consider the utilization of the software service available to manage the utilization and rental of town facility space, at a subscription cost of \$950 per year, to insure an efficient and user friendly system for the public and community organizations to be able to use the numerous Town spaces available and to assign a staff point person to oversee the management of the Town's multiple facility calendars with assistance from this program.

4. Update: Discussion on Madison's Marketing Attributes: Education and Recreation development. Mr. Duques recommended that discussion on the marketing attributes for education and recreation development be held until the May meeting.

5. Update: CERC Project Update. Mr. Anderson noted that he had e-mailed the Draft CERC Action Plan narrative and recommendations to the Commission members for review.

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He requested that the members review the draft and forward any recommended edits to Mr. Duques or him. He will then work with CERC to bring the documents to its final form for consideration for approval by the Commission. He will also provide a draft for a recommended Mission Statement for consideration. CERC will be in attendance at the May EDC meeting to present the final plan.

6. Update: Madison Center Project. Mr. Banisch noted that the Selectmen have looked into the option of utilizing eminent domain to secure the final easement needed to complete this part of the Madison Center project. This item would need to go to Town Meeting with a quorum of 75 people to receive approval. If approved the town will obtain an appraisal and then move forward.

Mr. Banisch also noted that the Town is hopeful that the walkway project will be completed this spring. There is a project manager in place and the project has gone out to bid. Construction is expected to only take approximately one month to complete. The goal is for completion by Memorial Day.

Mr. Banisch provided an update on the Tuxis Walkway work from the Post Road to the walkway. This work will include creating an entrance from Bradley Road and the creation of a contiguous path to the transportation center. They might need to make curb cuts where needed to make the walkway handicapped accessible.

Mr. Banisch noted that the next phase of the Madison Center project will involve a walkway from the train station to Wall Street on the north side of the street. A road crossing would be provided near the Cross Fit business. The project is in the design phase so this part of the project will not be proceeding until the fall. The Concord Meadows are will not be scheduled until next year.

7. Hammonasset Exit Signage Update. Mr. Anderson noted that approximately 1 million people visit Hammonasset Park each year. It has been noted that the only signage when leaving the park directs people to the highway and it had been agreed it would be beneficial to provide signage to direct park uses to dining, shopping, lodging and gas opportunities in Town to hopefully encourage visitors to visit businesses in Madison.

Mr. Duques noted that the State has approved the installation of directional signs on the existing posts exiting the park. Mr. Anderson showed a possible design for a sign at a cost of \$450 for a standard vinyl sign or \$900 for carved plastic. The draft showed a sign that would direct to gas, dining, shopping and lodging under wording that says "Discover Madison". The Commission members agreed that the distances to the directed locations should be included on the sign.

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Mr. Anderson noted that there is a balance of \$4350 in the Tourism line in the EDC budget. Mr. Duques recommended that the Commission approve the expenditure for two directional signs, including installation, on Hammonasset State Park property at the park exits.

On motion made by Mr. Duques, and seconded by Mr. Pellegrino, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the expenditure of up to \$2000 from the Tourism line in the EDC budget for two signs, including installation, at the exit to Hammonasset State Park with the final design to be reviewed and approved by Commission members Lisa Miksis and Anne Foley.

8. Board Reports (BOS, BOF, Planning and Zoning). Mr. Banisch noted that, now that the Academy School project will not go to referendum, it will be put into the CIP and included as a part of the big picture moving forward.

Mr. Anderson noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission has approved regulation changes that allow for additional height in the mixed residential commercial district. He also noted that the Commission is working on regulations for breweries, wineries and distilleries. Mr. Anderson reported that the Commission is working with an outside attorney on a proposal for a concept for a planned residential development district. He also reported that the 16 lot subdivision south of Cole Farm is moving forward. He noted the Mr. Cole will continue to farm a portion of this property as part of the negotiations.

9. Old Business. There were no items discussed under Old Business.

10. New Business. Mr. Duques noted that some Commission members had discussed the idea of moving the meeting time for the regular Commission meetings to 7:00 p.m. The Commission members were in agreement to move the meeting time from 7:30 p.m. To 7:00 p.m. starting with the May meeting.

11. Adjournment. On motion made by Mr. Steffen, and seconded by Mrs. Foley, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Terry Holland-Buckley
Clerk