

**East Lyme Economic Development Commission  
Regular Meeting  
April 13, 2010**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present**

Steven Santino, Chairman  
John Jensen  
Richard Gada  
Charles Ambulos  
Ed Shapiro

**Also Present**

Mr. Mark Christensen, Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources  
Mr. Tom Kalal, Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources

**A. Preliminary Business**

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Steven Santino called the April 13, 2010 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 7:00 PM.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION (1)**

Mr. Gada moved to approve the March 9, 2010 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Economic Development Commission as presented.

Seconded by Mr. Ambulos.

Motion carried 3-0-0.

Mr. Shapiro abstains.

**3. Delegations**

Mr. Mark Christensen and Mr. Tom Kalal members of the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources were present to discuss their goals and objectives towards the formation of an Agricultural and Farming sub committee. Mr. Jensen said that he felt the Agriculture and Farming of the Town was an EDC issue and wanted to offer assistance. There was discussion about funding and the Agricultural sub committee being a part of EDC. Mr. Christensen discussed housing development and the impact on taxes within the town. He wanted to clarify they were not against development, but seeking a balance between land preservation and development. Mr. Christensen talked about organizing a trail ride as a way to benefit the area by attracting tourism and involving local farms. There was discussion about having a farmers market. Mr. Christensen said another initiative was to keep farmers up to date on what their options were to preserve their land. There was discussion about the various types of farming. Mr. Ambulos asked how many farms were producing products. Mr. Marvin Schutt, Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources, was available to provide this information, he stated that there are 93 tracts of farm land in East Lyme, 53 that are producing products, and 21 different forms of agriculture, 17 percent of the total land base in East Lyme was considered farm land. Mr. Schutt has an information packet on this survey that he will provide to the Commission members. There was discussion about a place within the community to make the products available to the public to purchase.

Mr. Christensen had information about the tax benefit of farm land. Mr. Shapiro suggested contacting Dave Labrie of Harbor Hill Marina, who manages the website for Discover East Lyme to help promote local farms and their attractions by directing people to them. Mr. Christensen addressed the need for zoning regulations regarding Agriculture buildings. He also mentioned the idea of holding weddings at local farms to generate income to assist the farmers in the maintenance of their property. Mr. Jensen said he would like to initially see a private farmers association and use the EDC as a sounding board and assistance.

#### **4. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

### **B. Reports**

#### **1. Ex-Officio Report**

There was no report.

#### **2. Chairman's Report**

Mr. Santino distributed a written list of Proposed Goals for the Commission for 2010. He has reviewed this list with Mr. Formica and asked for input from the Commission. Mr. Shapiro said that the boardwalk would have to go in the other direction temporarily and perhaps even permanently, since it is difficult to reach the top of McCook's Point as it is now. He suggested the boardwalk continue to the grassy area where it would meet a defined walkway area leading to the top of McCook's Point. Mr. Shapiro said that regarding the "imminent arrival of Gateway" there should be more emphasis on signage. He suggested that where the Formica family clock would be placed at the entrance to the walkway there could be a kiosk indicating "where you are now" and providing direction to other attractions such as the Pub and public restrooms. He said the public restrooms or lack thereof is an issue that needs to be addressed. Mr. Gada commented that there was a large amount of people and traffic in town on Friday night. There was discussion regarding "Main Street's" role in advertising and the draw of tourism. There was also discussion about grants and funding for signage, parking and restrooms. Mr. Ambulos said there was supposed to be a sign for Niantic at the Rocky Neck exit and it is still not there. Mr. Jensen said he was concerned with accommodating more people if we already did not have enough parking or public restrooms. There was discussion about the Cone property and the plans for this to be used for parking. There was discussion about Mystic and a comparison of attractions to Niantic. Mr. Shapiro said that Niantic did not have accommodations for transient over-night boaters. Mr. Jensen said regarding the "vacant store fronts" he feels the problem is due to the seasonal aspect of the Town. Mr. Shapiro said that he has had success with the internet in keeping in contact with his customers. There was discussion about retail business and Merchant associations.

Mr. Gada said he didn't think it was the role of the EDC to bring the merchants together, but to supply them with the tools. It was agreed that the issues that could be directly dealt with by the EDC was parking and public restrooms.

Mr. Jensen asked about the agreement between the Economic Development Commission and the Discover East Lyme, LLC. Mr. Ambulos related information about his communications with Mrs. Stevens regarding this contract. It was decided that an amendment would be drafted for review at the next meeting to clarify the dates and the validity of the contract. Mr. Santino said he will follow up on this with Mr. Formica for the next meeting.

Mr. Santino wanted to address the comments he had from Mr. Goeschel, Town Planner, regarding the POCD. He said there would not be anything for the EDC to review for another month or so due to delays within the steering committee and POCD.

### **3. Presentation of Bills**

There were none.

### **C. Old Business**

#### **1. Updates: Roles and Responsibilities**

Mr. Jensen had an update on CERC he said they have improved with their service, and that information can be taken and entered into an excel spreadsheet. Mr. Jensen has his secretary working on this procedure and once he has an update he will present it to the Commission.

Mr. Gada said that he spoke with Mary Royce regarding the Commission; she said she appreciated the consideration but was unable to serve on the Commission at this time.

#### **2. 2010 Planning**

This was discussed in the Chairman's report.

### **D. New Business**

#### **1. Open Discussion**

Mr. Santino presented a request form the East Lyme Information Center for funding for the 2010 season in the amount of \$1,375.00 (one thousand three hundred and seventy five dollars). There was discussion about the budget and funds available. It was agreed that the funding would be granted.

#### **MOTION (2)**

Mr. Shapiro moved to approve the request for funding to the East Lyme Information Center in the amount of \$1,375.00 (one thousand three hundred and seventy five dollars).  
Seconded by Mr. Jensen.

Motion Carried 4-0-0.

### **E. Adjournment**

#### **MOTION (3)**

Mr. Gada moved to Adjourn the April 13, 2010 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:20 PM.

Seconded by Mr. Ambulos.

Motion Carried 4-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Zoe Zrakas, Recording Secretary