



**TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK**  
Economic Development Commission

David Prendergast, Chair  
Kacie Costello Hand, Vice Chair  
Sandra Roberts, Secretary/Treasurer

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Telephone (860) 395-3139 • FAX (860) 395-3125

Judy Ganswindt  
Nick Prevost  
Elizabeth Swenson  
Susan Quish  
Michael Bender, Alternate  
Erica Cosenza, Alternate

**MEETING MINUTES**

HYBRID MEETING

Thursday, December 14, 2023 – 6:30 P.M.  
Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman, David Prendergast called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Members present: David Prendergast, Erica Cosenza, Michael Bender, Judy Ganswindt, Susan Quish, Nick Prevost, Kacie Costello Hand

Members absent: Elizabeth Swenson, Sandra Roberts

Staff: Jennifer Donahue, Director of Economic Development & Communications  
Sarah Makowicki, Clerk

**III. PUBLIC QUESTION & COMMENT – None**

**IV. GUESTS – Maria Miranda, Miranda Creative - Virtual**

**V. STAFF REPORT**

- A. Ms. Donahue updated the commission on the Starlight Festival, the festival was well attended with restaurants reporting positively on Starlight specialty drinks.
- B. New holiday lighting has been installed along Main St. This installation will be added onto in the future.
- C. The annual budget will be presented to the Board of Finance at the January 16, 2024 meeting. Ms. Donahue encouraged the Commission members to show up in support.

**VI. REGULAR BUSINESS**

**A. November 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION** to approve the meeting minutes of November 9, 2023 as presented. **MADE** by N. Prevost  
**SECONDED** by J. Ganswindt; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** N. Prevost, S. Quish, M. Bender, E. Cosenza, D. Prendergast, J. Ganswindt; **ABSTAINING:** None **OPPOSED:** None. **APPROVED:** 6-0-0

**B. CORRESPONDENCE**

- a. Amtrak responded to the inquiry about building a connector from the OS station to the north side of the tracks; Amtrak is not interested in pursuing this project.
- b. RiverCog is working on a plan called Thrive, in relation to transit centers.
- c. A new group in town called SOS Trees sent a letter asking for the Commissions support in preserving the tree canopy in town, and specifically asking for reparation terms for the unregulated activity at 0 Middlesex Turnpike.
- d. The Commission received a letter from Attorney Dave Royston thanking the Commission for their support in regards to the Zoning Commissions public hearing about drive through regulation changes.
- e. Ms. Donahue inquired if the Commission wished to continue their membership with Main Street Center. The Commission agreed that the membership has been beneficial and to continue.

VII. **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Maria Miranda from Miranda Creative presented to the Commission. This included new inventory of images, highlights of \$5000 media placement and new Starlight Festival marketing. This marketing included a new landing page that will be the framework for a large site that is easy to use and mobile friendly. During the paid social media campaign from November 20- December 2 there were 4, 218 visits to the Festival site. Next, Miranda Creative will be working on the larger website, digital footprint and search engine marketing. For the start of the tourism season the website and calendar tool should be up and running.
- B. Ms. Donahue updated the Commission on the Mariner’s Way survey, currently there have been 122 responses.
- C. Ms. Donahue informed the Commission that the early bird sign ups for Celebrate Saybrook is going well with 42 vendors and 6 Main St businesses registered.
- D. Currently the Art Hallway does not have an artist lined up for January. Commission members suggested contacting the schools for student submissions.

VIII. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. ARPA Grant Expenditures- Ms. Donahue suggested that an update on past expenditures and earmarked projects should be compiled, commenting that the micro site will potentially cost \$10,000.
- B. 2024 Meeting Dates

**MOTION** to approve the 2024 Meeting Dates Calendar as presented. **MADE** by E. Cosenza **SECONDED** by M. Bender; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** N. Prevost, S. Quish, M. Bender, E. Cosenza, D. Pendergast, J. Ganswindt, K. Costello Hand; **ABSTAINING:** None **OPPOSED:** None. **APPROVED:** 7-0-0

X. **COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR** – Mr. Pendergrast thanked Ms. Donahue for all of her hard work over the past year, commenting that she has made some real “buzz” for the town.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** to adjourn the meeting of Thursday December 14, 2023 at 8:17 until the next regularly scheduled hybrid meeting of the Economic Development Commission on January 11, 2024 at 6:30 pm, Town Hall, 302 Main Street, second-floor conference room; **MADE** by E. Cosenza; **SECONDED** by K. Costello Hand; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** N. Prevost, S. Quish, M.

Bender, E. Cosenza, D. Pendergast, J. Ganswindt, K. Costello Hand; **ABSTAINING:** None  
**OPPOSED:** None. **APPROVED:** 7-0-0

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Makowicki  
Recording Clerk