



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK Economic Development Commission

302 Main Street • Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475
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David Prendergast, Chair
Carol Conklin, Vice Chair
Sandra Roberts, Secretary/Treasurer

Judy Ganswindt
Kacie Costello Hand
Nick Prevost
Elizabeth Swenson
Susan Quish, Alternate
Erica Cosenza, Alternate

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

HYBRID MEETING

Thursday, July 18, 2022 – 7 P.M.
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair, David Prendergast, called the meeting to order at 7:09 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Members present: David Prendergast, Sandra Roberts, Kacie Costello Hand, Judy Ganswindt, Erica Cosenza, Susan Quish (remote)

Members absent: Carol Conklin, Nick Prevost, Elizabeth Swenson

Others present: Attorney Amy Souchuns, Ben Zachs

Staff: Jennifer Donahue, Director of Economic Development & Communications; acting Recording Clerk

III. PUBLIC QUESTION & COMMENT - none

IV. GUESTS

Mr. Prendergast invited Ms. Souchuns and Mr. Zachs representing Fine Fettle, a proposed adult-use recreational marijuana business that has applied for a special exception permit before the Zoning Commission to locate their business at 233 Boston Post Road, to present as guests rather than under new business so that they could appear earlier on the agenda. Ms. Souchuns explained that the special exception is related to the conversion of their licensing from medical marijuana use to recreational marijuana use. All approvals related to the site work were completed in 2018 and do not need to be revisited with the Zoning Commission. According to the site plan, the entire 4,000 sq. ft. building will be used for the dispensary and the non-conformities related to the site will all be corrected. The business has already been through the Planning Commission and the Architectural Review Board processes.

Mr. Zachs explained in detail the process that customers will go through, the security measures that will be in place, and about Connecticut's strict rules related to the dispensary. He noted that all sales will be subject to a 23% sales tax – 20% of which will go back to the state and 3% which will go to the Town of Old Saybrook. He noted that of the 22 dispensaries in CT they are one of only five that are CT-owned. He stated that they plan to employ 40-50 people who will receive a 401(k) match as well as medical, dental and vision insurance and that they plan to give back to the community through an annual group volunteer day and by becoming a member of the Chamber of Commerce. They currently run dispensaries in Willimantic, Newington, Stamford and Manchester. There will be no medical component to the business.

After answering questions from the commission, Ms. Souchuns and Mr. Zachs left the meeting at 8:12 pm asking that the EDC consider providing comments and a letter of support for the business before the August 1 Zoning Commission meeting.

Commissioners discussed the proposal at length considering security, local tax benefits and job creation.

MOTION that the EDC draft a letter to the Zoning Commission indicating that the EDC feels that there are economic development benefits to the application by Fine Fettle Dispensary for the 4,000 sq. ft. adult-use marijuana dispensary at 233 Boston Post Road that the Zoning Commission should consider, including local tax benefits to the Town of Old Saybrook, by switching from a medical facility to an adult-use facility as well as employment benefits; **MADE** by K. Hand; **SECONDED** by J. Ganswindt; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, J. Ganswindt, K. Hand. **ABSTAINING:** None **OPPOSED:** S. Quish, E. Cosenza **APPROVED:** 4-0-2

V. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Donahue reported on a proposal to revitalize the Ferry Road waterfront area. She reviewed the marketing information provided by ScierkaLang noting that they will continue to provide social media services for \$300 a month until the EDC finalizes its search for a marketing firm. She also reported that planning for the Starlight Festival has begun and did a round-up of recent grant activity including a \$500,000 STEAP grant for sidewalks on Boston Post Road that the town hopes to submit by the end of the month. She noted that the state's tourism department has a major ad campaign out promoting the state and that AdvanceCT is doing a promotion to attract businesses to the state as well.

During discussion Ms. Ganswindt noted that her recent experience has shown that Old Saybrook is not busy on Sundays. She suggested the commission consider ways to promote Sunday shoppers to support Main Street businesses and to find ways to encourage businesses to be open on Sundays.

VI. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes: June 9, 2022

MOTION to approve the meeting minutes of June 9, 2022; **MADE** by S. Quish; **SECONDED** by E. Cosenza; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, J. Ganswindt, K. Hand, S. Quish, E. Cosenza. **ABSTAINING:** None; **OPPOSED:** None. **APPROVED:** 6-0-0

B. Correspondence & Announcements

A referral from the Zoning Commission regarding amendments to the zoning regulations related to signage was tabled until the August meeting due to lack of time to review the material prior to the meeting and the late hour.

MOTION to table zoning discussion related to signage until August meeting; **MADE** by S. Quish; **SECONDED** by E. Cosenza; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, J. Ganswindt, K. Hand, S. Quish, E. Cosenza. **ABSTAINING:** None; **OPPOSED:** None. **APPROVED:** 6-0-0

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Ms. Hand and Ms. Donahue reviewed the feedback from the ARPA Committee related to the EDC's letter to them. Based on that feedback and the September 1 deadline for application, commissioner's discussed what options would be realistic to present in the timeframe that could have an economic impact on industries that may have been more adversely affected by the pandemic. After much discussion, commissioners agreed that a broader view of the 4 Seasons promotional campaign

encouraging Sunday shopping, events, possible trolley service and brochures could be realistic to plan in the timeframe and would be impactful. Commissioners asked Ms. Donahue to follow-up with the Chamber of Commerce on some of its feedback from businesses and the possibility of keeping the visitor's center open on the weekends at least during the summer.

- B. Mr. Prendergast noted that he would like to again have a recognition event for the business awards. He suggested the fall either at the Kate or the Pavilion with refreshments. This will be further discussed in August.

VIII. ADVISORY GROUP REPORTS - None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. A draft RFP for marketing services was briefly reviewed. Ms. Donahue asked commissioners to send her comments so that a revised draft can be presented at the next meeting. She also asked that if anyone had suggestions for who they would like to receive the RFP to let her know. ScierkaLang has expressed interest in submitting.
- B. Discussed previously under item IV of the agenda.
- C. Discussed previously under item V of the agenda.

X. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

Mr. Prendergast recognized Ms. Cosenza who discussed an upcoming zoning issue related to a proposed doggie daycare and kennel. She noted that it is not currently allowed in the industrial zone where it is proposed and that there are concerns about the noise. She encouraged commissioners to attend the related Zoning Commission meeting if they had an interest.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 P.M. until the next regularly scheduled hybrid meeting of the Economic Development Commission on August 11, 2022 at 7:00 pm, Town Hall, 302 Main Street, second-floor conference room; **MADE** by E. Consenza; **SECONDED** by J. Ganswindt; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, J. Ganswindt, K. Hand, E. Cosenza. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Donahue
Director of Economic Development & Communications
Acting Recording Clerk