



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK Economic Development Commission

302 Main Street • Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475
Telephone (860) 395-3139 • FAX (860) 395-3125

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, August 11, 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 7:04 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Members present: David Prendergast, Sandra Roberts, Kacie Costello Hand, Judy Ganswindt, Nick Prevost, Elizabeth Swenson, Erica Cosenza, (remote)

Members absent: Carol Conklin, Susan Quish

Others present: Judy Sullivan, Executive Director OS Chamber of Commerce; Marie McFarlin, President OS Historical Society; Emily Grochowski, Chairman OS ARB; Attorney David Royston; Ron Lyman.

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

III. PUBLIC QUESTION & COMMENT - none

IV. GUESTS

Ms. Sullivan and Ms. McFarlin spoke with the Commission about the Chamber of Commerce working in conjunction with the Historical Society to update the walking tour pamphlet. The Chamber is interested in creating an app that will be a companion to the walking tour. They have established seventy-five locations from the train station down to the fort and up along Pennywise Ln to highlight on this tour.

Ms. McFarlin spoke to how “history sells,” stating that she has seen a great interest in patrons coming from Saybrook Point Inn to the Hart House, along with phone calls of individuals conducting family research.

The Chamber of Commerce will be applying for ARPA funds and has asked the EDC to provide a favorable letter of support for their application.

MOTION that the EDC write a letter of support for the revamp of the OS historical walking tour and the Chamber of Commerce ARPA application; **MADE** by N. Prevost; **SECONDED** by J. Ganswindt; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, J. Ganswindt, K. Hand, N. Prevost, E. Swenson. **ABSTAINING:** None **OPPOSED:** None **APPROVED:** 6-0-0

V. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Donahue reported that a survey about RiverCOG's comprehensive economic development strategies (CEDs) was distributed and asked for the Commission members to fill it out. The RiverCOG CEDs would allow for the application of federal funds beyond what is currently available. RiverCOG has asked for a report on what present projects OS would take on. She also reported that planning for the Starlight Festival continues with the next meeting on August 19th at 12pm in the first-floor conference room. Ms. Donahue updated the Commission on the STEAP grant, she stated that if the town is awarded the \$500,000 grant along with the more than \$700,000 in bond fund that was recently awarded, the Boston Post Road sidewalk project could be accomplished in one phase.

VI. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes: July 14, 2022

MOTION to approve the meeting minutes of July 14, 2022 with a correction that the date read July, 14, 2022; **MADE** by J. Ganswindt; **SECONDED** by K. Hand; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, J. Ganswindt, K. Hand, E. Swenson. **ABSTAINING:** N. Prevost; **OPPOSED:** None. **APPROVED:** 5-1-0

B. Correspondence & Announcements - None

The Chairman moved to hear new business.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Ms. Grochowski presented the Architectural Review Board's proposed amendments to the sign regulations that will be presented to the Zoning Commission. She stated that the proposed amendments came from the ARB workshopping and surveying its members in order to streamline sign regulations. The Board chose to highlight the size, lighting, and landscaping regulations in these proposed amendments. Regarding lighting, the ARB has found that new technology implemented by national chains has been crowding out local businesses that choose to use external lighting instead of internal lighting that the chains prefer. Ms. Grochowski stated that the proposed reduction in sign size would be in line with other towns with the same characteristics as OS. The reduction would also promote "place branding" that would help OS keep the charm and small-town vibrancy by keeping the signage at human scale that works with a more intimate and walkable environment.

The Commission discussed if the reduction in size would be business friendly and asked ARB to consider a different classification on Rt. 1 to accommodate the faster pace of that business area. Members discussed sizing of signage in relation to the setback from the roadway asking ARB to consider increasing the allowable square footage of a sign the further from the road it is placed. Although the Commission was not in agreement about the size changes to the signage; overall, they felt that the proposed amendments were well thought through and support the amendments with some recommendations.

MOTION that the EDC write a letter of support to the Zoning Commission for the Petition to Amend the Old Saybrook Zoning Regulations Section 64 and 11 Sign Regulations with the following recommendations: that the landscape be a mix of hardscaping and organic materials, there be a reclassification of roads to reflect the pace of each zone, and to increase the s.f. of the signage if it is placed further back from the road setback. **MADE** by N. Prevost; **SECONDED** by E. Swenson; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, J. Ganswindt, K. Hand, N. Prevost, E. Swenson. **ABSTAINING:** None **OPPOSED:** None **APPROVED:** 6-0-0

- B. Attorney Royston, along with Ron Lyman presented the proposed Fuel Pump Text Amendment for Max's Place and Big Y Foods. Mr. Royston presented the four possible amendment changes stating that the current regulations were a restraint of trade, and the proposed amendments would promote competition.

Mr. Royston asked the Commission for a favorable letter of support to be written to the Zoning Commission for all or some of the amendments that the Commission wishes to support.

MOTION that the EDC write a letter of support to the Zoning Commission for the Petition to Amend the Old Saybrook Zoning Regulations Fuel Pump Text Amendment, supporting all four amendments. **MADE** by N. Prevost; **SECONDED** by J. Ganswindt; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, J. Ganswindt, K. Hand, N. Prevost, E. Swenson. **ABSTAINING:** None **OPPOSED:** None **APPROVED:** 6-0-0

VIII. ADVISORY GROUP REPORTS - None

IX. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Ms. Donahue presented the draft application for ARPA funds, the Commission is potentially asking for \$150,000 with most going towards a marketing campaign. ScierkaLang presented a comprehensive marketing strategy for the next year, with \$40,000 being spent on each season of events. Ms. Donahue also stated that funds would be used to workshop ideas, goals, and target audience of events.

Commission members discussed adding on to the existing events and using marketing to broaden the audience those events reach. Members spoke of efforts already under way from local business merchants, stating that the Commission should partner with these merchants along with the Chamber of Commerce to coordinate and promote events that are already going on. Members stated that instead of using a large amount of the funds for one year of marketing, that an infrastructure should be built to be able to repeat marketing strategies year after year.

The Commission came to the consensus to focus the APRA application on goals for the next three years with a focus on using funds for a consultant with a broader view other than marketing and business focus, creating marketing infrastructure that is repeatable/sustainable and speak to how these concepts will promote economic resilience in town. Commissioners agreed to hold a special meeting on August 25 to review a new draft of the ARPA application in advance of the September 1 submission deadline.

- B. Ms. Donahue will inquire about potential October dates on a Tuesday or Thursday around 9am at the Pavilion to host the Business Recognition Awards.

X. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

None

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 P.M. until the next regularly scheduled hybrid meeting of the Economic Development Commission on September 8, 2022 at 7:00 pm, Town Hall, 302 Main Street, second-floor conference room; **MADE** by N. Prevost; **SECONDED** by S. Roberts; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, J. Ganswindt, K. Hand, N. Prevost, E. Swenson. **ABSTAINING:** None **OPPOSED:** None **APPROVED:** 6-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Makowicki
Recording Clerk