



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK Economic Development Commission

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Matthew Pugliese, Chair
Carol Conklin, Vice Chair
John DeCristoforo, Secretary/Treasurer

David Cole
Judy Ganswindt
Sandra Roberts
Elizabeth Swenson
Joseph Arcari, Alternate
David Prendergast, Alternate

MEETING MINUTES

July 9, 2020

7:00 pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair, Matt Pugliese, called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Meeting held via videoconference.

Members present: Matthew Pugliese, John DeCristoforo, David Cole, and Sandra Roberts

Members absent: Carol Conklin, Judy Ganswindt, Elizabeth Swenson, and Joseph Arcari

Staff: Susie Beckman, Economic Development Director, and Meryl Moskowitz, Recording Clerk

Guest: Susan Esty, Chair, Old Saybrook Parks & Recreation Commission

III. PUBLIC QUESTION & COMMENT

Susan Esty, Chair of Parks & Recreation Commission, thanked the Commission for the June 16 letter from the EDC to Parks & Recreation Commission addressing use of town land for private use. She expressed recognition of the time and effort the EDC has put in to help Town businesses affected by the covid 19 pandemic. S. Esty stated some of the concerns of Parks & Rec, while acknowledging the intent of EDC is to help businesses. S. Esty stated Parks & Rec is not in favor of private business on park land. Some of the stated concerns of private business on park land are:

- possible conflict with Parks & Rec programming
- liability
- appearance of pop up kiosks or tents
- setting precedent
- prohibiting the public from passive enjoyment of parks
- establishment of businesses at town beaches

M. Pugliese thanked S. Esty for recognizing the EDC's intent to help businesses have a level of flexibility. Members agreed that businesses would need to be addressed on a case by case basis and that continued discussion with Parks & Rec would be advisable.

IV. STAFF REPORT

S. Beckman reported that the Old Saybrook Chamber Community Auction continues for one more week, and items are still being accepted.

S. Beckman also reported that the Planning Commission has accepted the EDC's Economic Development Strategy Plan as part of the Town Plan of Conservation & Development. M. Pugliese recognized the dedicated work of S. Beckman and members of the Planning Commission who worked on the Plan, including Kathy Sugland, Tom Cox, and Town Planner Christine Nelson.

V. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes: June 11, 2020

MOTION to approve the Meeting Minutes of June 11, 2020; **MADE** by J. DeCristoforo; **SECONDED** by D. Cole; **VOTED IN FAVOR**: M. Pugliese, J. DeCristoforo, D. Cole, S. Roberts; **OPPOSED**: none; **ABSTAINED**: none; **APPROVED**: 4-0-0.

B. Correspondence & Announcements

S. Beckman reported that a request of \$4,000 has been approved, to improve the landscaping around two "Old Saybrook" signs. S. Beckman will notify members of the dates when she will visit the sites with Director of Public Works, Larry Bonin, so that others may join.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

VII. ADVISORY GROUP REPORTS

A. Marketing Plan – S. Beckman reported that good results were obtained from the geofencing campaign, which aimed to attract people to town who are escaping densely populated urban areas. The campaign received 135,000 impressions, with 876 visits to the Relocation landing page and 480 visits to the EDC web site.

B. Recognition of Long-Term Businesses/Spirit of Saybrook – on hold

C. Arts & Culture: S. Beckman reported that the new arts hallway display is partially installed.

D. The Preserve -- M. Pugliese reported that a grant was received for construction of the parking lot at the Ingham Hill Road entrance.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Small Business & Employment Recovery Update

M. Pugliese reported on the small business subcommittee group, which put out a survey to try to gather information on how small businesses are faring during the pandemic. To date they have received 10 responses. The Board of Selectmen brought a proposal to the Board of Finance seeking funds to go to small businesses who have incurred covid-related expenses. The Board of Finance approved \$25,000, which will be distributed in grants of up to \$750. Distribution guidelines are being developed and M. Pugliese asked members for their input.

B. Yankee Magazine Advertising

Elizabeth Swenson had distributed material to the group prior to the meeting, regarding advertising in Yankee Magazine. S. Beckman reviewed the costs and examples provided in the material. She explained that the EDC has \$15,000 available in funds and asked if members want to consider print advertising.

M. Pugliese stated he is not in favor of an expenditure at this time and would rather put effort into relocation advertising. He stated he thinks it not the best use of money, and that this is not the time to encourage people to visit from out of state. Other members were in agreement. M. Pugliese requested that Rich Czierka be invited to an upcoming meeting to discuss the current advertising environment and recommended strategy.

IX. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

M. Pugliese asked that the Economic Development Strategic Plan be placed on the September meeting agenda so that the group can review.

M. Pugliese related how in the process of putting together the Small Business Recovery sub committee and trying to have diversity across industries and minorities, he realized the lack of relationships the Town has with minority owned businesses; he stated he would like to work to improve or establish such relationships.

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 7:57pm until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Economic Development Commission which will be held on Thursday, August 13, 2020 at 7:00 P.M., Town Hall, 302 Main Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room; **MADE** by D. Cole, **SECONDED** by J. DeCristoforo; **VOTED IN FAVOR**: M. Pugliese, J. DeCristoforo, D. Cole, S. Roberts; **OPPOSED**: none; **ABSTAINED**: none; **APPROVED**: 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Meryl Moskowitz
Recording Clerk