



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK Economic Development Commission

302 Main Street • Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475
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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

December 10, 2020

Video conference

7:00 pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair, Matt Pugliese, called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Meeting held via Zoom video conference.

Members present: Matthew Pugliese, John DeCristoforo, David Cole, David Prendergast, Sandra Roberts, Elizabeth Swenson, Carol Conklin, Judy Ganswindt

Members absent: Joseph Arcari

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

Members of the Public: Bruce Carlson

III. PUBLIC QUESTION & COMMENT

IV. GUESTS

V. STAFF REPORT

Economic Development Director Susie Beckman invited Bruce Carlson to introduce the topic of arts and crafts pop ups in town, essentially creating opportunities for local artists to display and sell their art. Mr. Carlson explained that the idea is to use empty space in town to attract visitors while providing work space to artists. He asked if there is interest in piloting the idea for a couple of weekends. Discussion followed, including the idea of branding Old Saybrook as a place for art. Members were receptive to the idea and S. Beckman will raise the topic with a business group meeting already planned for Monday.

VI. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes: November 12, 2020

MOTION to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 12, 2020; **MADE** by D. Prendergast; **SECONDED** by D. Cole; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Pugliese, C. Conklin, J. DeCristoforo, D. Cole, J. Ganswindt, S. Roberts, E. Swenson, and D. Prendergast; **OPPOSED:** none; **ABSTAINED:** none; **APPROVED:** 8-0-0.

B. Correspondence & Announcements

Referral – “Classic Carriage Car Wash” Application for Special Exception Use

Prior to discussing the application, M. Pugliese informed Commissioners that the Planning Commission has hired a firm to create an affordable housing plan (funded with a state grant), and they will be updating the housing section of the Town Plan of Conservation and Development. At a recent Board of Selectmen's meeting, M. Pugliese asked that a representative of the EDC be included in a housing advisory committee.

M. Pugliese reviewed key aspects of the application which is an update to an existing gas station and car wash at 351 Boston Post Road. Hours of operation will be expanded and employees may increase from 1 to 3. Members agreed with M. Pugliese's assessment that the updates will be an improvement to the existing site, that new hours would be helpful, and did not have great concern about increase in traffic as the use will not change, and likes that new jobs will be created. Members stated unanimous support to send a letter of support to the Zoning Commission.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. FY22 budget Review

- a. Website upgrades
- b. Facade Improvement Revolving Loan Fund (MCRC info on how-to)
- c. 9-Town Transit Trolley

S. Beckman reported that she is in contact with Joe Comerford, executive director of 9Town Transit, and their proposed plans for next year include potential trolley service in Old Saybrook.

S. Beckman stated there are no changes in the budget. EDC is asking for an additional \$2500 for photography and has already spoken with a photographer who will take photos for web site and advertising.

MOTION to submit the FY22 Budget as presented; **MADE** by J. DeCristoforo; **SECONDED** by J. Ganswindt; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Pugliese, C. Conklin, J. DeCristoforo, D. Cole, J. Ganswindt, S. Roberts, E. Swenson, and D. Prendergast; **OPPOSED:** none; **ABSTAINED:** none; **APPROVED:** 8-0-0.

B. TIF

S. Beckman reported that she has sent an email to the First Selectman, and a meeting was held today with staff to review where things are at. A TIF advisory board meeting will be held next year, at which time they will discuss whether to expand the district.

C. CT Railroad Bridge

S. Beckman referred members to the written director's report. She added that Julia McGrath from Representative Courtney's office, looked into the possibility of using a portion of the existing railroad

bridge as a pedestrian pathway, but because of the way the grant was written, if we try to change the project it could put it off any changes for years. She suggests talking to the property owner to find out if there's a way the Town can use that land as public access to the CT River. M. Pugliese suggested sending a joint email from the EDC and the First Selectman to a contact at Amtrak to inquire about feasibility.

D. STEAP Grant

Discussion of compostable toilets and determining an alternative location since Saybrook Point cannot be used since it is in a flood zone. S. Beckman read an email from Tedd Levy from the O.S. Historical Society, which states their opposition to placing toilets at Saybrook Fort Park.

Members agreed to support the position of the Historical Society and discussed possible alternative sites.

MOTION to send a letter of support of the O.S. Historical Society's position to the Parks & Recreation Commission and Board of Selectman with the suggestion to examine the parking area at 210 Main Street as an alternative site; **MADE** by E. Swenson; **SECONDED** by C. Conklin; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Pugliese, C. Conklin, J. DeCristoforo, D. Cole, J. Ganswindt, S. Roberts, E. Swenson, and D. Prendergast; **OPPOSED:** none; **ABSTAINED:** none; **APPROVED:** 8-0-0.

VIII. ADVISORY GROUP REPORTS

E. Swenson gave an update on The Preserve, stating it's been slow going and that the trial map has not yet been updated. She asked if anyone is interested in representing EDC on The Preserve.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2021 Meeting Calendar

MOTION to approve the 2021 Meeting Calendar; **MADE** by D. Prendergast; **SECONDED** by D. Cole; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Pugliese, C. Conklin, J. DeCristoforo, D. Cole, J. Ganswindt, S. Roberts, E. Swenson, and D. Prendergast; **OPPOSED:** none; **ABSTAINED:** none; **APPROVED:** 8-0-0.

B. Business Recognition

Members discussed ideas for doing something positive for the Town. S. Beckman suggested recognizing the Small Business Recovery Task Force. M. Pugliese talked about recognizing businesses for longevity, and asked members to bring nominations to the January 2021 meeting.

X. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

M. Pugliese gave a recap of the Recovery Task Force and efforts related to aiding businesses, such as the PPE purchasing program. C. Conklin asked how other towns are using their rainy day funds, and if a portion could be used for advertising the town.

M. Pugliese also suggested bringing together all of the Land Use boards, to talk about what can be done to make things easier for businesses to navigate, and for the Town to adjust quickly to changing needs.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 8:39pm until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Economic Development Commission which will be held on Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 7:00 P.M., via video conference; **MADE** by D. Prendergast; **SECONDED** by C. Conklin; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Pugliese, C. Conklin, J. DeCristoforo, D. Cole, J. Ganswindt, S. Roberts, E. Swenson, and D. Prendergast; **OPPOSED:** none; **ABSTAINED:** none; **APPROVED:** 8-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Meryl Moskowitz
Recording Clerk