



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

David Cole
Judy Ganswindt
Nick Prevost
Elizabeth Swenson
Barbara Labriola, Alternate
Kacie Costello Hand, Alternate

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

HYBRID MEETING

Thursday, September 9, 2021 – 7 P.M.
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook

I. CALL TO ORDER

The chair, David Prendergast, called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Members present: David Prendergast, Sandra Roberts, David Cole (joined at 7:13pm), Judy Ganswindt, Elizabeth Swenson (joined at 7:37pm), Barbara Labriola, Kacie Costello Hand

Members absent: Carol Conklin, Nick Prevost

Staff: Susan Beckman, Economic Development Director and acting Recording Clerk

III. PUBLIC QUESTION & COMMENT - none

IV. GUESTS – none

V. STAFF REPORT

S. Beckman distributed a staff report for July and August. The Constant Contact digital newsletters experienced higher open rates in August meaning more recipients opened both the @SaybrookBiz newsletter sent to businesses and the Activities & Events newsletter sent to residents and others. The Welcome Back to Old Saybrook video was posted on Facebook in July reaching 5,200 with 1,600 watching the video for at least 3 seconds. Videos provide a better response and the marketing plan will reflect an effort to create more short, 15-second videos to expand our audience.

VI. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes: August 12, 2021

MOTION to approve the meeting minutes of August 12, 2021; **MADE** by K. Hand; **SECONDED** by S. Roberts; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, D. Cole, J. Gandswindt, K. Hand, B. Labriola. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 6-0-0

B. Correspondence & Announcements

- Referral from Zoning Commission RE: “Cannabis Moratorium” Petition to Amend the Old Saybrook Zoning Regulations - Commissioners discussed the proposed moratorium and decided to support the moratorium. Commissioners will urge the Zoning Commission to use the time between now and May 31, 2022 to investigate the pros and cons of allowing or prohibiting retail cannabis sales in Old Saybrook. Commissioners offered to do research and provide information about the economic impact of allowing retail cannabis sales. If the town decides to allow retail cannabis sales after May 31, 2022, the Commissioners expressed concerns about the delay caused by the moratorium leading to missed opportunities to capture the tax benefits of retail cannabis sales.

MOTION to recommend approval of the moratorium and urge the Zoning Commission to use the time between now and May 31, 2022 to consider the question with public input to minimize delays for potential applicants if the Zoning Commission ultimately determines to allow retail cannabis sales; **MADE** by K. Hand; **SECONDED** by J. Gandswindt; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, D. Cole, J. Gandswindt, E. Swenson, K. Hand, B. Labriola. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0

- Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission Representative – S. Roberts will consider volunteering as the representative. D. Prendergast will contact N. Prevost to see if he is interested.
- 57th Annual OS Chamber Arts & Crafts Festival Sponsorship & Volunteer Request – Commissioners discussed the Arts & Crafts Festival and agreed to be a \$100 sponsor. S. Beckman will email the request for volunteers and sign-up link.

MOTION to become a \$100 sponsor of the OS Chamber of Commerce Arts & Crafts Festival; **MADE** by B. Labriola; **SECONDED** by S. Roberts; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, D. Cole, J. Gandswindt, E. Swenson, K. Hand, B. Labriola. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0

- S. Beckman read a thank you note from the OS Chamber of Commerce for the EDC’s membership renewal.
- S. Beckman read a note from the current Art Hallway Artist, James Dunphy, that included a donation to the EDC of \$26.50. James Dunphy pledged to give 10% of any art sales to the EDC. The Commission recommended asking the Finance Director if the EDC could create an off-budget account for these and future funds to use for economic development projects.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Sponsorship Policy: review & vote to pass to BOS for review and possible adoption
Commissioners discussed the DRAFT Sponsorship Policy. Commissioners recommended having the Town Attorney and First Selectman review the policy again to be sure the language allows the Town to have full discretion in accepting or rejecting offers of sponsorship and to

consider adding language that ensures Old Saybrook businesses are given preference for sponsorship opportunities.

- B. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Update – S. Beckman reported that the First Selectman is creating an advisory group to guide decision-making on the use of ARPA funds. The First Selectman is also considering using a consultant to assist the town with ARPA fund administration. The Commission expressed interest in requesting funds for marketing purposes. S. Beckman will revise the proposal presented earlier this year for discussion at the October meeting.
- C. New Signs at Exit 67 off ramp – S. Beckman reported that the town owns the property so placing a sign in the location will not require approval from CT DOT. The Wayfinding off-budget account no longer has funds so the EDC will consider a new capital request from the Board of Finance and/or adding Wayfinding to the ARPA marketing proposal. Discussion will continue at the October meeting.

VIII. ADVISORY GROUP REPORTS

The Commission reviewed the economic development priorities identified in August 2020. The Commission determined that Façade Improvement and Creation of a Revolving Loan Fund/Development Fund as a Financing Tool should have an Advisory Group and ARPA funds would be sought to implement these projects. K. Hand and B. Labriola will serve as this Advisory Group. The Commission decided to create two additional Advisory Groups:

- 1. Business Recognition Advisory Group- D. Cole and another member will be recruited by D. Prendergast. The Business Recognition Advisory Group will plan to recognize businesses in spring 2022. S. Beckman will send a list of businesses for consideration to D. Cole.
- 2. ARPA Advisory Group – S. Roberts and C. Conklin. S. Beckman will provide draft proposals for marketing, wayfinding and façade improvement/revolving loan fund.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Tax Free Week Recommendation Letter – The Commission reviewed a draft letter and approved sending with some minor revisions to Governor Lamont, Representative Carney, Senator Needleman and Senator Formica.

MOTION to send a letter urging Governor Lamont, Representative Carney, Senator Needleman and Senator Formica to establish a Tax Free Week in December to encourage Connecticut residents to patronize local businesses during the holiday shopping season; **MADE** by B. Labriola; **SECONDED** by D. Cole; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, D. Cole, J. Gandswindt, E. Swenson, K. Hand, B. Labriola. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0

- B. 2021-2022 Marketing Plan – Will be reviewed in full at the October meeting. One of the items in the marketing plan is to spend \$1,000 to capture video of events and activities during different seasons. That video will then provide content for short videos to use in marketing. The video is of sufficient quality to grab still images from the footage to also use in marketing. S. Beckman recommended the Commission approve spending \$250 to hire the Cinemotion production company to capture video over the Oct 2&3 weekend during the Arts & Crafts Festival.

MOTION to approve spending \$250 to hire the Cinemotion production company to capture video of the events on October 2 & 3; **MADE** by B. Labriola; **SECONDED** by D. Cole; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, D. Cole, J. Gandswindt, E. Swenson, K. Hand, B. Labriola. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0

X. **COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR – none**

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 P.M. until the next regularly scheduled hybrid meeting of the Economic Development Commission on October 14th, 2021 at 7:00pm, Town Hall, 302 Main Street, second floor conference room; **MADE** by B. Labriola; **SECONDED** by D. Cole; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, D. Cole, J. Gandswindt, E. Swenson, K. Hand, B. Labriola. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Beckman, Economic Development Director
Acting Recording Clerk