

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

### HYBRID MEETING

Thursday, October 14, 2021 – 7 P.M.  
Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

The chair, David Prendergast, called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M.

#### II. ROLL CALL

Members present: David Prendergast, Carol Conklin, Sandra Roberts, Judy Ganswindt, Nick Prevost, Barbara Labriola, Kacie Costello Hand

Members absent: David Cole, Elizabeth Swenson

Staff: Susan Beckman, Economic Development Director

#### III. PUBLIC QUESTION & COMMENT - none

#### IV. GUESTS – none

#### V. STAFF REPORT

S. Beckman distributed a staff report for September. N. Prevost asked for clarification on the T-Mobile grant. S. Beckman explained that Parks & Recreation wants to replace the Gazebo that was funded and built by the Lions Club over two decades ago. T-Mobile is offering grants of up to \$50,000 to small towns that are implementing projects that bring communities together. The Gazebo is a center of activity for the community so the grant is a good fit and will be submitted by the end of October. Letters of support are coming from the Lions Club, the OS Chamber of Commerce and Parks & Recreation. N. Prevost discussed East Hartford's agreement with an internet company whereby free wifi will be provided in public spaces in exchange for the opportunity to attract residents as customers. S. Beckman will contact E. Hartford.

Discussion then revolved around the recently developed concept to create a day-long event on the Town Green in early December for the following purposes:

- to help residents rebuild a sense of community as we recover from the pandemic;
- to provide a multi-cultural experience where a variety of seasonal traditions can be shared by community members;
- to attract visitors into Old Saybrook to celebrate the season with fun activities for all ages, unique shopping, festive dining, and general good cheer that culminates in the evening with the lighting of the Heroes Tree at the Kate and Saybrook Starlight on the Town Green.

Commissioners supported the project and contributed ideas for the event. S. Beckman distributed a proposal to request ARPA funds to support the event which the Commissioners agreed were an appropriate use of those funds. The funding request will cover the cost of marketing, reusable supplies such as decorative outdoor lights and wire for hanging lighted driftwood stars, rent for port-o-lets, and a local shopping and dining incentive to support local businesses.

**MOTION** to approve the Proposed Request for ARPA Funds to support the December 4 Event and send it to the Board of Selectman for consideration ; **MADE** by N. Prevost; **SECONDED** by J. Ganswindt; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, C. Conklin, S. Roberts, J. Ganswindt, N. Prevost, B. Labriola, K. Hand. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0

## VI. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes: September 9, 2021

D. Prendergast noted that on page 2 of the minutes it states that D. Prendergast will contact N. Prevost to see if he is interested in serving as the Inlands Wetlands Watercourses Commission Representative. That was corrected to state that D. Prendergast would contact N. Prevost regarding working with D. Cole on the Business Recognition Advisory Group. N. Prevost accepted that assignment.

**MOTION** to approve the meeting minutes of September 9, 2021; **MADE** by B. Labriola; **SECONDED** by S. Roberts; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, C. Conklin, S. Roberts, J. Gandswindt, N. Prevost, B. Labriola, K. Hand. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0

B. Correspondence & Announcements - none

## VII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission Representative – S. Roberts will serve as the EDC Representative. S. Beckman will forward her name to the First Selectman.
- B. New Signs at Exit 67 off ramp – S. Beckman reported that she still needs to talk with the director of Parks & Recreation to determine if that department has any funds for signs. The EDC may need to make a capital request in next year's budget to purchase and install a sign.

## VIII. ADVISORY GROUP REPORTS

- A. Business Recognition Advisory Group- D. Cole and N. Prevost. S. Beckman will send a list of businesses for consideration. D. Prendergast recommended recognizing Saybrook Hardware for the façade renovation project on their building. S. Beckman will also check with the Architectural Review Board to find out if they are doing any redevelopment awards in the next year.
- B. Façade Improvement/Revolving Loan Fund/Development Fund – K. Hand and B. Labriola. No report.
- C. ARPA Advisory Group – S. Roberts and C. Conklin. K. Hand recommended that the EDC review a list of Economic Development priorities at the November meeting in order to develop a list of potential projects that may be eligible for ARPA funding support. S. Beckman will provide a list based on the Strategic Plan for Old Saybrook's Thriving Local Economy and on recovery goals.

## IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Memo from the First Selectman re: FY '22-'23 – S. Beckman reviewed the budget process and will bring a draft budget to the November meeting for Commissioners to review.
- B. Referral from Zoning Commission: Petition to Amend the Old Saybrook Zoning Recommendations – N. Prevost, who is also a member of the Planning Commission, explained the changes being proposed. Discussion focused on the changed proposed to Section 53 Accessory Apartments. Commissioners agreed with the proposed changes and directed S. Beckman to draft a memo in support of the petition.

**MOTION** to send a memo supporting the Petition to Amend the Old Saybrook Zoning Regulations; **MADE** by K. Hand; **SECONDED** by J. Gandswindt; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, C. Conklin, S. Roberts, J. Gandswindt, N. Prevost, B. Labriola, K. Hand. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0

- C. 2021-2022 Marketing Plan – S. Beckman distributed the FY '21-'22 Marketing Plan. The Commissioners approved of the planned expenditures. N. Prevost recommended getting drone footage of the summer concerts in summer 2022 because they draw so many crowds.
- D. Affordable Housing Plan – A new Affordable Housing Plan was adopted by the town.
- E. Gingerbread Decorating Contest – The contest will be conducted again this year. Commissioners approved requesting funding for prizes along with the request for ARPA funds to support the December 4 day of events.

X. **COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR** – D. Prendergast shared that the shopping center is nearly full for the first time in many years except for two small spaces. Discussion included empty storefronts. C. Conklin asked to invite Chris Costa to a meeting to discuss the options to incentivize property improvements or discourage allowing properties to fall into disrepair such as a blight ordinance. S. Beckman will invite C. Costa to a meeting to discuss the challenges and opportunities.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 P.M. until the next regularly scheduled hybrid meeting of the Economic Development Commission on November 11, 2021 at 7:00pm, Town Hall, 302 Main Street, second floor conference room; **MADE** by B. Labriola; **SECONDED** by N. Prevost; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, C. Conklin, S. Roberts, J. Gandswindt, N. Prevost, B. Labriola, K. Hand. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Beckman, Economic Development Director  
Acting Recording Clerk