



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK Economic Development Commission

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

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

MEETING MINUTES

May 21, 2020

2nd Floor Conference Room, Old Saybrook Town Hall

7:00 pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair, Matt Pugliese, called the meeting to order at 7:07pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Meeting held via teleconference.

Members present: Matt Pugliese, Carol Conklin, John DeCristoforo, David Cole, Sandra Roberts, Joseph Arcari, David Prendergast

Members absent: Judy Ganswindt, Elizabeth Swenson

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

Also present: Judy Sullivan, Executive Director, Old Saybrook Chamber of Commerce, Annemarie LePard, CT Examiner, Jessica Penfield and Ken Penfield, Wild Birds Unlimited, Judy Morrow, Service Master

III. PUBLIC QUESTION & COMMENT

IV. BUSINESS ROUDTABLE ON REOPENING BUSINESSES IN OLD SAYBROOK

M. Pugliese welcomed comments from members of the public about their experience with the reopening.

Ken Penfield, co-owner of Wild Birds Unlimited stated they are trying to figure out how to meet all the rules, they will post signs outside their store about wearing face masks and distancing. He wonders how long they will be required to do this and if in phase 2 the regulations will ease up for retail stores. He has noticed that customers have begun wanting to enter the store. As this continues he wonders how long people will be willing to comply with the rules.

MP: have you thought about what town can do to support you?

Jessica Penfield, co-owner of Wild Birds Unlimited stated she appreciates the daily updates from Emergency Management and feels well informed about the guidelines, and finds that people are complying.

S. Beckman stated that O.S.P.D. is open to hearing from business owners about about any challenges they may have with the public and compliance.

Judy Sullivan, Executive Director, Old Saybrook Chamber of Commerce, offered that businesses want to comply, that clear guidelines are helpful, and that the Chamber is assisting businesses to get answers to some of their questions regarding reopening and guidelines. She is finding that businesses are excited to re-open, while consumers are hesitant to come back.

Regarding community events, J. Sullivan stated they are not going forward. People are waiting to hear when they can open and what the protocols are, and that information needs to get out in a timely manner.

Carol Conklin offered feedback from the community, that many small businesses have laid off employees, and are now finding it difficult to find employees. She is receiving daily updates from from our various representatives, who are a good source of information for hard to find answers.

David Prendergast observed that Old Saybrook seems to be getting some good publicity about its handling of the Covid crisis, which shows that we are working together as a community.

Judy Morrow, owner of Service Master of Old Saybrook, Middletown and Guilford stated they are trying to keep up with what people need, and offered to be a resource for supplies and cleaning, and to share best practices.

There was a discussion about sourcing cleaning supplies from wholesalers, and a suggestion that business owners make joint purchases as cleaning supplies are becoming an increasing expense due to the necessity of increased sanitizing.

V. STAFF REPORT – Covid-19 Response

S. Beckman discussed the Mother's Day promotional ad in the Harbor News, which provided exposure for businesses and encouraged local shopping, and the geo-fencing campaign, which will shift to focusing on housing. The campaign will be called “Peace of Mind” and highlight reasons to move to Old Saybrook. More information can be found in the Economic Development Director’s Report of May 14.

C. Conklin stated she has heard that people are wanting to move into the area. She suggested that realtors be invited to next month's virtual meeting.

M. Pugliese reported that the Economic Development Strategy Plan has been submitted to the Planning Commission and is being reviewed by other commissions. He has had lots of feedback, overall positive and instructive.

VI. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes: April 9, 2020 & May 14 meetings

MOTION to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 9 and May 14, 2020; **MADE** by C. Conklin; **SECONDED** by D. Cole; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Pugliese, C. Conklin, D. Cole, J. DeCristoforo, S. Roberts, J. Arcari, D. Prendergast; **OPPOSED:** none; **ABSTAINED:** none; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0.

B. Correspondence & Announcements

S. Beckman reported she had contacted the sign company about replacing the missing oval lighthouse piece on the “Old Saybrook” signs. There is money available in the wayfinding budget. There was a discussion about the cost of vinyl versus more expensive carved piece, which the original was.

MOTION to expend funds for vinyl repair of the “Old Saybrook” sign off of I-95 at Exit 68 in the amount of \$580; **MADE** by C. Conklin; **SECONDED** by D. Cole; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Pugliese, C. Conklin, D. Cole, J. DeCristoforo, S. Roberts, J. Arcari, D. Prendergast; **OPPOSED:** none; **ABSTAINED:** none; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

VIII. ADVISORY GROUP REPORTS

- A. Marketing Plan – marketing is on hold
- B. Recognition of Long-Term Businesses/Spirit of Saybrook
- C. Arts & Culture: S. Beckman reported that the first Town Hall art exhibit has ended, and a new exhibit will open when Town Hall reopens
- D. The Preserve: M. Pugliese stated he has observed lots of visitors to The Preserve. A grant will allow for expansion of the parking area.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Placemaking – Creating Seating Areas on the Green
- S. Beckman presented the idea of creating seating areas on the Town Green using an assortment of colorful Adirondack chairs. The goal is to encourage people to sit, picnic, create community, while also adhering to social distancing guidelines. After some discussion, it was agreed to create 4 groupings (of five chairs each) with 20 chairs. There was discussion about the need to secure the chairs to prevent theft or movement from wind and weather.

A motion was made by D. Prendergast and seconded by J. Arcari for the purchase of 20 chairs and four tables. The motion was amended by D. Prendergast to purchase 20 chairs and no tables for seating on the Town Green.

MOTION to approve purchase of 20 chairs and 4 side tables to create 4 seated groupings on the Town Green; **MADE** by D. Prendergast; **SECONDED** by J. Arcari; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Pugliese, C. Conklin, D. Cole, J. DeCristoforo, S. Roberts, J. Arcari, D. Prendergast; **OPPOSED:** none; **ABSTAINED:** none; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0.

X. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

M. Pugliese reported that the Town has formed a Recovery Task Force, per recommendation of the governor. S. Beckman and M. Pugliese are on committees and meet weekly with working groups.

S. Beckman also reported that Zoning Enforcement Officer Chris Costa has expedited permitting approval for outdoor dining for restaurants.

There was a discussion about the flower barrels in town and the need for them to be repainted. C. Conklin stated they are repainting the one in her community. She would like to see the barrel at Henny Penny

repainted. M. Pugliese stated that if the barrels are not Town property they could be repainted. There was unanimous support.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 8:25pm until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Economic Development Commission which will be held on Thursday, June 11, 2020 at 7:00 P.M., Town Hall, 302 Main Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room; **MADE** by D. Cole, **SECONDED** by C. Conklin; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Pugliese, C. Conklin, D. Cole, S. Roberts, J. DeCristofor, J. Arcari, D. Prendergast; **OPPOSED:** none; **ABSTAINED:** none; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Meryl Moskowitz
Recording Clerk

