



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK Economic Development Commission

David Prendergast, Chair
Kacie Costello Hand, Vice Chair
Sandra Roberts, Secretary/Treasurer

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Judy Ganswindt
Nick Prevost
Elizabeth Swenson
Susan Quish
Michael Bender, Alternate
Erica Cosenza, Alternate

MEETING MINUTES

HYBRID MEETING

Thursday, February 8, 2023 – 6:30 P.M.
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman, David Prendergast called the meeting to order at 6:33 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Members present: David Prendergast, Erica Cosenza, Michael Bender, Judy Ganswindt, Elizabeth Swenson, Sandra Roberts (Virtual)

Members absent: Kacie Costello Hand, Nick Prevost, Susan Quish

Staff: Jennifer Donahue, Director of Economic Development & Communications
Lisa Strickland, Clerk

III. PUBLIC QUESTION & COMMENT – None

IV. GUESTS – Maria Miranda, Miranda Creative - Virtual

V. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Donahue reported that the Mariner's Way study is in its final stages. A draft strategy document will be reviewed by business and property owners at a meeting on February 13th and then all Land Use boards and commissions will discuss it on February 21st.

Women's Business Development Council is currently offering its Ignite Grant (\$2,500-10,000), deadline March 14th. An Old Saybrook business received maximum grant amount in a recent round.

Middlesex County Revitalization Commission will be offering a second round of business development grant funding beginning March 1st.

River Valley Transit has updated their services and expanded routes in Old Saybrook.

Ms. Donahue stated a small cruise ship is scheduled to dock in Old Saybrook this summer, more information to come. Celebrate Saybrook is coming along with entertainment and booths booked.

VI. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes: December 14, 2023

MOTION to approve the meeting minutes of December 14, 2023 as presented. **MADE** by E. Cosenza **SECONDED** by J. Ganswindt; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, M. Bender, S. Roberts, E. Swenson, E. Cosenza and J. Ganswindt.

ABSTAINING: None **OPPOSED:** None. **APPROVED:** 6-0-0

B. Correspondence & Announcements – None

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Strategic Planning & Planning for ARPA Grant Expenditures 2024

Ms. Donahue presented a summary of expenditures to date and proposed upcoming expenditures. We are on track with spending and have made investments in things like videos and photography that can be reused for other projects.

B. Visitor Microsite Planning Update

A budget of \$12,000 allocated at this time does not include calendar or directory feature. A vendor information meeting is scheduled to determine the price and functionality of products to meet our goals, community needs and budget.

C. Main Street and Route 1 Inventory Update

Ms. Donahue wants to wrap it up; she will speak with Sarah Makowicki for updates.

D. Art Hallway Exhibits 2024

Currently the Art Hallway does not have an artist lined up. Discussion of having an Advisory Committee group. Ms. Cosenza volunteered to contact the schools and an artist she knows of in Indiantown. Mr. Prendergast has also done some outreach.

VIII. ADVISORY GROUP REPORTS – None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Marketing Update – Miranda Creative

Planning balance of the year, messaging, website, and events calendar as well as special events. Shop Local/support had 1,200 clicks and 900K impressions. Ms. Donahue asked the commission to approve \$250 per month from ARPA funding to pay for digital advertising since those costs are not in the scope for the monthly retainer. Commissioners discussed the request and approved the monthly expenditure.

B. Review of Possible Small Main Street Projects

Ms. Donahue composed a list of items collected during the fall walk with CMSC. Some of the items on the list could be handled by the Department of Public Works. Ms. Donahue will isolate these. Discussion of what happened to the piano came up. Will first ask Fred Astaire Studio if they would like to continue to host it. If so, we can pursue a new piano donation. If not, we must first find a host. Ms. Donahue could put the request in a newsletter.

C. Officer Elections

Elizabeth Swenson presented the slate of officers, reporting that current officers are willing to continue: David Prendergast, Chair; Kacie Costello Hand, Vice Chair; and Sandra Roberts, Secretary/Treasurer.

MOTION to vote to move the slate of officers as presented. **MADE** by J. Ganswindt
SECONDED by E. Cosenza; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** M. Bender, J. Ganswindt, E. Swenson,
E. Cosenza, D. Prendergast, S. Roberts **ABSTAINING:** None **OPPOSED:** None.
APPROVED: 6-0-0

X. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

S. Roberts brought up a discussion on the Save Our Shade program, a group that is working to improve the tree canopy in Old Saybrook, noting that their work would have a positive impact.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn the meeting of Thursday February 8, 2023 at 8:39 p.m. until the next regularly scheduled hybrid meeting of the Economic Development Commission on March 14, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., Town Hall, 302 Main Street, second-floor conference room; **MADE** by E. Cosenza; **SECONDED** by J. Ganswindt; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** D. Prendergast, S. Roberts, E. Swenson, E. Cosenza, J. Ganswindt; **ABSTAINING:** None **OPPOSED:** None. **APPROVED:** 5-0-0

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Strickland
Recording Clerk