

Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
June 7, 2023
MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Old Lyme Economic Development Commission was held on Wednesday, June 7, 2023.

Commissioners Present: Cheryl Poirier, Jean Wilczynski, John Stratton, Terry Lewis, Mona Colwell, Wendy Russell, Scott Smith and MJ DeRisio.

Excused absence: Joe Camean

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Cheryl called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM and welcomed everyone to the Economic Development Commission Regular Meeting.

2. Approval of May 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Mona Colwell made a motion to approve the May 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Jean Wilczynski seconded the motion.

Cheryl stated that she had a couple things to correct in the May 3, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Cheryl stated that on page 2 under 6A “ordinance” was spelled incorrectly.

Cheryl stated that on page 3 under Public Comment “Lenny Corvo” was incorrectly spelled and should be “Lenny Corto.”

Cheryl stated that on page 5 in the Chairman’s Report she reported that the parking time maximum is 6 hours. She realized after submitting the report that that is incorrect, the maximum time allowed is 9 hours. The correct cost of maximum parking is \$81.50 plus taxes and fees if someone wanted to come and park at Sound View for 9 hours.

The motion to approve the May 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes with the above corrections passed with a vote of 8 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

3. Marketing & Promotion

a. Midsummer Festival – Saturday July 29, 9am-3pm

Cheryl stated that the Midsummer Festival is July 29 from 9am-3pm not June like the agenda stated.

Cheryl stated that plans are moving forward and listed events that will be happening.

- The Car Show will take place at the Estuary.
- The Florence Griswold Museum will host the dog show.

-The non-profits will be on the front lawn of the Lyme Academy.

-The Lyme Art Association will have different booths set up, including the EDC booth.

-There will be food trucks, a 5K and much more.

Cheryl stated that the night before, July 28, there will be the concert on the lawn of the Florence Griswold Museum.

Mona spoke about the EDC booth. Mona stated that last year the booth was set up an hour before the event started and that EDC members did 2 hour shifts working the booth.

Mona stated that the schedule worked out well last year and that the booth was situated in a good spot as many people stopped to speak with EDC members. She stated that the members gave out promotional materials showcasing Old Lyme businesses.

Wendy suggested that the EDC hold a drawing to entice people to come to the table and sign up. Terry suggested to hold a drawing in which someone can win a basket with local flavorings. She suggesting asking local businesses if they would be willing to donate.

Wendy volunteered to spearhead the local business basket project.

Cheryl stated that she will send out email closer to the date regarding booth scheduling.

Cheryl asked Mona to draft an email asking businesses to drop off promotional materials to hand out at the booth. Mona stated that she will do that and added that she will put in it that Wendy will be reaching out to see if any businesses would be willing make a donation to the basket.

b. Make Music Day – Wednesday, June 21, 2023, 5pm-7pm

Cheryl stated that Make Music Day is Wednesday June 21 from 5pm – 7pm on Lyme Street. She stated that street musicians will play in front of businesses and participating residences. She stated that this event is great for the small businesses on Lyme Street.

Cheryl asked if anyone would like to help her staff the EDC table in front of Town Hall that night. She stated that she would like to take photographs of the different musicians.

John stated that he would staff the table while Cheryl takes photographs.

c. Eastern Regional Tourism District (ERTD) Update

Wendy stated that she was traveling and was not able to attend the last meeting of the ERTD but that there is one tomorrow.

Wendy advised the EDC that the June newsletter will be coming out soon so the ERTD will be looking for information. Cheryl stated that she will provide information once she receives the email.

Wendy suggested that since the state is currently working with film companies maybe there is a way to piggyback off that. She stated that the “Hallmark Channel” has already filmed movies in surrounding areas.

Cheryl asked if Wendy can inquire as to why the Westbrook Welcome Center is not open yet.

d. Ribbon Cutting – Saturday, June 24

Terry stated that she has reached out to Julia, the new owner of Hallmark’s, and that the ribbon cutting will take place at 11am on June 24th.

Cheryl stated that she has reached out to the Liquor Store Old Lyme and the Salty Monkey will see if they would like ribbon cuttings on the 24th as well.

4. Economic Indicators

a. Real Estate Update

MJ provided the EDC with a Real Estate Update. She stated that on the commercial side there were only a couple updates. She stated that the Silo building price was reduced by about \$100,000.

The 52/56 Hartford Ave (El Morocco and lot) was listed at \$750,000.

MJ stated that she has spoken with the new owners of the Gulf Station and that they have installed new windows and are making other upgrades which will hopefully entice a new buyer for the property.

MJ stated that she has put in a call to the agent who listed the Lyme Street ice cream shop. She stated that she will find out the intended use.

On the residential side properties are still selling fast. She stated that there are more houses on the market now than last month. She stated that most are closing at full list prices.

MJ stated that she is interested in finding out where the people who are purchasing these house are coming from. Cheryl stated that she too is interested.

Cheryl stated that she is disappointed to see Old Lyme Ice Cream shop go, if that’s what is happening.

5. Economic Revitalization Efforts

a. Shoreline Gateway

Cheryl stated that Joe is excused tonight but that he did send in a brief update on the Shoreline Gateway.

In Joe’s report he stated that the mission statement was adopted by a unanimous vote. He stated that blight ordinances were discussed with 3 major areas of discussion being eye sores, light trespass and sound.

Joe's update stated that the storage unit application on 250 Shore Rd was denied by the Town. He also added that the owner of 52/56 Hartford Ave is giving the town the first right of refusal to purchase the property and the Shoreline Gateway Commission discussed that.

Joe stated that the Town must consider what direction they want to take if there is any interested in purchasing the property.

6. Public Comment

Mark Griswold commented that he is happy to learn more of what is happening in economic development. He had heard possible future uses for the ice cream shop and the gas station.

Carolyn Miranda commented stating that she enjoys listening and coming to meetings. She stated that the EDC members all make an effort to listen when people comment and she appreciates that.

7. New or Additional Business

a. Sound View Parking

Cheryl stated that at the last meeting Lenny Corto asked EDC review the Sound View parking costs and make a statement to the Board of Selectman.

Cheryl stated that she would like to review the parking and the EDC can decide if they want to make a statement.

Cheryl stated that the Soundview Commission, in April, unanimously agreed to the new approach to parking by using the "Passport App." Cheryl explained how the parking application works. She stated that the minimum parking is 2 hours. The cost would be total \$7.50 for the first 2 hours. The rate changes in the third hour to \$9.50 per hour on the weekends and \$6.50 per hour during the week. She said that these rates are subject to taxes and fees.

Cheryl read a statement that the Sound View Commission provided. The Commission stated that they wanted to find a solution that assisted area businesses. They stated that it was a complicated task but during the April meeting the new system was unanimously approved and recommended to the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen approved the new system and the Soundview Commission asked if the EDC had any further questions to please reach out.

Cheryl stated that if you are an Old Lyme resident who has a beach parking pass your beach pass will cover street parking and town lot parking. She also stated that parking is free after 6pm.

The EDC discussed that there are local private lots in that area too that have had prices recently from \$10 - \$15 to park for the day.

Cheryl asked for comments or input.

First Selectman Griswold, who was in attendance, stated that if you want to stay longer than originally expected you can log into your phone and extend your time without having to go back to your car. He

stated that the application will also know if a car moves spaces if someone is trying to avoid the third hour rate.

John asked how the application knows a resident with a beach pass is parking there. First Selectman Griswold stated that the Rangers will have a special phone that will tell if the time is expired and if a car should get a ticket. He stated that the Rangers will see the beach pass parking tag in the window for the resident.

Cheryl asked the EDC members if anyone would like to make a motion to make a statement to the BOS about the Sound View parking. No motion was made.

John asked First Selectman Griswold if there will be another analysis on parking after this season. First Selectman Griswold stated yes the Passport app data will hopefully be used along with Ranger input.

Mona stated that if businesses come to the EDC with questions or concerns she would like to be able to discuss it.

Cheryl stated that EDC members should keep an ear out and speak with businesses on Hartford Ave to see what they think about parking.

Terry suggested a survey for businesses at the end of the season too.

The EDC decided there was no need to make a statement.

b. Other New Business

Cheryl stated that The Sr. Center Building Committee will present the Senior Center renovation project to the public at what is now a Special Town Meeting to be held on Monday June 12, 7pm at the Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School. Following this presentation, the BOS will vote to move the resolution, entitled, "*Town of Old Lyme Resolution to authorize an appropriation of \$5,263,541 and the acceptance of grants and taking of loans for the planning, design and construction of an expanded joint Old Lyme-Lyme Senior Center*" to referendum for authorization by the voters on June 20th.

First Selectman Griswold stated that Old Lyme and Lyme will share the cost and that until bids come in they will not know what the actual cost it. Lyme has committed to reimbursing \$1.3 million for the project. 75% of the cost will be Old Lyme's share.

Cheryl asked John if he has any follow up on the high speed train. John stated nothing concrete.

Cheryl asked when the DEEP Park is closing for construction purposes. Terry stated that she will find out.

8. Adjournment

MJ DeRisio made a motion to adjourn. Wendy Russell seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed with a vote of 8 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jennifer D'Amato

Records Clerk for the Old Lyme Economic Development Commission