



TOWN OF OLD LYME

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting MINUTES

AUGUST 2, 2023 / 5:30PM

MEMORIAL TOWN HALL MEETING HALL

Call-in remote access was made available to the public.

A regular meeting of the Old Lyme Economic Development Commission was held on Wednesday, August 2, 2023.

Present: Cheryl Poirier, John Stratton, Mona Colwell, Wendy Russell, Scott Smith and MJ DeRisio

Absent: Teri Lewis, Joe Camean, Jean Wilczynski

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Cheryl called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM and welcomed everyone to the August 2, 2023 Economic Development Commission Regular Meeting.

2. Approval of July 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes

John Stratton made a motion to approve the July 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Mona Colwell seconded the motion.

Discussion: Cheryl said that the July 5, 2023 minutes under new or additional business did not reflect Jean advising the EDC that the Old Saybrook Chamber of Commerce has been renamed to the Greater Old Saybrook Chamber.

The motion to approve the July 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes with the above addition passed with a vote of 4 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 abstaining (Scott Smith). MJ DeRisio was not present for vote (arrived to the meeting right after).

3. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

4. Marketing & Promotion

a. Midsummer Festival Outreach

Cheryl advised the Commission that 137 people signed up to participate in the raffle held at the EDC table. She thanked the businesses that provided goods and or services for the basket. The following list of businesses donated to the raffle basket: Black Hall Marina, Hallmark Drive-In, Homeward Collective, Marna Roons, Old Lyme Nails, Old Lyme Hardware, Old Lyme Landscape, Salty Monkey, The Carousel Shop, The Chocolate Shell, The Hideaway, The Pavilion, The Stumble Inne.

b. Eastern Regional Tourism District (ERTD) Update

Wendy advised the Commission that she recently met with Mark Dixon, head of film commission for the state of CT. She stated that he advised her on what Old Lyme can do to be represented. One recommendation is to be listed on a database of towns and attractive settings for film location scouts. She stated that he said first the town needs to establish a point



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of contact within town hall who is easily accessible and would respond to emails and phone calls quickly. Wendy said that the EDC needs to come up with a list of locations in town that are unique and that Old Lyme can be added to the website listing towns that are interested in having film crews scout locations for Hallmark films and more.

MJ asked if it would be helpful to have an EDC member as a point of contact also. Wendy stressed that the person who is the contact would need to be someone who checks their emails regularly and needs to be available on a regular basis, such as town hall office hours.

Wendy stated that Mark listed a bunch of places that they would be interested in. He asked Wendy to add to the list. Cheryl stated that the Commission can share that email and review it and have suggestions for the next meeting to not waste time.

c. Ribbon Cuttings

Cheryl thanked the Commission for participating in the Salty Monkey ribbon cutting.

Cheryl stated that there were a few more coming up. She stated that there is a new business opening up on Hartford Ave in the former Soundview Market to be called Figs & Olives. She stated that she heard they will likely be serving Mediterranean inspired breakfast and lunch.

Cheryl stated that she reached out to the owner of Marna Roons, who makes macaroons on Halls Road. Wendy noted the owner is mostly focusing on wholesale and online sales.

Cheryl stated that A Behavioral Approach is looking to have their ribbon cutting a week after Labor Day.

Cheryl noted that the Old Lyme Ice Cream Shoppe will be closing August 30th. The owner is retiring and the space will be turned into residential space. Cheryl noted the ice cream shop has been a wonderful attraction to visitors to Old Lyme.

5. Economic Indicators

a. Real Estate Update

MJ advised the Commission that the 4 Mile River Marina sold for \$2.1 million. She stated that she reached out to the agent to see what new plans they may have for there.

MJ stated that a new property 47 Hartford Ave was recently listed for sale at \$325,000.

MJ stated that there is a rental listing at 389 Shore Road for an office space, restaurant etc. lease.

MJ stated that houses are still moving quickly. She stated that the active price is \$900,000 plus for Old Lyme with an average 30 days on the market. She stated that the average sale price is over \$810,000. She said that inventory is still tight and that housing prices are not decreasing.

MJ said that The Landing at 389 Shore Road only has one commercial space left for rent.



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6. Economic Revitalization Efforts

a. Shoreline Gateway

Cheryl stated that Joe is an excused absence tonight but updated the Commission on the Shoreline Gateway. She stated that the Shoreline Gateway presented their findings from the survey to the Soundview Commission. She stated that the survey majority want Shore Rd and Harford Ave to be more family friendly. They want a safe, clean, walkable environment. The majority also stated that they want to support small businesses and stay away from chain stores. She stated that they said blight issues need to be addressed but that people are optimistic that it can be a wonderful location.

7. New or Additional Business

a. Long Term Planning

Cheryl stated that the EDC had money from 2018 left over in reserve for strategic planning. She stated that about \$7,000 has been put back into the general fund. She stated that the EDC needs to find framework in which they are operating in. She stated that she feels that the EDC is lacking a strategic framework and would like to tackle something toward building that each month. She stated that she would like to start by reviewing the current mission statement.

Cheryl read the current EDC mission statement and suggested reviewing it and discussing it at the next meeting. MJ stated that they need to attach a cost to action items and stated that they have to be very specific about what the EDC is looking to do.

b. Chamber of Commerce

MJ asked Cheryl if she knows how many storefront businesses joined the Greater Old Saybrook Chamber. She asked if any efforts have been made to get them involved. Cheryl stated that the chamber said they would support Old Lyme and that Rich Shriver was going to be joining their executive board. Cheryl also stated that some of the quarterly meetings will be held at Old Lyme establishments. Cheryl stated that the EDC could host one in the future. Mona asked if the Greater Saybrook Chamber info was on the Explore Old Lyme page. Cheryl will update the information currently there.

c. Social Media

Wendy asked if the town has anyone who handles social media. She stated that the town has a Facebook page only. She stated that the town Facebook page can post broad economic items and events only.

d. Sound View Businesses

The Commission revisited meeting with Soundview businesses. Cheryl stated that she would like the Commission to set up a one day "office hours" in order to speak to Soundview businesses on how the summer season went. John suggested inviting the businesses by invitation that way nobody can claim that they were not invited. Cheryl asked if the EDC wants to do it right before or after Labor Day. John stated that the EDC should send notice out now saying the end of August. Cheryl stated that she will coordinate the office hours picking a morning and after work time.

e. Midsummer Festival

Mona said some people commented on social media they were disappointed by the Midsummer Festival She asked if the EDC should have a discussion about it. MJ stated that it wasn't what it used to be. She stated that not everyone was aware that the fireworks were cancelled. She stated that the day moved in segments but that people who only came for a short time missed a lot of things. She thought additional sidewalk sales should have been incorporated.



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Cheryl read her response to the facebook commenter regarding the festival. She stated that the free festival is put on by the individual nonprofit organizations that host activities and vendors on their properties. She stated that the festival has changed a lot over the past 35 years, beginning as an arts festival. She stated that back in 2010 they wanted to include more nonprofits further down on Lyme Street but that fewer people walked far enough down to them. She stated that farmers markets and food truck festivals make it very hard to secure as people are committed to many other events.

MJ stated that when attending other town events they are held on town greens and they have space to have everything in one area. She stated that this year was mostly arts. The commission further discussed the festival compared to other area festivals. Scott spoke about the Southington Apple Festival and how that event works. He stated that the town hires a paid person who oversees the event. The person is paid out of the proceeds.

8. Adjournment

MJ DeRisio made a motion to adjourn. John Stratton seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jennifer D'Amato
Records Clerk for the Old Lyme Economic Development Commission

with Cheryl Poirier
EDC Chair