



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

Regular Meeting MINUTES

September 6, 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, September 6, 2023.

**Present:** Cheryl Poirier, Joe Camean, Jean Wilczynski, MJ DeRisio, John Stratton and Teri Lewis.

Excused absence: Mona Colwell, Wendy Russell and Scott Smith.

**1. Call to Order and Welcome**

Cheryl called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM and welcomed everyone to the September 6, 2023 Economic Development Commission Regular Meeting.

Cheryl advised the Commission that Scott Smith recently took a new position teaching at Eastern CT University and his fall class schedule includes Wednesday nights. He will be unable to attend the next four meetings. She stated that he offered to resign from his EDC position but she feels he brings value to the Commission and stated that she wishes to excuse him from the next four meetings, and then he will have more control over his Spring semester schedule. She asked the Commission for their thoughts. They agreed with her decision (no vote).

**2. Approval of August 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

John Stratton made a motion to approve the August 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes. MJ DeRisio seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed with a vote of 3 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 (Jean Wilczynski/Joe Camean) abstaining. Teri was not yet present for the vote.

**3. Public Comment**

There were no comments from the public.

**4. Marketing & Promotion**

**a. Eastern Regional Tourism District (ERTD) Update**

Cheryl noted that Wendy is absent due to travel but will have an update for next month's meeting.

**5. Economic Indicators**

**a. Real Estate Update**

MJ stated that there has been no changes or updates for commercial real estate.

MJ stated that the residential market continues to be busy. She stated that there are 23 active listings with the average price being \$1.3 million dollars. Over the past 30 days 8 properties have closed averaging over \$637,000. She stated



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that Old Lyme prices are climbing. The year over year average price is up 76%. July of 2022 saw home prices averaging \$468,000, July of 2023 was averaging \$823,000. She stated that people appear to be willing to pay more to live here.

### **b. Business Openings/Closings & Ribbon Cuttings (Cheryl)**

Cheryl stated that the season is ending in Sound View and many businesses will be closing for the off season. She wished them a good winter and to enjoy their off season.

Cheryl updated the Commission on upcoming Ribbon Cuttings. She needs to finalize a date with A Behavioral Approach. Sapore Pizzeria is supposed to be re-opening soon, she has been in touch and waiting to hear back from them. The driving school moved locations on Halls Rd. It will be hosting an open house on 9/29 and has invited the EDC to attend and hold a ribbon cutting. A new business, Fig and Olive, is supposed to be opening on Hartford Ave but Cheryl has not seen any movement there.

### **6. Economic Revitalization Efforts**

Cheryl stated that she will invite Edie Twining to a future EDC meeting for a Halls Road update.

#### **a. Shoreline Gateway:** Joe updated the Commission on the Shoreline Gateway with the following:

##### **i. Survey Results**

As part of the larger findings, Joe stated that half of the survey responses listed a bakery as a preferred business to bring to the area.

##### **ii. Bakeries**

Joe has drafted a letter to solicit bakers to set up shop in Old Lyme. He stated that it is directed to bakeries in NYC, Boston and Hartford and will hopefully gather some interest. He stated that incentives need to be given by the Town for this to work.

The Commission discussed Joe's proposal. MJ asked if the reach has to be as far as Boston and NYC. There are plenty of quality bakeries closer than that. Joe stated that he welcomes additions to the list. MJ suggested a bakery co-op. Joe stated that if there is a variety of high quality items he feels it would sell.

Cheryl stated that people would recognize the name of a well-known Hartford bakery since many northern CT residents come down to Old Lyme for the summer.

The Commission discussed that the EDC and Shoreline Gateway Committee will sign the letter before sending it out.

**Joe Camean made a motion that the bakery solicitation draft be advanced to final form and recommended that it be signed by the EDC and the Shoreline Gateway before sending it out. MJ DeRisio seconded the motion.**

Teri Lewis arrived during the discussion at 5:57 PM. **The motion passed with 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.**



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### **iii. Study**

The Commission discussed the Advance CT study that was done in 2019. The study was focused broadly on Old Lyme, and not specifically on the Shoreline Gateway area. The Shoreline Gateway Committee would like to consider if a focused study would be worthwhile.

Joe stated that yes he feels it would but that he was not sure how the study would be funded. Cheryl stated that she would consider inviting someone from Advance CT to discuss and a budget request would have to be put in by November.

Joe asked if it would be worthwhile for the EDC to commission a study for Sound View asking what kind of commercial development would be optimal for that area. MJ asked if the questions would be open ended or would the survey try to narrow down the responses. She stated that if you make it too big it gets costly. Cheryl stated that a survey has been already done. MJ stated that she is not sure about the cost effectiveness of a study. Joe stated that a cost has to be determined first.

Teri stated that when thinking about certain businesses she asks herself where they would fit into town. She suggested putting together a list of available buildings and spaces in town that businesses could look at. Teri stated that way you can put business owners together with spots.

Teri also stated that it looks like the town may not proceed with sewers. The capital cost is too high. She believes it makes no sense for property owners when they can have individual engineered septic systems for half the price of what the sewer systems would cost.

MJ stated she believes that without sewers the area will remain seasonable. She stated that area needs something that you don't have to go to East Lyme or Halls Rd to get.

Teri stated that often property owners lease vacant properties for farmers markets, craft villages etc. and suggest that idea.

Cheryl stated that she will reach out to Advance CT and that Teri and MJ will work on the list of available spaces.

### **7. Chamber of Commerce Update**

Jean stated that the Greater Old Saybrook Chamber is making an effort to do activities in Old Lyme as they stated they would. She stated that next Thursday they are using the Old Lyme Inn for a meeting location and hosting a Chamber Connections in October at High Hopes. She added that a Women in Business presentation will also be held at the Old Lyme Inn this fall.

Jean reached out to the Greater Old Saybrook Chamber to see how many Lyme-Old Lyme Chamber members joined and she stated that she was told 18 members joined. She stated that there has been some interest and anything that EDC can do to encourage that is great.

MJ asked if the emails from the Chamber can be forwarded. Cheryl stated she will forward the emails; they often include upcoming events.



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**8. EDC Strategic Planning Process**

Cheryl stated that she put this item on the agenda and sent past documents from 2019 to the Commission. She stated that she also included the town's POCD vision statement in the email. Cheryl stated the EDC mission needs to align with the Town vision.

MJ stated that she is not sure what is clear for the mission statement. She stated that ribbon cuttings are great but in order to spur economic development the EDC has to go beyond its comfort zone. Cheryl stated that she feels that they should focus on both current businesses and the future. She stated the EDC has to figure out what resources it has.

Joe suggested that they generate appropriate list of what are the targets.

The EDC will put the mission statement at the top of the agenda next month.

**9. New or Additional Business**

**a. Sound View Business Check-ins**

Cheryl started that she has begun to start checking in with the Sound View businesses regarding the effect that 2023 parking prices have had on business. She stated that she still has more business owners to speak with.

**b. Other**

Cheryl stated that the CT Magazine article that came out was very nice; however, it did not include much about the Sound View District, which disappointed some.

John stated that the Hamburg Fair had over 5,000 visitors. He stated that it was not record breaking numbers but came close.

**10. Adjournment**

**Teri Lewis made a motion to adjourn. Jean Wilczynski seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

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