



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, March 14, 2023 – 6:30 P.M.
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair, Kacie Costello Hand called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Members present: Kacie Costello Hand, Sandra Roberts, Michael Bender, Judy Ganswindt, Elizabeth Swenson, Susan Quish, Nick Prevost

Members absent: David Prendergast and Erica Cosenza

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

III. PUBLIC QUESTION & COMMENT – None

IV. GUESTS – Sarah Gibbons, Miranda Creative - Virtual

V. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Donahue reported that the Mariner's Way study has completed the data gathering along with market analysis and economic opportunity study. A strategy document with next steps is being finalized and should be complete by April.

Middlesex County Revitalization Commission's second round of business development grant funding is open until March 31 for eligible businesses in Middlesex County.

The CT Recreational Trails Grant resubmission to make improvements in the Gardiner's Landing area of Saybrook Point and to complete the riverfront walkway has been submitted. Discuss among members regarding rebuild of bulkhead, per Ms. Donahue would need permits to fix wall and the contractor can do a lot of repairs land side.

Discussion of the cruise ship came up. The historical society is working with them to provide some tours and they may also be partnering with The Kate. Ms. Donahue will share the visit dates with the commission.

Registration is complete for the second annual Celebrate Saybrook Street Party scheduled for Sunday, June 23, 2024. More than 100 vendors in addition to local businesses will participate.

VI. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes: February 8, 2024

MOTION to approve the meeting minutes of February 8, 2024, as presented. **MADE** by N. Prevost **SECONDED** by J. Ganswindt; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** K. Costello Hand, M. Bender, S. Roberts, E. Swenson, and J. Ganswindt.

ABSTAINING: S. Quish and N. Prevost **OPPOSED:** None. **APPROVED:** 6-2-0

B. Correspondence & Announcements - None

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Marketing Report – Miranda Creative – virtual

Paid social media for March thru April promoting “get outside” has had 24,000 impressions since it started last week. Videos and photography from other projects was used. Upcoming summer/spring for May will use videos and photography from late summer 2023.

Celebrate Saybrook’s branding has been updated to have a consistent look. A preview of the new landing page was also shown. Ms. Gibbons asked if a map of the vendors would be added. This is under consideration. The new landing page will debut in April with promotion beginning in early May to drive traffic to the site, increasing closer to the event.

The calendar software cost and functionality for the microsite was discussed. The cost is \$2750 (\$230/month) for unlimited contributors, 5 users and up to 2000 events. Commissioners felt this was reasonable. Public launch of the microsite is currently planned for August 1st. Ms. Donahue asked if it could be closer to the beginning of summer in time for Celebrate Saybrook. Ms. Gibbons will find out if the timeline can be moved up at all. Commissioners also discussed creating a policy to govern the content of calendar submissions.

- B. Discuss Promotions & Funding for Remainder of Year – some discussion with Miranda
Ms. Donahue noted that to be able to promote both events and seasonal town visits, \$1500 per month from ARPA will be needed. Clarification about what this buys will be presented at the next meeting. In addition, Ms. Donahue will make ARPA expenditures to date a regular monthly reporting feature.
- C. Visitor Microsite Planning Update - included in marketing update with
Miranda Creative
- D. Main Street and Route 1 Inventory Update
Sarah Makowicki is currently wrapping up and Ms. Donahue will check in with her on the status.

- E. Art Hallway Exhibits 2024
Ms. Cosenza spoke to an artist that is interested in exhibiting. The schools have not gotten back to her yet.
- F. Update on Small Main Street Projects
Have not heard back from Fred Astaire Dance Studio regarding the piano. Have not heard back from the Department of Public Works on project list yet.

VIII. **ADVISORY GROUP REPORTS - NONE**

IX. **NEW BUSINESS**

Discussion of occupancy rate and the vacancies on Main Street. For Celebrate Saybrook consider putting festive signage in the empty spaces.

X. **COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR - NONE**

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION to adjourn the meeting of Thursday March 14, 2023 at 7:45 p.m. until the next regularly scheduled hybrid meeting of the Economic Development Commission on April 11th, 2024 at 6:30 pm, Town Hall, 302 Main Street, second-floor conference room;
MADE by S. Quish **SECONDED** by N. Prevost; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** K. Costello Hand, S. Roberts, E. Swenson, N. Prevost, S. Quish, M. Bender, J. Ganswindt
ABSTAINING: None **OPPOSED:** None. **APPROVED:** 7-0-0

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Strickland
Recording Clerk