

TOWN OF SALEM
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 4, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
Salem Town Hall, Conference Room 1

PRESENT

Steven Shelley, Chairman
Melissa Beers
Carl Fontneau
John Houchin
Alexandra Marsh, Alternate (*seated*)

ABSENT

Victoria Knopf
John Gilbert, Alternate

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Shelley called the meeting to order at 8:25 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SEATING OF ALTERNATE MEMBER(S):

M/S/C: Houchin/Beers, to seat Alternate Member Marsh for Full Member Knopf.

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.

2. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

M/S/C: Fontneau/Beers, to approve the Economic Development Regular Meeting Minutes for December 7, 2021. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

3. CORRESPONDENCE – none

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

First Selectman Chmielewski congratulated the new members on their appointments and expressed his appreciation to the Commission for their efforts and their willingness to serve on the Commission and the community. He looks forward to working with them and supporting their upcoming accomplishments.

5. SALEM BUSINESS AND COVID 19 IMPACT

a. Update from Senator Paul Formica

b. Update from State Representative Holly Cheeseman

Chairman Shelley reported that both Senator Formica and State Representative Cheeseman are looking forward to working and communicating with the

Commission. Rep. Cheeseman is working on legislation that will aid smaller businesses with funding.

c. Update from Salem First Selectman Ed Chmielewski

First Selectman Chmielewski reported on a very busy two weeks, in part, due to the ongoing pandemic and rising case numbers. While the State failed to deliver the promised At-Home Rapid Test Kits and Masks on the scheduled day, they were surprised by a call that the town would be receiving 270 At-Home Rapid Test Kits and Masks on New Year's Eve. The test kits and masks were delivered to the town's First Responders, Salem & Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Companies, Ambulance crew, Emergency Services, Emergency Management, critical Town staff, Salem School, and the town's high-volume businesses, eateries, and daycare centers. He thanked the Chairman for his help distributing the test kits and masks to the town's local businesses. They are expecting to receive additional test kits and masks this week, which will be distributed to the town's residents. He expressed his appreciation to the Emergency Services/Management staff, Volunteer Fire Companies, and Town Hall staff who helped develop the distribution plan. Additional test kits and masks have been requested. All updates will be posted on the Town website.

In response to Commissioner Beers regarding the distribution of test kits and masks to the town's seniors, First Selectman Chmielewski stated that, in speaking with the Salem Seniors Board of Directors, it was felt that, because most of the town's seniors are not venturing out, it was not necessary to distribute test kits and masks to them. They are welcome to pick up a test kit and masks during the distribution period.

Commissioner Fontneau expressed his hope that the town and other Commissions will seek the aid of the Commission to draft grant applications, including STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grants.

Commissioner Houchin expressed the Lions Club's willingness to provide any assistance the town might need.

First Selectman Chmielewski thanked the Commissioners for their service and encouraged them to continue thinking outside of the box.

Chairman Shelley informed and encouraged the Commissioners to distribute a flyer noting the registration information for the town's notification system to the town's local businesses.

6. CT OFFICE OF TOURISM

a. EASTERN REGION TOURISM DISTRICT UPDATE

Commissioner Shelley reported that the Committee discussed changing the name from Mystic Country, as the area has become known, to a name that more adequately reflects the entire region. The Committee also discussed a 1:1 (up to) \$10,000.00 Marketing Grant being offered by the State's Office of Tourism. The region's businesses, nonprofits, and municipalities were encouraged to submit a proposal by January 15.

Commissioner Fontneau commented on the possibility of developing a generic proposal that could be utilized for future grant opportunities.

7. EDC BUSINESS & SERVICE DIRECTORY 2021/22 UPDATE

Chairman Shelley reported that he is currently working on an updated digital Directory that includes the businesses and a photo credit that were inadvertently omitted from the printed version. Once completed, the digital Directory will be posted on the town's website.

He is also hoping to create an addendum to the Directory that will categorize the businesses and include the omitted businesses. Commissioner Beers volunteered to work with Chairman Shelley to create the addendum. Commissioner Fontneau informed the new members that one of the items the Commissioners have discussed is the possibility of creating a cluster/affinity analysis of the town's local businesses, including home occupations, or cottage industries, and suggesting any synergies that might exist between them.

8. SENIOR FRIENDLY / AGE RESTRICTED HOUSING DISCUSSION

Chairman Shelley reported that a list of interested individuals is being gathered. The housing will be rentals and the development includes a community center for its residents.

9. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (POCD)

Commissioner Fontneau provided a brief overview of a draft of the Economic Development chapter of the POCD. A copy will be e-mailed to the Commissioners for review and comment.

10. SALEM BUSINESS OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

a. In-Person Outreach

Chairman Shelley stated that a large part of the Commission's task is to reach out to the town's businesses. He encouraged them to introduce themselves and speak with the manager and/or owner regarding what the town could do to support them so that

they can make any recommendations or refer their concerns to their State Legislators.

The Commission agreed with Commissioner Houchin who inquired about the possibility of creating and sending out a survey. Commissioners Houchin and Marsh expressed their willingness to create the survey.

b. Welcome Packet

Commissioner Fontneau provided a brief background of his proposal to create a Welcome Packet for new residents and businesses, including businesses that experience a change of ownership/management. The Packet would include details regarding the necessary applications and permits that must be applied for and approved by the town prior to opening their business. The Packet would be accessible both in physical form and online.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review and Approve the Regular Meeting Dates for 2022

M/S/C: Houchin/Beers, to review and approve the 2022 Economic Development Regular Meeting Dates as follows:

**February 15, March 15, April 19, May 17, June 21, July 19,
August 16, September 20, October 18, November 15, December 20,
and January 17, 2023.**

Discussion: The meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of the Month at 7:00 p.m. in Salem Town Hall, Conference Room 1. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

12. OLD BUSINESS – none

Chairman Shelley welcomed the new members; he looks forward to working with them.

13. ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Fontneau/Marsh, to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem