

TOWN OF SALEM
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 19, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
Salem Town Hall, Conference Room 1

PRESENT

Steven Shelley, Chairman
Carl Fontneau
John Houchin

ABSENT

Victoria Knopf
John Gilbert, Alternate
Alexandra Marsh, Alternate
Melissa Beers

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Shelley called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA – *none*

3. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES: Tuesday June 21, 2022 Regular Meeting
M/S/C: Fontneau/Houchin, to approve the June 21, 2022 Economic Development Commission Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor.

4. CORRESPONDENCE – *none*

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS – *none*

6. SALEM BUSINESS AND COVID 19 IMPACT

- a. Update from Senator Paul Formica
- b. Update from State Representative Holly Cheeseman
- c. Update from Salem First Selectman Ed Chmielewski

Chairman Shelley reported that Senator Formica, Representative Cheeseman, and First Selectman Ed Chmielewski expressed their appreciation to the Commission for their volunteerism and continued interest in the community.

The First Selectman discussed the continued improvement to Salem Town Center (1 New London Road) and the active involvement of the new owners to improve and revitalize the property. Chairman Shelley stated that he spoke with tenants of said property and discussed proposed remodel of the interior of the vacant units, making

them more presentable to prospective tenants. The limitations the property's well and septic system poses were briefly discussed.

Senator Formica and Representative Cheeseman informed Chairman Shelley of the legislative recess and expressed their hopefulness of approval of pending legislation upon a return to session.

7. CT OFFICE OF TOURISM

a. Eastern Region Tourism District Update

Chairman Shelley informed the Board of that an update regarding the proposed renaming of the districts remains unchanged, as the quarterly meeting had not yet been convened. A brief discussion ensued regarding Salem's involvement as a part of District 2, which includes the towns of Colchester, Hebron, East Lyme, New London, Haddam, Waterford, Norwich, Bozrah, Bolton, and Montville. Commissioner Houchin expressed his idea that the ERTD should consider reducing the number of Districts to 2; Chairman Shelley stated he would forward this idea to the Tourism Board for their consideration.

8. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (POCD)

Commissioner Fontneau updated the Commissioners on some of the revisions that were made to the POCD. He noted that the Town's Open Space has grown by approximately 10% over the last ten years, from 21% to 31%. The increase places pressure on the remaining land available for the establishment of businesses and residences. In addition, many will not establish a business without the existence of an adequate population to serve. The amount of land that is designated as PA-49 (Farm & Forestry) has also grown. Commissioner Fontneau suggested the possibility of studying the effects of PA490 and Open Space land and its potential for residential and commercial growth. The discussion was tabled.

9. SALEM BUSINESS SURVEY

Chairman Shelley reported that the EDC Facebook account was active, however the initial post was not made would include their mission statement and contact information. He will send a proposed post to the Commissioners for review and discussion during their next meeting.

10. SALEM BUSINESS OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

- a. In-Person Outreach**
- b. Welcome Packet**

Commissioner Fontneau presented a draft of the EDC welcome page for the website for review and discussion during their next meeting. The page includes an introduction letter, framed by hot buttons with links to related Town departments for prospective businesses.

11. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

12. OLD BUSINESS

- a. ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funding / Salem Small Business Assistance
Chairman Shelley reported that, after speaking with the First Selectman and the Town Attorney, it was determined that the business vouchers would be too cumbersome for the Town's staff to adequately pursue. Commissioner Houchin felt that, once the Facebook page and the updated webpage has officially launched, they would be able to gain a sense of the public's wishes, providing them with the impetus to pursue their goals.

Commissioner Fontneau proposed the possibility of posting an announcement in the *Our Town Salem* newsletter inviting home occupation businesses to submit their business cards for inclusion in an upcoming issue of *Our Town Salem*. The business-sized advertisements would be funded by their ARPA funds. The information received could also be used to group like-businesses into clusters and create synergies and provide additional businesses to the Business Directory. Chairman Shelley suggested promoting a QR Code linking them to the proposed business survey, which, if completed and submitted, would reward them with a free business card-size advertisement, increasing their exposure and complementing their Facebook campaign.

13. ADJOURNMENT

**M/S/C: Fontneau/Houchin, to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m. Discussion: None.
Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Steven M. Shelley, Chairman Economic Development Commission for the Town of Salem