

**TOWN OF SALEM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 20, 2020 – 8:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

PRESENT

Edward Chmielewski, Jr., Chairman
Paul Robillard
Terri Salas

ABSENT

none

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Chmielewski called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – *led by Commissioner Robillard*

2. ADDITIONS/MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA

The following items were moved up on the agenda; the succeeding items were renumbered accordingly:

- 7(a) Public Blight Complaints Update, 1 New London Road, Salem Plaza, and
- 6(c) Salem Business and COVID-19 Impact, Update from Salem First Selectman Kevin Lyden

7. PUBLIC BLIGHT COMPLAINTS UPDATE

a. 1 NEW LONDON ROAD, SALEM PLAZA

Chairman Chmielewski reported that complaints have been voiced regarding the Salem Plaza and, on a recent visit, viewed several abandoned items, including a cooler, table, dryer, lawnmower, bed, and couch, an overflowing trash bin, and a propane tank surrounded by rubbish, behind the building. The condition of the plaza is a disservice to its tenants who are working hard to survive, especially during the pandemic. The town has actively been in the process of remedying the issues.

First Selectman Lyden reported that the plaza has been cited for zoning, building, and health violations and a Cease and Desist Order was placed on the property over one year ago. Several of the violations have not yet been remedied. A lien is in the process of being placed on the property to recoup the costs for two Public Works employees to clean and mow the front of the property.

M/S/C: Salas/Robillard, to enter into Executive Session to discuss the pending litigation against the Salem Plaza located at 1 New London Road at 8:14 p.m. Executive Session to include the members of the Economic Development Commission and First Selectman Kevin Lyden. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Salas/Robillard, to exit from Executive Session at 8:45 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor. No votes were taken during Executive Session.

M/S/C: Salas/Robillard, to commend the First Selectman Kevin Lyden for his proactive efforts to improve, enhance and clean up the appearance of the Salem Plaza.

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor.

6. SALEM BUSINESS AND COVID-19 IMPACT

c. Update from Salem First Selectman Kevin Lyden

First Selectman Lyden reported that the *Two Brothers Restaurant*, which is currently not interested in offering outdoor dining, has been busy offering limited indoor dining and take-out meals. They continue to provide the lunches for the Salem Seniors two Tuesdays every month. Chelsea Groton Bank is also open with limited hours. The new owner of the Maple Shade General Store and Salem Prime Cuts are also doing well.

He will be meeting with CT D.O.T. (Connecticut Department of Transportation) to discuss the possibility of making site line improvements at Music Vale Road and Route 85 as part of the road improvements on Route 85 in 2022. Currently, the CT D.O.T. is replacing the bridge located on Route 85 by Rattlesnake Ledge Road. The next State bridge replacement project is scheduled to take place in 2021 and the State has agreed to provide the expenses for an additional ambulance to be available on the other side of town for the duration of the project, which would result in a significant detour.

The old *Salem Feed & Grain* store on Route 82 now houses a business that maintains power lines. The old *Panfili's Farm Stand* was also recently sold. Thompson Stone now owns *Getty Granite* and is retaining the *Getty Granite* name. *Salem Valley Farms Ice Cream* was also recently sold.

The most recent issue of the *Our Town Salem*, recognizing the Salem graduates, was distributed to the Commissioners.

The Commission thanked the First Selectman for the updates.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: JUNE 15, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

M/S/C: Robillard/Salas, to table the approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 15, 2020. 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

Chairman Chmielewski thanked and welcomed Senator Formica for joining their meeting via speakerphone and providing the Commission with a brief update.

Senator Formica thanked the Commission for their hard work and the opportunity to join the meeting during this difficult time. He reported that much of the state's meetings have centered around nursing homes and the postponement of Phase III of the state's Reopen Plan. The

upcoming Special Session will involve discussions regarding police reform, especially additional training, elimination of chokeholds, and qualified immunity, and absentee ballots. Both of these bills will require extensive discussions, public hearings, and reviews by Committees of Cognizance. Discussions will also include the allowance of providing an emergency seven (7) day supply of and reducing the copay for insulin as well as telehealth and telemedicine. Discussions will continue regarding the reopening of schools.

In response to Commissioner Robillard regarding the institution of tolls, Senator Formica stated that, while he does not foresee the conversation regarding tolls to be included until the next session, there is some initiative to generate revenue for the Special Transportation Fund.

b. Update from State Representative Holly Cheeseman

Chairman Chmielewski provided a brief update received by Representative Cheeseman, who continues to be frustrated by the state's unfunded mandates, is working hard to ensure that smaller towns will receive their fair share of funding and continues to advocate for the local businesses. She also continues to volunteer for the town's Mobile Food Pantry, which is currently delivering food to approximately 40 residents.

8. CT OFFICE OF TOURISM

a. EASTERN REGIONAL TOURISM DISTRICT UPDATE

Chairman Chmielewski, who was recently appointed as the town's representative of the Eastern Regional Tourism District Board of Directors, reported that the organization was recently reorganized and regular updates will be provided to the Commissioners.

9. EDC BUSINESS & SERVICE DIRECTORY 2021 – no update

10. SENIOR FRIENDLY / AGE RESTRICTED HOUSING DISCUSSION

Chairman Chmielewski continues to be discussed and of interest to the town and its residents.

11. SALEM BUSINESS OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

The Commissioners continue to reach out and support the local businesses. Commissioner Salas continues to be impressed by the creativity and overall willingness for the local businesses to adjust to the new environment with which they have been confronted.

12. NEW BUSINESS – none

11. OLD BUSINESS – none

12. ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Salas/Robillard, to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.