

**TOWN OF SALEM  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2020 – 8:00 P.M.  
SALEM TOWN HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

**PRESENT**

Edward Chmielewski, Jr., Chairman  
Carl Fontneau  
Paul Robillard

**ABSENT**

Terri Salas  
Steven Shelley

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Chmielewski called the meeting to order at 8:30 p.m.

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**2. ADDITIONS/MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Item 6, Salem Business and COVID-19 Impact, was moved to follow Item 2, Additions/Modifications to the Agenda. The succeeding items were renumbered accordingly.

**3. SALEM BUSINESS AND COVID-19 IMPACT**

**a. Update from State Representative Holly Cheeseman**

State Representative Cheeseman, who was not available due to a business conflict, continues to work for Salem and East Lyme businesses, several of which she has helped apply for and obtain a CT CARES (Connecticut Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Small Business and Nonprofit Grant.

**b. Update from Senator Paul Formica**

Senator Formica reported that the newly-elected and returning legislators are working on committee assignments and job duties. He has been named the Deputy Minority Leader. Both he and State Representative Cheeseman will be seeking to serve on committees that will best serve the towns they represent. A CARES Program offering businesses the opportunity to apply for a (up to) \$5,000.00 Grant was recently released; he is hopeful that additional programs will be available in the near future. He encouraged interested parties to sign up to receive e-mail updates at [senatorformica.com](http://senatorformica.com). The swearing-in ceremonies and the session will begin on January 6.

Commissioner Robillard will send information regarding the Directory, including the cost estimate, to the Senator who agreed to investigate any available grants that could help fund the Commission's Business Directory.

**c. Update from Salem First Selectman Kevin Lyden – *not present***

Chairman Chmielewski prefaced his recitation of the First Selectman's report by stating that the First Selectman and Town Hall staff have been diligently working to create a business-

friendly environment for current and future businesses. The proposed 48-unit age-restricted development is in its planning phases. The town's lack of housing diversity has been mentioned in the town's 2002 and 2012 Plan of Conservation and Development; the development will fulfill a much-needed void for those residents who wish to downsize and remain in the town. Located on Route 82, it will not require any additional town services and would become one of the top taxpayers in the town.

Information regarding the Connecticut CARES Small Business Grant Program has been posted on the town's website and a copy was distributed to the Commissioners.

Chairman Chmielewski expressed his appreciation to Senator Formica, Representative Cheeseman, First Selectman, the town's boards and commissions, and Town Hall staff for all of their hard work and efforts.

**4. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES**

**M/S/C: Robillard/Fontneau, to approve the October 19, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes.**

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

**5. CORRESPONDENCE**

Chairman Chmielewski recited Commissioner Salas' resignation letter and the e-mail correspondence that followed. He congratulated her on her recent promotion and thanked her for her invaluable service to the Commission and the Town of Salem.

**M/S/C: Fontneau/Robillard, to accept the resignation of Commissioner Salas from the Economic Development Commission, effective immediately. Discussion: None.**

**Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor.**

**6. PUBLIC COMMENTS – none**

**7. PUBLIC BLIGHT COMPLAINTS UPDATE**

**a. 1 NEW LONDON ROAD, SALEM PLAZA**

Positive comments continue to be received regarding the improvements that have been made to the Plaza. Chairman Chmielewski commended the First Selectman for his efforts, creating a nice town center for the betterment of the town; Commissioner Robillard agreed.

**8. CT OFFICE OF TOURISM**

**a. EASTERN REGIONAL TOURISM DISTRICT UPDATE**

Chairman Chmielewski reported that he was named the Legislative Action Committee Chair for the Eastern Regional Tourism District and will be reaching out to Senator Formica to receive any guidance he might have to offer.

Commissioner Fontneau suggested the possibility of creating an Antique Trail, similar to the Wine Trail, as an effort to promote the region's cottage industries.

**9. EDC BUSINESS & SERVICE DIRECTORY 2021**

Chairman Chmielewski thanked Commissioner Robillard for his hard work on the Directory, which help promote the town's businesses that are suffering due to the pandemic.

Commissioner Robillard distributed a draft of the survey questions and pricing options for the advertisements for review. The survey is comprised of 15 questions that would be sent to those businesses for which they have e-mail addresses. Discussion ensued regarding the estimated cost, grant possibilities, advertising costs, and deadlines. The estimated cost of placing an ad in the Directory is based upon the cost of publishing the previous Directory. Should the Commission be successful in obtaining a grant, the advertising costs would be adjusted accordingly.

Commissioner Fontneau, who has reviewed both the Assessor's list and the Directory, stated the need to capture the town's hidden economy. While many of these businesses may not be interested in placing an advertisement in the Directory, it would provide a way in which they could encourage and create a synergy amongst those clusters of businesses.

The following preliminary schedule was set:

December 1	Rough, preliminary list of businesses to be included in the Directory
January 1	Contact businesses regarding any updated information and interest in purchasing advertisement space
April 1	Finalize the businesses to be included in the Directory
May 1	Finalize advertisements
June 1	Review and approval of the proof
July 1	Publication/Delivery of the Directory

**10. SENIOR FRIENDLY / AGE-RESTRICTED HOUSING DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Fontneau reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) will be holding a Public Hearing next Tuesday, November 24, for a proposed age-restricted development. The Commission greatly improved and simplified their age-restricted housing regulation encouraging developers to consider constructing such a development in the Town of Salem. To reside in such a development, an individual must be 55 years of age or over and the property may be owned or rented. Because it would be offered to older individuals without children, schools would not be an issue and the development would be considered an economically positive addition to the town.

**11. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (POCD)**

Commissioner Fontneau plans to conduct a cluster analysis of the cottage industries or home occupations in town to offer businesses a different level of support. One of the recommendations he would like to suggest is the re-zoning of certain areas that would allow and encourage the establishment of businesses.

Chairman Chmielewski reported that the Board of Selectmen reacted positively to the Commission's plans to provide input to and work with the PZC on the POCD.

**12. SALEM BUSINESS OUTREACH AND SUPPORT**

- a. Electronic Survey (Commissioner Shelley) – *not present; no report*
- b. In-Person Outreach (Commissioner Robillard)

The list of businesses that was previously distributed to the Commissioners will tie in with the Directory and the Survey.

- c. Welcome Packet (Commissioner Fontneau)

The Welcome Packet will be created in such a manner that would be amenable to being printed and posted on the town website. The Commission set April 1 as a tentative deadline for the production of the Welcome Packet. Meanwhile, a letter will be drafted to be sent to all of the town's businesses introducing themselves and informing them of the upcoming Directory. Chairman Chmielewski proposed sending an annual letter to the businesses to open and/or maintain communication between the town and its businesses.

**12. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Approve 2021 Meeting Dates

**M/S/C: Robillard/Fontneau, to approve the 2021 Meeting Dates, with the following amendments:**

**Tuesday, January 19**

**Wednesday, January 20**

**Tuesday, February 16**

**Wednesday, February 17**

**Tuesday, January 18, 2021**

**Wednesday, January 19, 2021**

**Discussion: The Tuesday evening meeting dates were amended as they conflict with the Planning & Zoning Commission meetings. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor.**

**13. OLD BUSINESS – none**

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C: Robillard/Fontneau, to adjourn the meeting at 10:16 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

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