

**TOWN OF SALEM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2021 – 8:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

PRESENT

Edward Chmielewski, Jr., Chairman
Carl Fontneau
Steven Shelley

ABSENT

Paul Robillard

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Chmielewski called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. ADDITIONS/MODIFICATIONS TO AGENDA – *none*

3. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

M/S/C: Shelley/Fontneau, to approve the December 21, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes, with the following amendment:

Item 12(c), Welcome Packet:

Commissioner Fontneau plans to speak with the Zoning Enforcement Officer and Town Planner in the ~~near~~ future and compile a list of names and contact information to include on the EDC webpage.

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

4. CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Copy of a resignation letter from Commissioner Robillard
Chairman Chmielewski recited a letter received by Commissioner Robillard regarding the expiration of his term and wish not to be reinstated due to family commitments. On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Chmielewski thanked Commissioner Robillard for his service to the town, Commission, and local businesses.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS – *none*

6. SALEM BUSINESS AND COVID 19 IMPACT

As the town's businesses continue to experience the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the first doses of the vaccinations have begun to be administered to the public.

a. Update from Senator Paul Formica

b. Update from State Representative Holly Cheeseman

Senator Formica and Representative Cheeseman, who were unable to join this evening's meeting, wished the Commissioners a Happy New Year and expressed their appreciation to the Commissioners for their service and continue to look forward to serving the town and supporting the town's local businesses.

c. Update from Salem First Selectman Kevin Lyden

Similarly, First Selectman Lyden, who was also unable to join the meeting, wished everyone a Happy New Year and expressed his gratitude to the Commission for their hard work and efforts.

The local businesses were thanked for their continued dedication to the community during these challenging times. Especially noted was *Two Brothers Restaurant* who has continued to support the Salem Seniors through their lunch program.

7. PUBLIC BLIGHT COMPLAINTS UPDATE

a. 1 NEW LONDON ROAD, SALEM PLAZA

Thanks to the efforts of the First Selectman, the owners have made visibly noticeable improvements to the property. Positive comments continue to be received by both the residents and business owners. The First Selectman and *Maple Shade Services, LLC*, were apprised of the issue regarding the overflowing garbage cans and the issue appears to have been resolved.

8. CT OFFICE OF TOURISM

a. EASTERN REGION TOURISM DISTRICT UPDATE

Chairman Chmielewski reported that the Board of Directors, which includes individuals from nearly every town in the region, continues to meet and work behind the scenes to help bring back tourism to Eastern Connecticut.

9. EDC BUSINESS & SERVICE DIRECTORY 2021

A packet including information regarding the Directory was received from Commissioner Robillard. Due to his resignation, Chairman Chmielewski proposed the possibility of revising their proposed timeline. Commissioner Shelley volunteered to adopt Commissioner Robillard's duties. The goal of the Directory is to showcase, identify, advertise, and support the town's local businesses. It provides an opportunity for the Commissioners to meet and network with the businesses, providing them with a pulse of the community. It also aids them in identifying any future potential businesses and help guide them with the requirements for establishing a business. Commissioner Fontneau agreed, adding that their purpose is to generate economic development in the town.

10. SENIOR-FRIENDLY / AGE-RESTRICTED HOUSING DISCUSSION

While the project has not yet broken ground, Commissioner Fontneau reported that an office has been erected on the property.

Chairman Chmielewski added that the project is the result of the town's ability to listen to the needs of the townspeople. The development is estimated to bring in \$160,000.00 to \$170,000.00 in additional tax revenue.

11. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (POCD)

Commissioner Fontneau stated that the Planning & Zoning Commission will be seeking the input of the Commission for the town's POCD, which is required by the state in order to be eligible for discretionary funding. He expressed his appreciation to Commissioner Shelley for acquiring and providing the list of businesses from the Secretary of the State. He hopes to touch base with the home occupations to identify cluster businesses and create a synergy amongst them. He also suggested the possibility of the Commission to propose potential changes to the zoning map, i.e., re-zoning the available industrial parcels to highway commercial zones, so as to invite more business developments. He plans to present a zoning map and identify possible lots at a future meeting.

He reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission set a Public Hearing date for a zoning regulation change to allow "Ghost Kitchens" for the preparation and storage of food items at the Salem Center and an application for a Special Agriculture Zone allowing for a retail farm stand.

12. SALEM BUSINESS OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

a. Electronic Survey (Commissioner Shelley)

Commissioner Shelley reported that the survey has been simplified so as to provide them with the necessary information with minimal impact on the individual's time. He plans to speak with Commissioner Robillard to discuss the survey and its relationship with the Directory.

b. In-Person Outreach (Commissioner Robillard)

Chairman Chmielewski encouraged the members to continue speaking with the town's businesses. Commissioner Fontneau agreed, stating that he has introduced himself as a member of the Commission to some of the town's businesses expressing his availability to discuss any needs or feedback they might have.

c. Welcome Packet (Commissioner Fontneau)

Commissioner Fontneau reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission stated that one of the primary complaints received by businesses or developers is the process and time it takes to process applications. Much of the process deals with the State requirements for a Public Notice and Public Hearing. He proposed including the contact information for the Assessor, Zoning Officer, and Town Planner and the high points of the permitting process on the EDC page of the town's website.

13. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Chmielewski challenged the Commissioners to think about the Commission's need for additional members with any particular skills and suggest any prospective individuals who might be interested in serving on the Commission.

The Commission's budget request for FY2021/22 will be included on their next agenda.

14. OLD BUSINESS – *none*

15. ADJOURNMENT

**M/S/C: Fontneau/Shelley, to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 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