

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING**

**Essex Town Hall – Essex, CT**

**October 9, 2019 4:00 pm**

In attendance: Brian Weinstein, Peter Decker, Betsy D’Amico, George Sexton, and Susan Malan.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by George Sexton at 4:02 pm.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion made by Peter Decker to approve the September 11 meeting minutes. Betsy D’Amico seconded the motion. All in favor.

### **INTRODUCTION**

**Visitors:** UConn Engineering students – Sean Driscoll, Makyle Hawk, Bridget Burke, Samantha Lee. Chris McDermott – Staff Reporter at CT Examiner.

**Commissioners:** No additional comment.

### **REPORT FROM EDC CONSULTANT/SUSAN MALAN**

Cait Shea on Main Street in Ivoryton is completing their build out and have an opening planned on October 6, 2019. Indoor golf center is working through their remaining approvals. 1-3 North Main Street is under contract. Construction is in-process at Siren Essex Island Marina. Safe Harbor is considering a “winter bridge” to accommodate for year-round dining. Pucks Antiquarian Books at 55 Main Street #2, is still working on their racks and build out. They hope to open in the next 14 days. A new pet grooming business is moving from Old Saybrook to 90 Pond Meadow Road, hoping to open in the next few weeks. The Centerbrook sidewalk work is scheduled for completion this month. Carlson’s Landing’s soft opening is underway. Swanky’s should be opening soon. French Tablecloth business has relocated to the Brush Factory building in Centerbrook.

### **Zoning Officer Report**

Approved Zoning Permits:

- Application No. 19-95 – New use: Prive Swiss Wellness Center, 57 Main Street, Ivoryton.
- Application No. 19-100 – New Use: Business office for JULII Luxury Brands, 6 Main St, Centerbrook.
- Application No. 19-105 – New Signage: Mobil to Gulf, 55 Main Street, Centerbrook.

Special Exception Application:

- Application No. 19-16 – Nick Sapia, 130 Dennison Road, Essex. Application to locate a new 7,000+ square foot office building on a vacant property. Hearing continued to October 21st.
- Application No. 19-18 – Scott Harger, 23 Saybrook Road, Essex. Application to locate an indoor golf center within a commercial space. To include an accessory bar, and food truck service. Hearing continued to October 21st.

Petitions for Text Amendments:

- Application No. 19-14 – Essex Zoning Commission. A text amendment to allow “Pet Grooming Facilities” as an allowed use in most commercial districts. APPROVED September 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Application No. 19-15 – Essex Zoning Commission. A text amendment to allow Cottage Food Operations as an exception to the current definition for Customary Home Occupations. Public hearing scheduled for October 21st.
- Application No. 19-21 – Essex Zoning Commission – Newly reformatted Zoning Regulations with some additions and deletions. Public hearing scheduled for November 25th.

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- Production of Essex Video:
  - o Peter Decker spoke with owners of Over and Above regarding the Essex video and they offered stock video, photos, etc. to help in the production.
- Implementation of Tactical Urban Guide for Parking and Street Changes:
  - o UConn Engineering students attended this month’s EDC meeting to discuss implementing the Tactical Urban Guide in Essex. The plan chosen is the least costly urban guide plan, where changes are made using temporary materials. The plan is for the UConn students to create an implementation strategy for the town, and also help to implement the plan. They will begin by doing one area at a time and adding a little more as time goes on creating one continuous (temporary) transformation. It was suggested to be done this way so that the public can get a feel for the changes step by step. The material they will look into using will last somewhere from one week to one month. Physical objects such as moveable planters will also be considered. With all of the changes happening in town there will be a need for more signage. Peter Decker made a good point to the students that Essex is a small New England town and to keep the signage aligned with that. George Sexton suggested that the town send out some kind of questionnaire during the process to see what the community thinks of the changes; the students will work with the town to create this. Parking at the foot of Main Street should be looked at carefully, with the new restaurant opening down there. The students will look into different types of materials to use for the implementation for walkways, sidewalks, etc. Peter Decker mentioned that there is flooding on the intersection of Ferry Street and Pratt Street, so the students will need to keep that in mind when searching for materials. An idea that this year’s students brought up was to add beautification to the town by planting flowers, trees, etc. George Sexton closed the discussion stating that the EDC would review the budget, look into who in town will order the materials needed for implementation, the timing of when implementation would be done. As of now, the implementation will be in Spring 2020. The UConn students will look into alternative costs, creating questionnaires, signage, beautification and a full implementation plan.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS –**

Peter Decker expressed to the EDC that the town should be streamlining items for new businesses. Something such as a checklist of items that new businesses should review and may

need to take action on. George Sexton suggested that the EDC get together with someone from zoning to create an upfront checklist for new businesses.

**New Business:**

None.

**Upcoming Guests and Meeting Locations**

The next meeting will be on November 13, 2019 at 4:00 pm at the Essex Town Hall.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by George Sexton to adjourn the meeting at 5:00. Brian Weinstein seconded the motion. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kate Tucker, Commission Clerk