

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING via Zoom**  
**January 13, 2021**

**Present:** Chairman Janet Peckinpaugh, Brian Weinstein, Peter Decker, Betsy D’Amico and Robert Day.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Peckinpaugh at 4:01 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion made by Brian Weinstein to approve the December 2020 minutes. Peter seconded.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Janet introduced Robert Day. He is the liaison from Planning and Zoning. He has been on the Planning committee for many years (just joined Planning and Zoning Committee). Robert introduced himself. He is a tax attorney in Old Saybrook and resides in Ivoryton.

Janet introduced Steven Babjak. He is a new member to the commission. He will need to be sworn in and will become an official member in February. Steven introduced himself. He lives in Essex Village and has been here about 2 years. Originally, he lived in San Diego and has lived in Newberryport, Massachusetts (around Cape Cod) for about 13 years. He was an executive with Gap in San Francisco and New York. He has retail in his blood and that followed suit in his career.

Janet let everyone know that Tom Nichols was supposed to be on the meeting. Something must have happened. He is also a new member and would be sworn in at the February meeting as well.

Since we have new members, Janet asked the rest of the committee to introduce themselves. Peter Decker introduced himself. He is the overseer of the Witch Hazel property. There is an investment firm, an accounting firm, an insurance practice. He has been a resident for 21 years. Brian Weinstein has been on Deer Lane in Ivoryton for 20 years. His 3 kids went through the school system in town. He is the owner of Chapco Inc. which is located in Chester. He has been on the board for about 3 years.

Betsy D’Amico has lived in town for close to 20 years. She had 2 boys go through the school system and works at Essex Town Hall in the Selectman’s office.

Janet Peckinpaugh lives in Essex Village. She has been in real estate, Sotheby’s for 6 years. Prior she was in broadcast journalism for about 30 years.

Cindy Sadlowski is the board clerk. She lives in Higganum for 32 years and works at John Winthrop Middle School in Deep River.

**Visitors:** Steven Babjak

**Commissioners:** None

**Updates:**

There is no longer an Economic Development Consultant. Susan Malan will be helping out for a bit as a volunteer but will no longer be part of the monthly meetings. There will be the silent

policeman but no parade – there will be an unveiling but due to Covid restrictions no fanfare. The Essex Go Bragh and Egg Hunt have already been cancelled for this year. If you hear of anything cancelled or still being planned, let Janet know.

### **CONSULTANT REPORT**

Janet gave the report from December.

There are potential tenants going into the Colonial Market space.

Deep River Coffee Roasters are going into Peter's building. Peter said they are working on it- keeping the coffee roasting at their old location and the new location will be a retail shop about Over and Above Productions. Peter mentioned that the company split into 2. Ralph and his daughters are staying in the complex and John V left and went back to Chester. Is the name the same? Not sure.

There are 3 almost 4 spaces in the Steam Room. When Covid restrictions are gone, will try to go to different businesses each month for meetings. This is what was done in the past. It was good to be there as you could learn something you wouldn't necessarily be aware of if you hadn't gone into the business.

The brewery is pretty close to being done. They cannot get a permit as they don't have the kitchen done. They don't want to purchase everything without having a date they can actually open. They also need to finish the bar area.

The Ivoryton Alliance raised \$6,000 with a Go Fund Me campaign for Christmas lights in town. Janet has a call out to the person, Chris but has not heard back yet. He had twins about a year ago.

Ingrid Bergman Interiors – right now looks up in the air. Steven said that he heard once Covid is over, she would be back.

Privateers Pizza and Provisions- heard to open February 1<sup>st</sup>. Many problems with parking and septic. This is in the building that Olive Oyl's was in prior. It will be a pizza place with boater provisions.

Mama's Gardens- open but does it have all the permits?

There is a person looking for retail space on Main- right now, there is nothing available.

Confectioner's still not open but they could be open Spring of 2021.

### **REPORT FROM ZONING OFFICER JOE BUDROW:**

Joe Budrow will no longer be the Zoning Enforcement Office. He has stepped down. Carrie Duques is the Land Use Official and will helping us out. Janet did not have a lot of information about this change. Robert said he has no major details, but it makes sense to combine these positions into one person. Carrie is the Economic Development person for North Branford. This may be an enhancement to Planning and Zoning which will be exciting, helpful and may make it more clear as to what our role for the town will be. Right now, we have a voice but no power in making things happen.

What about John's position? We have not heard anything about it if there will be a new person or a different role. His position may remain involved but not as involved in the planning. Peter asked if with Susan's departure we have the money that was for that position. Janet and Peter will talk about it separately.

The following applications have seen activity since the last submission to the Essex EDC:

Approved Zoning Permits:

Application No. 20-162 – 36 Plains Road – New Use: Gill Health Insurance, LLC

Application No. 20-171 – 46 Plains Road – New Use: Benchmark Builders

Application No. 20-172 – 46 Plains Road – New Use: Engineered Septic and Sewer, LLC

Application No. 20-173 – 46 Plains Road – New Use: Braley and Finnegan

Special Exception Applications:

Application No. 20-13 - An application for a Special Exception to locate a self-storage facility within an existing commercial building at 35-41 Industrial Park Road, Building No. 5/6. Public Hearing scheduled for January 11, 2021. Public hearing closed. P&Z requested updated floor plan and building elevations.

Site Plan Review Application:

Petitions for Text Amendments:

News:

Essex Marine Group established an inland marine use at a property on Industrial Park Road.

Soon will be going to Zoning Commission for a Special Exception. Was told an application was near. Still waiting.

Janet discussed a letter from Maryanne Palemba. It was about what was happening in Chester. They had sold stars – families were able to buy stars and then the stars were hung around town. These were private money. It is believed that we as a commission have the power to make these type of things happen around town when in reality, we have no power. We are not doing things on purpose; we just don't have the power. Janet is going to reach out and invite her to a meeting. Peter said we are different than most towns. We are an advisory group. He is waiting to talk with Norm about it. Maybe with Carrie coming on board, it will change.

**ACTION ITEMS:** None

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

Janet asked if anyone looked at the Plan and Conservation Development from 2005. Janet to get a copy to Robert, Steven and Tom. There are 13 items spelled out. Some things have been worked on but some she didn't agree with and some she didn't understand. Discussed split zoning- some parcels go out into the road, some septic systems are in the road. They would have to dig up the road to get to the septic system. Discussion followed on this- Architectural Review Board. The study talked about making Ivoryton a destination by developing the Piano Factory. More discussion regarding the study. Robert and Steven will look this over and this will be discussed at the next meeting.

Discussion on what we could do to help businesses survive and promote them through Covid. Robert said he may be able to get a Safe Harbor representative to talk at our next meeting. Janet said that would be great. Robert will try for next meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

**Upcoming Guests and Meeting Locations:**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, February, 10, 2021

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion was made by Peter Decker to adjourn the meeting at 4:55. Brian Weinstein seconded the motion. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Sadlowski, Commission Clerk