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Economic Development Commission, Town of Stonington
Special Meeting Minutes DRAFT
Thursday, September 22, 2016
Stonington Police Station Meeting Room, 173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck- 7:00pm

Present: Blunt White, Virginia Abernathy, Joel Valenti, Danielle Chesebrough, Suzanne Lane, Ward Smith, Pete Robinson, Dave Hammond, Rich Balestracci

Guests: Bill Smith (Interim President Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce), Tim Murray (Downtown Mystic Merchants Association), Jason Vincent (Director of Planning), John Adams and Bob and Cathy Hannon

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Meeting Called to Order: 7:15 PM

Motion: Blunt White **Second**: Suzanne Lane **All in favor**

Approval of Prior Minutes of July 28 EDC Meeting

Motion: Blunt White **Second**: Danielle Cheesbrough **All in favor**

New Business:

Airbnb and VRBO, Short Term Rental activity:

EDC became aware of this issue after attending a Department of Planning zoning regulation rewrite outreach meeting held on September 8th at the LaGrua Center. Stonington has issued three Notice of Violations (Bob Hannon, 17 Washington Street, Mystic 9/18/2015; John Adams, 7 Oak Drive, Stonington 9/28/2016; William Bradford, 19 East Forest Road, Mystic, 1/29/2016). An actual count of properties listed as available on VRBO showed 39 in Stonington (does not include the Borough where an additional 16 we available, a total of 55). Clearly an issue is developing that needs to addressed.

Comments from the Public:

John Adams spoke first in favor of Airbnb rentals. He has been a long time resident of Stonington. He discovered Airbnb by using it himself and enjoyed the experience so much that he decided to sign up an extra room in his home for rental using Airbnb. As a landlord through Airbnb, he underwent an Airbnb background check to ensure that his advertisement was legal and property was safe for Airbnb users. His advertisement on Airbnb includes house rules and pictures making clear what is available. He said there was adequate off street parking and that he vetted his renters using the host's review system where renters are reviewed by prior hosts. Similarly, those who rent on Airbnb are also reviewed. Adams enjoyed the experience of bringing visitors to Stonington and having them explore our community. Adams described the expenses of short term renting (he performed all the chambermaid duties). Revenue exceeded expense but it's not a recipe to get rich, it's a recipe to help defray the high ownership costs of property taxes and mortgage payments.

Bob Hannon and his wife Cathy spoke next, like Adams they operate as an owner occupied Airbnb. Hannon was always on premise and also personally interacted with his guests. He has a small cottage in the back of his home. He talked about an International family that rented and the great experience they

had in our community and that they would surely return. Hannon felt that Airbnb is a more personal visit for some travelers and as a result that they were more likely to return. He also felt that Airbnb helped fill a void of affordable short rentals by renting to seasonal workers and helped local businesses by bringing in a set of visitors that might not have visited had it not been for this type of rental. He mentioned that he had picked people up from the train station and because of his close proximity to downtown Mystic, his guests were able to explore the town on foot. Hannon said his tenants were quiet and well behaved. If they not behaved to his standards Hannon would have required them to leave immediately.

EDC member Joel Valenti described his experience with Airbnb. Recently he rented rooms in Amsterdam and Sweden using Airbnb and felt that his travel experience was hampered a bit and would rather have used a hotel where he could come and go without the perceived obligation of interacting with a host.

In June 2016 Airbnb signed an agreement with CT to collect the 15% hotel tax which is included in the rental amount collected by Airbnb (remitted to CT by Airbnb). Airbnb also annually issues IRS 1099 forms to property owners, that income/revenue must be shown on their tax returns.

Jason Vincent spoke as a representative of the Town's Planning Department to shed light on the Notice of Violations issued and what is being done by other towns to address growing Short Term Rental activity (rentals for less than 30 days). He started by explaining the main principles of Commercial and Residential zones and public expectations for those zones. He explained the zoning restraints of residential zones (the expectation of neighbors) and that Short Term Rentals are not listed as an Allowed or Special Permit Use in residential zones (therefore they are illegal in Stonington). In residential zones Short Term Rentals are only allowed in Bed and Breakfasts. Vincent then described Stonington's definition of a B&B and that it required a Special Use Permit (a high bar). In commercial zones Short Term Rentals are only allowed in hotels, motels and Tourist Homes. Tourist Homes are defined as *"A dwelling unit in which sleeping accommodations for more than two (2) but less than five (5) bedrooms are rented out for transient [less than 30 days] occupancy."* There are no Tourist Homes in any of Stonington's residential zones (only in commercial zones).

Jason clarified that a person is allowed to rent out a room in their home or their entire home for more than 30 days because the transaction is not considered a commercial transaction and the renter is not considered transient. Less than 30 days is considered a commercial business activity and is not allowed under Residential zoning regulations outside of Bed and Breakfasts. An application for a zoning text amendment could be submitted to PZC for Short Term Rentals or relaxed B&B uses.

Jason also explained that Short Term Rentals, Airbnb and VRBO hosts will be given Notices of Violations on a complaint driven process and that his department does not anticipate the need to escalate to Cease and Desists Orders which have a fine of $150 per day. Both Hannon and Adams stopped Short Term Rentals upon receipt of the NOV.

Bill Smith (Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce) noted the services provided by Arbnb and VRBO are in high demand, therefore they are meeting a market need.

A well written letter in opposition to Short Term Rentals from Masons Island property owner John Pryor, dated September 19, 2016, is attached. EDC forwarded copies of the letter to the Planning Department and First Selectman.

Motion to add Airbnb, Short Term Rentals to our list of initiatives

Motion: Blunt White **Second**: Rich Balestracci **All in favor**

EDC members Joel Valenti and Virginia Abernathy volunteered to research the revenue and tax implications and the impact on our community and any surrounding areas that allow this activity. The economic impact could be a driver for change and acceptance for Airbnb in our community. EDC would provide assistance to anyone that applies for a zoning text amendment to Stonington's zoning regulations that would allow Short Term Rentals (EDC is prohibited from being an applicant).

Zoning Rewrite – Possible Regulation Changes:

EDC discussed holding a business community outreach meeting (similar to the Planning Department Meeting that took place on September 8th at the Lagrua Center) in conjunction with the Chambers to focus on what businesses are looking for in zoning regulation changes. EDC would like to get Business feedback so that ideas could be presented to PZC. Bill Smith, Interim President of the Greater Mystic Chamber, volunteered the Chamber to host a meeting (Zoning After Hours) in late October or early November. Jason Vincent agreed to help run the meeting by discussing the framework of work currently being done on changing the Zoning regulations; the vision for the change in zoning regulations; and share any concerns that have driven the current wave for better zoning regulations. Four EDC members volunteered to assist with the outreach meeting: Rich Balestracci, Danielle Cheesebrough, Pete Robinson, and Dave Hammond. This Subcommittee will work with Bill Smith and Jason Vincent

Motion to Hold Business Community Outreach

Motion: Blunt White **Second:** Danielle Cheesebrough **All in Favor**

Old Business:

Velvet Mill – business and community outreach – progress report:

On July 25th EDC members Kevin Bowdler (EDC Velvet Mill task leader and Borough representative on EDC), Blunt White and Danielle Cheesebrough had a follow up meeting with members of the East of Elm Street Neighborhood Advisory Council at the Velvet Mill (see attached meeting notes).

The Velvet Mill manager Eric Pivco reported that owner has agreed to restripe the parking lot to clearly identify parking. He has also decided to install an awning and sign over the back entrance to encourage people to use the rear entrance. Pivco has distributed new rules titled "Velvet Mill Tenant Guidelines" (attached) to his tenants in order to gain uniform conformity pertaining to Velvet Mill rules for example, any event with expected attendance over 150 people will require a parking attendant (paid by the tenant). The weekly Farmers Market traffic is still being assessed and continues to be a concern. Bowdler sent a letter (September 6th) to East of Elm detailing recent efforts (attached).

Fisheries – business outreach (Gambardella Wholesale Fish Dealers and SNEFLA) progress report:

EDC members Ward Smith (EDC Fisheries Task Leader), Kevin Bowder (Borough EDC representative on EDC), Blunt White and Danielle Chesebrough conducted business outreach meetings on 5 occasions from late May through September with both Stonington's commercial fishing fleet and representatives of our legislative leaders. Their efforts were discussed. See meeting notes in the attached memo dated 9/21/2016.

Communications: FOI Special Meetings:

EDC Chair Blunt White received an email from Climate Committee Chair Rick Newton that EDC was possibly holding illegal meetings, and if so that practice should be corrected. White meet with Town FOI officer Cindy Ladwig to address the concern. Going forward when EDC members have outreach meetings at which more than 1 EDC member is present then it is subject to FOI and considered a Special Meeting. Special Meetings require an Agenda be posted at Town Hall with a minimum 24 hour notice and meeting minutes must be recorded. White previously understood the trigger for FOI was a quorum (5 EDC members).

EDC Program Activity Matrix – Business Segment outreach – progress reports:

Dave Hammond (EDC POCD Implementation Task Leader) reported that the next POCD Implementation Committee meeting is October 3, 2016. Hammond will be updating the Activity Matrix status.

Hammond reported that Juliet Hodge of SeCTer is working on rewriting the regions Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (updated every five years). Steven Mackenzie who was the Executive Director stepped down and Sean Nugent is the Interim Executive Director and a new Executive Director should be hired in the next six months.

Downtown Pawcatuck:

Blunt White reported that several significant transactions had occurred, the former Day Building (29 West Broad) sold on August 5 for $225,000 (purchased by Jim Lathrop, Best Energy) and on August 23 the former Higgins Building (37 West Broad) sold for $425,000 (purchased by dentist Mike Capalbo). Additionally the business assets of McGill Auto Dealers were purchased by the Valenti Dealership and the real estate has been leased to Valenti. A new Valenti Used Car Dealership will be located at the site. The issue of lack of cable/Broadband access on the north side of West Broad Street has been brought to the attention of BOS by Lathrop and Capalbo. EDC will do what it can to assist.

Motion to adjourn meeting: 9:41 PM

Motion: Blunt White **Second**: Danielle Cheesebrough All in favor

Attachments – Letter from John Pryor to EDC dated 9/19/2016. One pdf data file containing the following:

1). Report of Activities by Ward Smith 9/22/2016.

2). Memo from Blunt White 9/21/2016, Report of Activities.

3). Letter from First Selectman Rob Simmons 8/15/2016

4). Letter from First Selectman Rob Simmons 8/30/2016

5). Velvet Mill Business Outreach Report by Kevin Bowdler 9/16/2016.

6). Meeting notes and Agenda from Special Meeting held on September 15, 2016. Attending Blunt White and David Hammond (no quorum).

Report of Activities – by Ward Smith, Task Leader
Economic Development Commission
Business Clusters: Commercial Fishing, Agriculture/Aquaculture
September 22, 2016

Commercial Fishing

Efforts continued to assist the beleaguered Stonington commercial fishing industry. New federal quotas have severely limited the catch size for some fish species thereby reducing the incomes of the fishermen and their primary wholesaler, Gambardella Wholesale owned by Mike Gambardella. In an effort to alleviate the situation, appeals have been made to elected government officials and representatives of the regulatory agencies that have local jurisdiction. For example, Gambardella arranged a local meeting with CT State Representative Craig A. Miner (one of three CT members on the Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission) to discuss fishing issues (see report by Blunt White for details).

While these long-term efforts were underway, other short term approaches were deemed necessary in an effort to maintain the daily operations.

One such approach was to see if it was feasible to increase the number of vessel landings at Stonington dock by inviting vessels from other ports to deliver their catch to Stonington. This idea, first suggested by First Selectman Simmons, was to offer incentives, such as reduced landing fees, discounts on gas, etc. thus increasing the volume of fish passing through Gambardella's wholesaler's operation. WS arranged a meeting with Bob Guzzo, Mike Gambardella, and other EDC members to discuss these issues. After some discussion, this idea was shelved due to Mike's concern about the resentment of the Stonington fishermen who would have to observe these vessels landing their catches at the Stonington docks.

Another approach was to publicize the plight of the fishermen to the general public thereby garnering public opinion. WS invited Judy Benson from The Day to interview fishermen at the town dock. Judy subsequently wrote an extensive article detailing the status of the Stonington fleet and the problems they were experiencing as a result of quota reductions (Further Cut in fluke quota puts Stonington fishermen, wholesaler in peril, August 28, 2016).

On August 28, EDC members WS, Blunt White and Kevin Bowdler met with Tom Williams (Stonington commercial fishing captain), Chuck Fellows (Stonington commercial fishing captain) and John Haran (manager of Northeast Fishery Sector 13) to discuss local fisheries issues. The imminent/pending designation of an Atlantic Ocean Marine Monument on Georges Bank, endorsed by the CT Delegation, was discussed.

After discussion, input was provided to First Selectman Rob Simmons who drafted a letter with specific talking points to be hand delivered to Senator Blumenthal outlining the concerns of Stonington's fishermen. John Haran had suggestions for promoting local fishing involving increased publicity to consumers about where their seafood comes from and put WS into contact with Jen Levin at Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI). She has a list of resources available if needed.

WS attended a presentation by Senator Blumenthal at the Mystic Aquarium on August 30 on the proposed marine monument on Georges Bank. The letter from Selectman Simmons was hand delivered to Senator Blumenthal at the event.

WS met with Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce President Bill Smith (no relation) in early September to discuss ways the Chamber might support Commercial fishing in Stonington. Most approaches the Chamber would take would involve re-evaluation of the sales model used by Gambardella to see if any more efficiencies could be squeezed out. Other approaches such as public promotion of the local fishing industry were discussed. The increase in demand might help bring public pressure to bear on elected officials to get them to move faster on changing the quota system. Another idea floated was "branding" a product similar to what the Bomsters have done with scallops. These approaches could allow Gambardella to raise prices and improve margins. These ideas were presented but Gambardella was not overly enthusiastic about them. Bill brought up the idea of a local fish market where fishermen can bring their catch to be sold on a daily basis (this could possibly be combined with a farmer's market). He was also willing to post links on the Chamber Website to any news articles or other information about the Stonington fleet.

WS suggested to Mike Gambardella to export dogfish since it is not restricted and is popular in Europe and Great Britain (fish and chips) where it is called Rock Salmon. According to SNEFLA, Bob Guzzo, there is currently no limit on the dogfish catch. However, Gambardella said that there are a lot of exporters and so it would not be profitable.

A letter to the editor by WS was published in The Day (Local fishing industry facing great stress, September 17, 2016).

Planning:

- Follow up with Jen Levin at GMRI for ways to promote local seafood consumption.
- Evaluate success of efforts to support local fishing industry to date and determine next step(s).

Aquaculture

The Shellfish Commission held a Special Meeting on September 8, 2016. Items of interest to the EDC included a pre-application by the Thimble Island Oyster Company (New Haven) to install a kelp farm just south of Gates Island in Fishers Island Sound near Masons Island. EDC received an electronic copy. The location of the proposed kelp farm would be in State waters and may present a hazard to navigation. This was also the opinion of Don Murphy, the Chairman of the Shellfish Commission. The application is very preliminary and it is unlikely that it will be approved by the proposed October 1, 2016 start date. Several local oyster bed areas are being restocked. Clams are in abundance. Areas of the Mystic River are being considered for additional beds. There are groups coming that may want to do aquaculture. There is a new GIS system available that can locate shellfish beds. This system is an Aquaculture Mapping Atlas available on the UConn website, and is an effort of the Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR) and the CT Bureau of Aquaculture. It will be useful for mapping the shellfish beds in town waters.

Planning:

- Monitor for potential new shellfish businesses.
- Utilize the Aquaculture Mapping Atlas to map the shellfish beds in the town waters and determine which might be brought under town control.
- Work with Planning Director to locate and characterize other potential bottom areas for seafood production and determine how they might be transferred to the town.

Agriculture

Maps of PA-490 properties (taxed as Farm/Forest Land), agricultural parcels, and open space as well as a list of property owners were provided by Mr. Keith Brynes, Town Planner. A listing of Town owned vacant land was provided by Mr. Ben Baldwin. These lists and maps are being used to inventory farmland in the town of Stonington and will help to set the stage for economic evaluation of farming operations and future land preservation efforts.

WS spoke with Elizabeth Moore of the Connecticut Farmland Trust about ways of preserving Stonington farmland. She forwarded guidance documentation on Conservation Options for Connecticut Farmland and Planning for Agriculture, a guide for Connecticut Municipalities. The organization is currently active in Stonington, and is in the process of negotiating a protection program with a farmer on Cove Rd. She suggested meeting with EDC, Conservation Commission, and Avalonia land trust to develop a strategy for preserving farmland.

WS attended a meeting of the Conservation Commission (CC) on August 22. POCD items common to the CC and EDC (Ag cluster) were discussed (1). CC member Ben Baldwin stated that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has an online source whereby the soils important to the town can be determined. Stanton Simms, chairman of the CC is also president of the Stonington Land Trust, which is working to preserve the Davis farm.

WS met with Josh Welch, owner of the Bridge restaurant in Westerly and owner of a grass-fed beef farm on Al Harvey Rd in Stonington. Josh is interested in farmland preservation issues and is familiar with the Community Farms Preservation Program. This may be the most appropriate program for Stonington farmers as the focus is on small farms and can support farms with less than prime soil quality.

Planning:

- Evaluate Heritage Farm floating zone model for farmland utilization
- Set meeting date for farmers to discuss their needs
- Evaluate list of farmlands for preservation
- Compile list of available Town land for use by farmers
- Find out more about the Community Farms Preservation program

References:

1. POCD task # 4.2.3 – Identify Important farmland and shell fishing areas and help determine ways to keep it in agriculture. # 4.2.4 – Identify Town owned parcels suitable for agriculture and recommend the town lease it to local farmers

MEMO

TO: EDC
DATE: 9/21/2016
FROM: Blunt White, Chairman, Stonington EDC
SUBJECT: Report of activities by various EDC members in support of Ward Smith, EDC Task Leader - Business Segment, Commercial Fishing.

This memo covers activities of certain EDC members over the months of May, July and August 2016 concerning EDC's response to the news that Stonington's fishing fleet was in stress over the possible closure of Gambardella Wholesale, the sole fish wholesaler in Stonington.

5/26/2016, Town Dock – EDC members Blunt White and Danielle Chesebrough attended a meeting organized by Bob Guzzo, the Vice President of the Southern New England Fisherman's and Lobsterman's Association (SNEFLA) and Mike Gambardella, owner of Gambardella Wholesale. Also attending were First Selectman Rob Simmons, State Representative Diana Urban, Director State of CT Natural Resources Marine Fisheries Division David Simpson and outreach officers from Senator Blumenthal and Senator Murphy's CT offices (Ellen Graham and Max Goldman respectively). Discussed were concerns of Stonington's fleet: effects of quota reductions, climate change causing movement of fisheries biomass out of regulatory regions, Federal and State regulations and biomass measurement schemes. Stonington's only wholesaler (Gambardella) is on the verge of closure due to YTD financial losses resulting from volume reductions.

7/12/2016, Town Dock – EDC members Ward Smith, Blunt White and Kevin Bowdler organized a meeting with Mike Gambardella and Bob Guzzo (SNEFLA) to follow up the 5/26/2016 meeting. See email below from EDC dated 7/13/2016 to First Selectman Rob Simmons summarizing meeting:

Hello Rob - on 7/12/2016 (yesterday) EDC members Kevin Bowdler, Ward Smith and Blunt White met with Bob Guzzo (SNEFLA) and Mike Gambardella (owner Gambardella Wholesale) to follow up the last meeting of May 26.

The month of June had good volumes for Gambardella Wholesale resulting from squid landings. The squid have moved on, volume/revenue is down again. Year to date, Gambardella Wholesale is operating at a loss and the risk to the Town of their discontinued operations remains. Business volume is being crushed by the quota reduction of 30% in Summer Flounder Sea Bass landings. SNEFLA recently provided relief on fixed costs with a rent reduction for 6 months from $3,150 to $1,500.

Going forward, Mike Gambardella is again reaching out Senator Blumenthal's and Murphy's offices to follow up their staff's site visit of May 26 and previous personal visits this spring.

SNEFLA's and EDC's recommendation, and where your involvement is needed, is for you to request the immediate involvement of CT's Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission members. Link to ASMFC Commission members below, the attached file has their contact information along with contact information for the Advisory Panel (same members) plus Technical Committee.

http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/commissioners

CT Commission members are David Simpson (DEEP representative), State Representative Craig Miner (the Legislator member) and Dr. Lance Stewart (the Governors appointee). SNEFLA has a long (over 10 years) and professional relationship with Commissioner David Simpson. Significantly Simpson is retiring in September, a key issue is his replacement. SNEFLA and EDC recommend that you request Miner and Stewart make a site visit to become familiar with the urgency of Stonington's problem. If Stonington loses its wholesaler (Gambardella) then we are a big step closer to following Newport (no more commercial fishing fleet).

ASMFC's website indicates it has meetings in early August (link below), tentative agendas are up. There is no agenda item discussing the mismatch of the 30% quota reduction in commercial Summer Flounder Sea Bass landings with the overabundance in our area of these species (significant amounts of bye-catch thrown back dead).

http://www.asmfc.org/home/2016-summer-meeting

A request form Stonington's First Selectman to CT Commissioners Miner and Stewart requesting a site visit in advance of the August ASMFC meeting, for them to hear firsthand of the issues, and a commitment from them to bring the concerns of Stonington's fishing fleet's to the ASMFC meeting is needed.

Please call me when you have few minutes to discuss these recommendations.

Thank you,
Stonington EDC
Blunt White

7/28/2016, Town Dock – EDC members Ward Smith, Blunt White, Kevin Bowdler and Danielle Chesebrough attended a meeting organized by Mike Gambardella and Bob Guzzo (SNEFLA). Also in attendance was CT State Representative Craig A. Miner. Discussed issues and upcoming August ASMFC meeting. This was Representative Miner's first visit to meet Stonington's fishing fleet.

8/12/2016, Town Hall office of First Selectman Rob Simmons. EDC members Ward Smith, Blunt White and Danielle Chesebrough organized a meeting with Rob Simmons to discuss fishery issues.

8/26/2016, WHITE PAPER – Stonington Commercial Fisheries Key Issues – prepared by Blunt White

1). The "math" of the latest Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass quota landing reductions – For Summer Flounder a reduction of 48.9% over a 2 year period.

Commercial Quotas Set by Mid Atlantic Fisheries Management Council						
	Summer Flounder		Scup		Black Sea Bass	
2015	11.07	NA	21.23	NA	2.24	NA
2016	8.12	-26.6%	20.47	-3.6%	2.24	0.0%
2017	5.66	-30.3%	18.38	-10.2%	2.24	0.0%
Total (1)	-5.41	-48.9%	-2.85	-13.4%	0	0.0%
(1) Total 2015 to 2017 - change in quota, millions of pounds and %.						

2). Getting fish from boats to markets – wholesalers add value in the delivery chain. Reductions in business volume of 49% over 2 years would crush any business. Stonington has had a fish wholesaler on the dock as far back as its fishing fleet has been in existence. Today that wholesaler is Gambardella Wholesale. The participation of wholesalers facilitates a traditional and predictable pricing and delivery mechanism.

3). "Government sampling methods" used to determine quotas – The principal biomass sampling methodology is by Government research vessels staffed by officials and scientists. Absent are commercial fisherman. Research vessels (1) Sample infrequently (several times a year) and are operated by scientists with weak fishing skills. (2) Government fishing gear is used infrequently and can be deployed poorly (due to infrequently used fishing skills). (3) Furthermore not being commercial fisherman, Government officials lack the knowledge of where to find the fish biomass to sample, consider that fish are not in same place every year. These flawed sampling methods are then used to develop quotas that are crushing Stonington's wholesaler and Stonington's commercial fleet. The Government quota determination process is cumbersome (lengthy) with decisions based on data frequently over 1 year old. The determination process does not allow timely responses to changes in data. A strong argument can be made that commercial fishing interests should become a part of the sampling methodology.

4). Actual abundance of Flounder now runs counter to "Government sampling" – It's not just Stonington fisherman that are reporting substantial and rapidly increasing Flounder populations close to New England. The increase reflects that the biomass has been moving, Government sampling methods have not kept up. Abundance is not reflected in the 2016 and 2017, quota reductions totaling 48.9% over 2 years.

5). CT's Commercial Fishing interests have little to no representation on the Councils, Commissions and Panels that determine management practices (quota schemes and quota amounts). This is not a new problem.

The waters where CT and RI boats are currently fishing is 10 to 150 miles south of Montauk Point NY. A key issue is that these waters are managed by the Mid Atlantic Fisheries Management Council MAFMC, not the New England Fisheries Management Council NEFMC. New England fisherman have no seat on the Mid Atlantic Council and therefore have no voice. Recently the NEFMC sent a letter to both NOAA/US Secretary of Commerce and the MAFMC requesting joint management of flounder, scup and black sea bass, discussions have commenced, a positive.

The Mid-Atlantic Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils (covering east and west coasts) created when Congress passed Public Law 94-265, the Magnuson Fishery Conservation And Management Act of 1976 (also known as Magnuson-Stevens Act, or MSA). The law created a system of regional fisheries management that was designed to allow regional, participatory governance by knowledgeable people with a stake in fishery management.

The Mid Atlantic Council is made up of 21 voting members and 4 non-voting members; 8 of the voting members represent the constituent states' fish and wildlife agencies, and 13 are private citizens appointed by the Governor who are knowledgeable about recreational fishing, commercial fishing, or marine conservation (confirmed by NOAA/US Secretary of Commerce). The 4 non-voting members are the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Coast Guard. An argument can be made that the voice of commercial fishing interests on this body is not as strong as it should be.

http://www.mafmc.org/about/

http://www.mafmc.org/members/

August 15 Mid Atlantic Council press release with chart of 2017 Flounder quota reductions:

http://www.mafmc.org/newsfeed/2016/mafmc-and-asmfc-review-demersal-specifications

6). New England Fisheries Management Council. This Council is made up of 18 voting members and 4 non-voting members; 6 of the voting members represent the constituent state's fish and wildlife agencies, and 12 are private citizens appointed by the Governor who are knowledgeable about recreational fishing, commercial fishing or marine conservation (confirmed by NOAA/US Secretary of Commerce). The 4 non-voting members are the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

The one CT appointee on the NEFMC Council is Dr. Matthew Mackenzie, (Governor's appointee) a Scientist from UCONN (lives in Mystic CT). An argument can be made that the voice of commercial fishing interests on NEFMC is not as strong as it should be.

http://www.nefmc.org/about/council-members

7). Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is a non-voting member on the Atlantic Councils. The ASMFC Commission represents 15 member states with 3 commissioners from each state, a total of 45 commissioners. CT's Commissioners consists of a member from DEEP (David A. Simpson), a Legislator (Representative Craig A. Miner) and a Governor's Appointee, Dr. Lance Stewart, a scientist from UCONN.

http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/commissioners

8). Practical problems with the Government's commercial licensing scheme which sets quotas by State and by species. Substantial amounts of fish are now being caught in waters close to Stonington, between 10 and 150 miles south of Montauk Point, NY. This biomass is harvested by boats from as far south at North Carolina and as far north as Maine. Outdated licensing schemes only allow boats to land their catch in the State's from which their licenses are issued. In effect, boats full of fresh fish are forced to spend extra days at sea carrying their catch back to their home states! Government rules require that if a NC boat were to land its catch in CT, that catch would be confiscated (no revenue), furthermore it would still count against CT's tonnage quota!

The term for this problem is "Landings Flexibility." The Councils are considering a plan amendment which may address this issue. If Landings Flexibility is successfully addressed it will highlight another problem with quota scheme, the gross inequity that allow boats with NC licenses to land 20,000 pounds in Stonington while boats with CT licenses, homeported in Stonington can only land 500 or 1,000 pounds.

9). Government quota schemes established in the 1970's determine the amount of each State's share of the species quota. Currently fish are abundant just off CT's shores, but NC licensed boats enjoy 10 times the tonnage quota of CT licensed boats (because at one time certain species were plentiful close to NC shores). Economics would favor the NC boats landing in CT (less fuel cost and fresher, higher value fish). If boats from NC could land in CT, then Gambardella Wholesale would have the volume necessary to continue to be successful. If fishing interests were fairly represented on the Councils and Commissions then citizens/consumers would see real world solutions to managing the fishery biomass. All vessels (CT, RI and NC) would have equal shares of the biomass.

10) New curtailments, Elected officials are now contemplating, by Presidential order, the creation of an undersea Marine Park off New England that would further curtail the amount of fish that CT and New England fishery interests rely on for their livelihood. These officials seem to forget that voters/consumers prefer fresh fish caught by US fisherman. Consider that even now substantial numbers of fresh fish are imported from Canada to the detriment of US fishing interests. Sadly substantial amounts of low priced, frozen fish are imported from China.

http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-new-england-coral-canyons-20160804-story.html

Over 95% of the fish eaten by US consumers is imported

11). Unintended consequences of a regulatory scheme based on state by state annual landing limits, quotas. Consider the mechanics as fishermen within states implement how they will meet quotas over that 1 year period. Do they agree to smooth individual landings out over 12 months or is it every man for himself? Traditionally fleets (within each state) work together to smooth landings over the 12 month period. They also work together to assure that by the end of the year 100% of the entire state quota is filled.

The mechanics meeting the quota can result in excessive waste with edible fish returned, dying, to the sea. Consider larger flounder are worth more. Currently flounder are so abundant, including the large high value ones, that the larger ones are targeted/retained (used to meet the quota). Thousands of lesser ones are returned (dying) so quotas can be filled with large, high value flounder (economics 101). As fisherman seek to maximize quota with additional trawls, discards of non-targeted species increase. An argument can be made that regulatory schemes based on annual landing quotas results in valuable protein being wasted.

A contrasting regulatory scheme is "days at sea" (scallop fisherman are regulated by days at sea). In Stonington several vessels worth close to a million dollars each can economically sit idle for 300 days a year because on the other 60 days they can keep all the scallops they catch. The regulatory scheme has

a much softer and less costly touch, the number of days they spend at sea (remote electronic monitoring).

8/28/2016, Noah's Restaurant. EDC members Ward Smith, Blunt White, Kevin Bowdler and Danielle Chesebrough organized a meeting with Stonington fishing fleet captains Tom Williams, Chuck Fellows and commercial fishing sector 13 manager John Haran. Discussed fishery issues, shared information, agreed to forward Stonington fleet's recommendation concerning George's Bank monument designation to Rob Simmons for his possible action.

TOWN OF STONINGTON

SELECTMAN'S OFFICE
ROB SIMMONS
FIRST SELECTMAN

152 Elm Street • Stonington, Connecticut 06378
(860) 535-5050 • Fax (860) 535-1046
rsimmons@stonington-ct.gov

August 15, 2016

The Honorable Craig A. Miner
State House of Representatives
Legislative Office Building, Room 4200
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Commercial Fishing in the Port of Stonington

Dear Representative Miner:

Thank you for visiting Stonington on July 28th to hear the urgent concerns of our commercial fishing industry. The curtailment by 30% of Summer Flounder and Sea Bass landings for 2016 is crushing the business operations of Stonington's only fish wholesaler and is hurting our local fin fishermen.

Commercial fishing has long been a part for Stonington's heritage and we want the industry to continue. Since I was a boy growing up in Stonington, the fishing boats, off loading of fresh fish, the Blessing of the Fleet, the Portuguese families and the funerals for those who have died at sea have been an integral part of our history and culture. The Town continued this with the purchase of the Town Dock in the 1960' s and this office is committed 100% to continuing this tradition. But the Federal and State regulation and regulatory structures are exceedingly complex and, some would say, adverse to our fishing families. So your guidance and support are needed if Stonington is to continue as a commercial fishing port.

From our perspective we see three key issues:

1. Stonington's fleet has a long and good relationship with local DEEP Natural Resources Director David Simpson. We are told that David is

retiring from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission [ASMFC] in September. We are concerned that his replacement be someone who could increase the voice of our commercial fisherman. Perhaps this is an area where you can assist. Do you play an advisory role is this matter? Do you know who is being considered?

2. Quota reductions on the scale of 30% have profound effects on our fin fishermen. Reductions of this scale in private sector companies could drive them into bankruptcy. Consider the effect of losing 30% of volume or top line revenue. Normally a reduction in supply would result in a price increase and an opportunity for some revenue but supplies are being met by imports such as Chinese flounder! Going forward ASMFC should not change quotas by more than 10% at any one time. And we should give careful consideration to whether the substitution of foreign fish is a healthy development for our people and the seafood restaurants that provide substantial revenue to our coastal towns in Connecticut.
3. We would like Commissioner Dr. Lance Stewart to hear our concerns. I have been unable to reach him at the University of Connecticut number on the webpage and we wondered if your office could provide contact information.

As one of Connecticut's three ASMFC Commissioners you have substantial regulatory knowledge and a voice. Your ideas on how Stonington can assist its fishing fleet are critically important at this time. We hope you will consider coming to Stonington again and, perhaps, bringing your Ongoing Proxy, Representative Melissa Ziobron.

We look forward to your responses to this letter.

All the best,

Robert R. "Rob" Simmons
Stonington First Selectman

Great to have you here Craig. Thanks so much!!

c/c: Stonington Economic Development Commission
Representative Diana Urban
Representative Melissa Ziobron
Mike Gamberdella
SNEFLA

TOWN OF STONINGTON

SELECTMAN'S OFFICE
ROB SIMMONS,
FIRST SELECTMAN

152 Elm Street • Stonington, Connecticut 06378
(860) 535-5050 • Fax (860) 535-1046
rsimmons@stonington-ct.gov

August 30, 2016

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
State of Connecticut
90 State House Square, tenth floor
Hartford, CT 06103

Re: National Monument Designation, New England Coral Canyons and Seamounts.

Dear Senator Blumenthal: Dear Rich:

Thank you for your recent visits to Stonington to hear from our fishermen about the critical issues they are facing in their industry. Your concern and that of Representative Courtney are much appreciated.

As you know, commercial fishing has long been a part of Stonington's heritage. For as long as I can remember Stonington's fishing fleet has been active with daily shipments of fresh fish enjoyed by our families and restaurants serving our robust tourist industry.

However, just this week the Stonington fisherman voiced serious concerns to me regarding the Connecticut Congressional Delegation's position in support of an Executive Order designating portions of George's Bank as a national monument, as detailed in its letter to the President dated August 2, 2016.

Of highest concern is that the Connecticut Delegation did not provide our fishing families with an opportunity to explain how a National Monument designation might impact their livelihoods. For example, I have just received a chart from one of our local fishing vessels, reproduced from a navigational aid, showing how

they frequently traverse the proposed Coral Canyon area. This vessel is just one of many trawlers working on Georges Bank. Will they be able to fish there in the future? We do not know.

On another point, our fishermen will tell you that they do NOT trawl the steep canyons because it would destroy their gear. So their activity does NOT damage the corals. But, sadly, the delegation letter does not reflect even the smallest concern for their future and the fact that a poorly drafted Executive Order may ban them from an area that has been fished productively and carefully for generations.

Also of concern is the fact that the delegation is calling for an Executive Order to create the monument which, by a stroke of the pen, removes most if not all opportunity for an educated discussion about the details of the proposal. It also eliminates informed input from different points of view.

We believe that the best approach was expressed by the Governor of Massachusetts in his letter to the President opposing the monument designation by Executive Order. He called attention to established government processes and practices that assure protection of the marine environment on Georges Bank through the work of the National Ocean Policy of 2010, the Northeast Regional Planning Body and New England Fishery Management Council. All of these entities are effectively bypassed by a Presidential Executive Order. We believe this is simply wrong.

On the basis of these considerations we would respectfully ask that you and the delegation reconsider your letter and promote a more conventional method of pursuing the monument designation that takes into account the potential adverse impacts on our fishing industry. Thank you for considering this matter.

All the best,

Robert R. "Rob" Simmons
First Selectman, Town of Stonington

I regret I cannot be at the aquarium to point release of other Town business.

Economic Development Commission

TOWN OF STONINGTON
152 Elm Street
Stonington, CT 06378
bluntwhite@stonington-ct.gov

Velvet Mill Business Outreach Report

September 16, 2016

The following documents provide an update on various discussions held between July and September 2016 with regards to issues raised by the neighborhood community that surrounds the Velvet Mill.

On July 25th 2016, a meeting was held at the Velvet Mill with neighbors and the following members of the EDC; Blunt White, Danielle Chesebrough, and Kevin Bowdler. The minutes from this discussion are attached.

On September 6th 2016, Blunt White and Kevin Bowdler had a meeting with David Atkinson, the Stonington Borough Zoning Enforcement Officer. This was a discussion to understand the zoning issues raised in the meeting of 7/25/16. An overview of this meeting is included in the attached letter to the East of Elm Neighborhood Advisory Council dated September 6th, 2016. This letter was cc'd to David Atkinson and Eric Pivco the manager of the Velvet Mill.

The next letter, also addressed to the East of Elm Neighborhood Advisory Council addresses non-zoning related issues raised in the meeting of 7/25/16. This letter is dated September 8th, 2016.

The final document is a copy of the Velvet Mill's 'Tenant Guideline' document that has been recently updated by Mill Management and will be distributed to new tenants as well as existing tenants.

Respectfully Submitted

Kevin Bowdler

Economic Development Commission, Town of Stonington
DRAFT notes from Neighbor Meeting July 25, 2016

EDC members present – Blunt White, Kevin Bowdler, Danielle Chesebrough.
Neighbors present – Robert Sundman, Jim Ceil, Debbie Ceil, Jeff Ball, Rory Contin, John Malmros, Rebekah Kepple, Carol Martin, Tom Frohnapfel, Muireann O'Callaghan

Meeting convened at 5:30 pm, adjourned at 7:00

Location/Date
July 25th 2016
5:30-7:00pm
The Velvet Mill

Hosted by:
Stonington Economic Development Commission and Representatives from East of Elm

Meeting Agenda – Follow up meeting to discuss changes agreed with Velvet Mill management after the community meeting that was held on June 27, 2016.

The neighbors requested a list of attendees to the June 27th meeting. See Appendix 1.

Traffic and Signs
The Tenant Guidelines will be amended to inform the tenants that off premises signs will require a permit and they should gain the correct permit before placing any signs in the neighborhood.

Parking
EDC will confirm with the total number of parking spaces available in the existing car park. EDC will confirm with the Town Planning Department if any of the existing car park is not compliant with the Town's zoning rules.
Based on the number of existing carpark spaces available, we will discuss whether the 150 car limit before Parking Attendants are employed seems logical. (The VFW had their carpark restriped for $600 by Tom Roy)
EDC will request that the Mill owners stripe the existing car park so that drivers can easily see where they should be parking and to maximize the number of cars that park in the parking lot.
On days when events are being held with more than 150 cars, it is recommended that parking cones be placed on Bayview Ave so as to restrict parking to one side only to allow for the safe passing of emergency vehicles.

Future P&Z Applications
Members of the EDC are prepared to meet with the neighbors of the Mill prior to any future P&Z applications being presented. We believe that going forward, it will be very unlikely that a P&Z hearing impacting the Mill will occur without someone in the neighborhood hearing about it and mentioning it to either the East of Elm Association or the EDC.

Events
There is quite a lot of concern by the neighbors with regards to events. The concerns relate to noise, traffic, parking and security.
The EDC will request a letter from Dave Atkinson, Stonington Borough Zoning Enforcement Officer that explains the existing zoning rules as they pertain to the Velvet Mill holding events within the premises.
The EDC will request that Mill Management provide an Event Package to organizations that are holding events. The package would include a variety of information including the following topics that impact the neighborhood:

- parking in the car park
- not leaving doors open when there is amplified music
- the time at which music and bar will close and time it is expected that patrons will depart and clean-up will be completed
- no smoking on Bayview Street etc.

- parking attendants
- Security for the event

Security
EDC will request information from Mill management about the general security of the building so as to asses if there is any risk to the neighbors such as burglaries, fire, etc.

Beer'd Brewing
EDC will check with Borough P&Z to see if Beer'd Brewing is operating within its permitted zoning use (determine if zoning permit limits days/hours of operation)

Other Ideas
We had a discussion about the types of businesses that the neighbors would like to see in the Velvet Mill. These included, Dog Grooming, Shared technology office space, coffee shop....

Economic Development Commission, Town of Stonington
DRAFT notes from Neighbor Meeting July 25, 2016

Appendix 1

Attendees at June 27, 2016 Velvet Mill Community Meeting

Debbie	Ceil
Juliana	Flynn
Lisa	Leach
Jim	Leach
Danielle	Chesebrough
Sam	Chesebrough
Blunt	White
Rick	Larkin
David	Brierley
Ed	Suers
Robert	Sundman
Janet	Sundman
Chad	Gaudette
Robert	Webb
Sylvia	Christiansen
Lisa	Simonds
Tressa	Gilliland
Sonja	Denyse
Coralia	Pacheco
Rosemary	Riley
Sharon	White
Megan	LaCour
Charles	LaCour
Jeff	Ball
Caroline	Ball
Buz	Sawyer
Rory	Contin
Lisa	Konicki
Rob	Simmons
Marsha	Standish
Wendy	Bury
Muireann	O'Callaghan
Michael	Sullo
Rebekah	Kepple
Jo	Robinson
Laura	Sawyer
John	Malmros
James	Ceil
	Jackson
Carol	Martin
Holly	David
Tom	Frohnapfor
Precious	Putnam
Aaren	Simoncini
David	Brierley

Economic Development Commission, Town of Stonington
DRAFT notes from Neighbor Meeting July 25, 2016

Appendix 1 Continued:

Laurie	Cameron
Susan	Lindberg
Jan	Lindberg
Don	Maranell
michele and John	Delmhorst
Ian	Camfield
Dick	Muntimuri
Michelle and Eva	Isted
Paul	Janssens
Deb	Blanchard
darren	stewrd
Cathy	Klein
Steve	Grover
Pete	Victoria
lloyd	miller
Pete	Robinson
Mott	Hinkley
Patti	Linder
Sharon	White
Dave	Hammond
Judy	Scully
Paul	Lesniewski
Sheuli	Akter
Tom	Chiarella
Jeff	Callahan

September 6, 2016

East of Elm Neighborhood Advisory Council
Stonington CT 06378

Dear All,

This letter is a follow up to our meeting of July 25th and is based upon a meeting and conversation with David Atkinson (Borough Zoning Officer) on September 6.

Restaurants and the serving of alcohol.

There are two types of restaurants defined by Borough Planning and Zoning regulations, Class 1 and Class 2. Class 1 restaurants are limited to 20 seats and 1,500 square feet and are a Permitted/Allowed Use in the Velvet Mill Planned Industrial zoning district. Class 2 Restaurants have a maximum seating capacity of 75 and can be no larger than 2,000 square feet, significantly Class 2 restaurants are not a Permitted/Allowed Use, they require a Special Use Permit. Before another Class 2 Restaurant, such as the Velvet Vine can open a public hearing would be held by Borough PZC to consider the merits of issuing the Special Use Permit. The hearing would consider comments from the neighbors and PZC could decline to issue the permit. Both Class 1 and 2 restaurants can serve alcohol. Liquor permits are regulated by the state and not by local P&Z's.

Beard Brewing is a Class 1 restaurant. Class 1 restaurants are an "Allowed Use" in the Velvet Mill Planned Industrial District. Beard Brewing therefore operates as a 'permitted use' under the P&Z regulations and therefore did not require a public hearing before from Stonington Borough P&Z. Because it is an approved use, it is only limited by the number of permitted seats (no more than 20) and square footage (for the retail area of the business, not brewing). Hours of operation are not subject to Borough or Town regulation.

Velvet Vine is a Class 2 restaurant and after a public hearing received a Special Use permit from Borough PZC permit to operate under certain conditions, including specific days and hours of operation. Hours of operation are limited to Thursday and Sunday 11am to 9pm, Thursday and Friday 11am to 10pm) Any increase in hours of operation times would require a P&Z public hearing for approval and the neighbors would receive legal notice of the hearing date.

Events - Section 6.3.2.1. Permitted Principal Uses

The Velvet Mill is regulated as a Planned Industrial District under the Stonington Borough Zoning Regulations. The section above reads....."Public or private events (including but not limited to: fund raisers, weddings, parties, farmers market, craft markets and similar functions) provided that such events are contained completely within the building with no exterior use permitted other than parking, temporary signage, or access to the event. There shall be no live or recorded sound or music projected outside of the building."

This provision in the Borough Zoning Code gives the Velvet Mill the ability to hold as many events as it sees fit inside the building. It is clear that Events cannot be held outside of the building, unless a 'Special Use Permit' is requested which would allow for input from the neighbors and could be declined by PZC

Noise Ordinance.

Noise regulations adopted by CT zoning boards have recently been successfully challenged and are now considered unenforceable at the local level. Noise is now only regulated by the DEP. Borough Zoning Regulations do not prescribe any noise regulations such as specific night cut-off or decibel limits. the Town of Stonington does have noise regulations (reprinted below) which closely match DEP regulations. They serve as guidelines, because they could not be enforced at the local level if there is an issue. The Town or the Borough officials would try to work with all of the parties involved to see if they could reach a solution.

2.13.2.4 Noise and Vibration. Noise levels as measured for the following uses shall not exceed the following levels when measured at the property line on the typical A-Weighted Sound Level (using ANSI S1, 4-1981 type 2).

.1 Residential District 55 dBA
.2 Business District 65 dBA
.3 Manufacturing District 75 dBA
.4 Noise levels in general shall not exceed a sustained level of 45 dBA in any District between 10:00 p.m. in the evening and 6:00 a.m. in the morning

The DEP regulations are available at:

http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/regulations/22a/22a-69-1through7.pdf

If you glance through this 21 document you will see the complexity in firstly defining noise and then how, when and where it can be measured.

Parking

There is a map titled "Boundary Survey" on file with Borough Planning and Zoning which serves a Site Plan. It shows a total of 264 off street parking spaces. This includes 20 spaces off street parking spaces on the east side of Meadow Avenue. No parking spaces are shown (counted) in the undeveloped section of land to the north of the mill along Meadow Ave and no street spaces on Bayview are included in the total of 264.

Kevin Bowdler Blunt White

cc. David Atkinson
Eric Pivco
Stonington Economic Development Commission

September 8, 2016

East of Elm Neighborhood Advisory Council
Stonington CT 06378

Dear All,

This letter is a follow up to our meeting of July 25th and is based upon a meeting and conversation with Eric Pivco on September 2nd 2016. This letter should be read after my other letter re zoning issues. That letter was prepared separately so that it could be sent to David Atkinson. This letter addresses the Mill management processes that are not related to zoning issues.

Parking

The car parks nearest the oil tanks were striped in August. Velvet Mill management have requested several quotes for repairing striping the remainder of the carpark. It is hoped that a suitable quote is provided and that the work can be done before the winter.

As per the Boundary Survey map on file with Stonington Borough Zoning, the car park count is 264. It would seem reasonable that we agree with the proposed 150 expected car limit for an event to trigger the employment of parking attendants for the event.

Security

The building is locked at the end of each work day. Each tenant has a key which allows them to come and go as they need and there can be times when the tenants leave perimeter doors unlocked. The newly revised Tenant Guidelines will re-iterate the importance of locking the doors after 6pm. Mill management would love to install a video security system to monitor activity both outside and inside the mill. The cost of such a system is significant. The owners would like to make this project a priority once the building makes an annual profit. Thankfully, we live in a low crime area and there have been very minor security issues.

Events and Building Management

A document outlining the how, what and when of events at the Velvet Mill is currently being drafted and will be available to all interested parties when completed.

The Tenant Guidelines document which is issued to each new tenant has been revised. It covers many housekeeping type issues that are not included in the tenant's lease agreement. Many of these same items are issues that the neighbors have mentioned as concerns. It will be distributed to all existing tenants as well as new tenants. A copy of this document can be shared with the neighbors.

Yours Truly,

Kevin Bowdler

cc. Eric Pivco

Velvet Mill Tenant Guidelines

Welcome to the Velvet Mill. We want to make your tenancy of the Mill as productive as possible. The goal of this document is to help you settle into your new space as quickly and efficiently as possible. It will explain some of the nuances of the building and the things that are not be covered in your lease. We are an eclectic community of artists, professionals and businesses and it is mutually beneficial for us to co-exist happily with our neighbors both inside and outside the mill.

If you have any issue that is not covered in this document, please contact:

Eric Pivco – General Manager of the mill
Phone: (917) 915-6340
Email: epivco@gmail.com

Garbage

All garbage is the personal responsibility of the tenant.

- Do not bring any kind of rubbish to the property.
- If you cannot take your rubbish with you, you should purchase yellow Stonington trash bags and leave them curbside on Tuesday mornings. You can also leave recyclables on Tuesday mornings. Do not leave your trash bags outside over-night.
- Do not place any of your trash in the hallways or public area bins. These bins are for the use of customers.
- Do not place any of your trash in the dumpsters in the carparks. These are dumpsters are for the exclusive use of the landlord's ongoing construction debris.

Parking

We request that all tenants park in the car park and not on the street. We want to make the Velvet Mill as accessible to customers as possible and we want to minimize inconvenience with the neighbors who like to park on the street in front of their houses. By the tenants making the effort to park in the carpark, we will be good neighbors and will allow customers to park closest to the destination.

Overnight parking is not allowed on Velvet Mill property nor is the parking of any unregistered vehicles.

On Saturdays in the winter when the Farmers Market is in session, we request that all tenants park in the back of the carpark, near Meadow St. It is mutually beneficial to allow customers to park with easy access to the building. On Saturdays when there is snow on the ground, we will employ staff as parking attendants to usher all cars into the carpark. Our goal is to ensure that Emergency Vehicles can drive down Bayview Ave. This is not always possible when there is snow on the ground and there are cars parked on both sides of Bayview.

We also request that you park in the back of the carpark when there is any large event occurring at the Mill. We want visitors and customers to have a hassle free parking experience when they visit the Mill and your assistance by parking further away is greatly appreciated and will be mutually beneficial.

Please remember that the Mill is in a residential neighborhood. The neighbors will be appreciative if you drive slowly and carefully when coming and leaving the mill. *Drive like your kids live here.*

Safety

The Velvet Mill is a non-smoking building. If you want to smoke, please go to the carpark side of the building. We request that you do not smoke on the Bayview Avenue side of the street which can be an annoyance to our neighbors.

The hallways and egress areas must be free of clutter at all times. We want to ensure that in the case of an emergency, all people within the building can exit as calmly and quickly as possible. We also need clear access to all fire extinguishers.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF A FIRE
1. Don't panic; stay calm.
2. Leave the building as quickly as possible. Touch doors to feel if they are hot before opening them. Use an alternate exit if necessary. Crawl along the floor, and DO NOT stop to collect anything.
3. Call the fire department from OUTSIDE the building.
4. DO NOT GO BACK INSIDE A BURNING BUILDING. Wait for the fire department to arrive.

Access and Security

The building is unlocked during normal business hours which are daily from 8am to 6pm. If you come into the building after normal business hours, make sure that the lock the door after you enter. Similarly, when you are leaving the building **after 6pm, please make sure that the doors are locked behind you**. Do not assume that someone else is still in the building and that they will lock the door from which you are departing.

Signage

All signage on the property needs to be approved by the Mill Management. As a general rule, please bear the following guidelines in mind before seeking approval from Mill Management. You are permitted to have a sign on the wall outside your leased space that is up to 18" X 12". 'A' frame signs will not be permitted. Please do not tape any signs to the walls using tape or other adhesives that will remove the paint. Directional signs must be agreed with Mill Management. Do not stick any notices or advertisements on any of the walls.

Please be aware that Stonington requires a permit for any sign that is not on Mill property. You should go to Town Hall and request the appropriate permit. The Mill is not responsible for your compliance with local state and federal laws.

Moving in/Moving Out

If you have a large amount of belongings to move in or out of the building, we request that you do it during regular business hours and recommend that you use the loading docks in the carpark. There are carts available inside the Mill to help ferry your belongings from the docks to your leased space.

Utilities (Electric, water, heat, Wi-Fi)

The building is large and expensive to heat and light. During the winter we request that you be sensitive to heat loss. Please close doors behind you and only leave dock doors open when they are in use. Your heat and electricity are included in your monthly rent. The average monthly winter electric bill is $15,000. The boiler, when set to its lowest minimal level consumes 30 gallons per hour and it runs a minimum of 12 hours per day. Depending on the temperature and the price of oil, the monthly oil bill can be from $25,000 to $45,000 per month.

Due to these enormous costs, we require all tenants to receive approval from Mill Management if they wish to use a space heater. Management have identified the most efficient space heaters and may even have unused space heaters for you to borrow. All space heaters must be turned off when you are not inside your leased space.

There is free Wi-Fi in the common area that does not require a password. If you are in South Studios or the Studio block, there is Wi-Fi that requires a password. Please request the password from Mill Management.

Noise

Please be considerate of your neighbors both inside and outside of the mill. Behave the same way you would at home in respect to the volume of music or other loud activities. Construction noise should only occur during business hours. No amplified music can be projected outside of the building. Please keep perimeter doors closed if you are making a loud noise so that the noise does not disturb the neighbors.

Economic Development Commission
Town of Stonington, Connecticut
152 Elm Street
Stonington, CT 06378
bluntwhite@stonington-ct.gov

Notice of Special Meeting and Agenda
Thursday, September 15, 2016 10:00AM
Location: Town Hall, Planning Department

1) Note only 2 EDC members are scheduled to attend (Blunt White and David Hammond). A quorum, which would be 5 members, is not planned or anticipated.

2) New Business – Airbnb information gathering meeting with Director of Planning.

3) Adjournment

Blunt White
Chair, Economic Development Commission

Economic Development Commission
TOWN OF STONINGTON

152 Elm Street
Stonington, CT 06378
bluntwhite@stonington-ct.gov

MEMO
TO: EDC
DATE: 9/19/2016
FROM: Blunt White, Chair EDC
SUBJECT: Draft Meeting Notes from Special Meeting held 9/15/2016 in the Department of Planning, purpose of meeting, information gathering on Airbnb.

In Attendance: EDC members, Blunt White and David Hammond. Town staff, Jason Vincent, Keith Brynes, Candice Palmer. Public: Brooke White reporter from the Westerly Sun

No quorum was present, no action taken. Information meeting started at 10:00am ended at 10:40. Learned about ZR that pertain to Short Term Rentals like Airbnb and VRBO. Discussed possible courses of action.

Submitted by,
Blunt White, meeting recording secretary

John & Thalia Pryor
21 E. Forest Rd.
Mystic, CT 06355
1johnhans@gmail.com

9/19/16

Dear EDC board,

We wanted to write to you to make you aware of the serious and growing problem of VRBO and Air BNB short-term rentals gaining popularity in our communities and indeed all across the state and nation.

The core problem with increased numbers of short-term vacation rentals is the very real dissolution of the neighborhood. The minute an owner or long-term renter turns over their home to unknown transient renters that are new to our community, that house no longer contributes to the community and indeed can endanger it. The home's owner transforms from a neighbor into a business owner. These short-term rental businesses can have significant impact on the safety and quiet enjoyment of our property. It has begun slowly and somewhat quietly and will most definitely grow significantly in the future. Lets try and get ahead of this problem.

FYI: (May 2016)
<u>VRBO / Air BNB homes listed on Mason's Island :</u>
-# of homes listed on VRBO website - 12
-# of homes on Air BNB website - 1
-Range of price per night - $129 - $577
-Average price per night - $414.55
-# of Bedrooms per house - 1 X 1br, 6 X 3br, 1 X 4br, 1 X 5br, 1 X 6br
-"SLEEPS" info - 1 X 4p,1 X 5p,2 X 6p, 1 X 7p, 1 X 8p, 3 X 10p, 1 X 12p
-"MINIMUM STAY" info: 5 @ 1-7 nites, 1 @ 3-7 nites, 1 @ 7 nites, 2 @ 3 nites

Interesting to note:

- There is a very real financial incentive to turn homes into VRBO's rental businesses. It is really profitable!
- Yes, responsible management by resident homeowners using VRBO can be just fine.
- The larger homes are the ones that cause the most disturbances, especially where the property owner does not reside in Stonington. Lack of ANY management or oversight in a VRBO rental property that sleeps 6-17 rented for multiple weekends over the summer is a recipe for incidents and confrontations among neighbors. These multi-bedroom properties turn into party headquarters for weddings, birthdays, re-unions, graduations, bachelor parties, etc...
- Quiet enjoyment, privacy and safety are the biggest issues.

John and Thalia Pryor's property has VRBO homes on each side of them and are subject to strangers (and strange behavior) every week from May - October. Bill Bradford is running a small very busy hotel next door to us! "6 bedrooms and sleeps 16" @$560/night!. This spring he told me, "don't show up there in May, John, I've got lots of graduation and wedding parties at our house".

We strongly urge the Town of Stonington to ask Planning and Zoning to take this issue up ASAP.

Thank you for considering this issue, it is really affecting the character of our very special community.

Sincerely,

John & Thalia Pryor

Please check out the VRBO site:
https://www.vrbo.com/vacationrentals?q=Mason%27s+Island%2c+Stonington%2c+CT%2c+USA

Web articles:
Why your short term VRBO / Air BNB rental is a problem
http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/opinion/why-your-short-term-airbnb-rental-is-a-problem/

Boulder Co issues cease and desist after complaints:
http://www.dailycamera.com/news/boulder/ci_27270016/boulder-issues-cease-and-desist-orders-20-property

Tiburon, CA bans short-term rentals:
http://www.marinij.com/government-and-politics/20150820/tiburon-bans-short-term-rentals-including-airbnb-and-vrbo

Restriction Ideas:
http://arlingtontx.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=1188&meta_id=140526

The legal side:
http://www.wczlaw.net/short-term-vacation-rentals-a-second-or-third-look/