

**TOWN OF MONTVILLE**  
**Economic Development Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes – June 20, 2022 – 6:00 p.m.**

**Town of Montville has lifted the mask mandate effective Monday, February 28, 2023, throughout Town facilities in coordination with our schools. Although the mask mandate has been lifted, Uncas Health strongly recommends that all individuals, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, continue to wear masks indoors. Comments will only be accepted at times designated for public comment by the Chair of the meeting. The Montville Town Council Rules of Procedure, decorum, timeliness, and suitability shall be followed and enforced.**

1) Call to Order

Co-Chair Napierski called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

All stood and pledged the flag.

3) Roll Call

Present were Commissioners Sierra Davis, Walter Hewitt (by phone), Sheelagh Lapinski, Thomas McCarthy, and Christopher Napierski. Absent were Commissioners Mickey Gillette and Meracus Hernandez. A quorum was present.

4) Alterations to the Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Lapinski; seconded by Commissioner Davis to move up New Business Item 8a to Item 6b. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

5) Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (3-minute limit)

Co-Chair Napierski asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

6) To Consider and Act on a Motion to approve:

a) The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 16, 2022.

Motion by Commissioner Lapinski; seconded by Commissioner Davis to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of May 16, 2022. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

6b) Leadership Coach Pro Presentation by Michelle Hartley. *This item was moved up.*

Asst. Planner Bezanson introduced Michelle Hartley owner of Leadership Coach Pro who was recommended by Commissioner Lapinski. Ms. Hartley gave an overview of her PowerPoint presentation [A copy of it was given to the Commission as reference.], describing her work as a consultant to municipalities and the services offered by her 8-year old company in addition to her professional background. A partial list of services include municipality consulting services, organization analysis, strategic planning for corporate and nonprofit sectors, business development services, and diversity and inclusion. Ms. Hartley's presentation focused on the specifics of a strategic plan prompted initially by a budget analysis that proceeds everything she does. The strategic plan involves several factors including consumer (resident) surveys, a

marketing plan with emphasis on social media with updates a few times a week, attracting new commercial entities, public relations and implementation of the strategic plan. Another presentation component addressed ways in which to raise capital—revenue bonds, general obligation bonds, a local government investment pool, and RFPs. Technology is also a factor used to make detailed comparisons of a Town with its surrounding ones.

Commissioner Davis stated the goal of the Commission is to grow small businesses and increase Town revenue by having vacant lots become tax revenue and commented about Town business information leaks privy to a select few. Asst. Planner Bezanson referenced Montville as a pass-through Town on the Route 32 corridor. Commissioner McCarthy noted information is available when a businesses comes to Town but none is available as to when and why it leaves. Per discussion, the Commission discussed the Town strip malls, attractions other than the casino such as Nature’s Art and the Farmers Market, diverting visitors to Town hotels, and businesses that start but do not keep the Town involved. Emailed surveys used to find out needs and engage is a qualitative analysis designed to attract as many businesses as possible, according to Ms. Hartley. The conclusion of the Ms. Hartley’s presentation referenced her fees—a full strategic plan as discussed is \$16,000. Town Council Liaison Yuchniuk asked for the names of towns Ms. Hartley has worked for—all were in New York--and obtaining reference letters from them which she can provide. Ms. Hartley was thanked for her presentation to the Commission.

Asst. Planner Bezanson explained to Commissioner McCarthy how the Town 10-year Plan of Development (POD) differs from a strategic plan. The POD looks at what the Town currently has and ways in which to improve it as presented by seCTer to the Commission at its last meeting. Marketing experience, a social media consultant, and the goals of the Commission for Town development were discussed. Discussion of a strategic plan will be added to the next meeting agenda After review of Town properties listed for sale and vacancies on the website Advance CT by Asst. Planner Bezanson, the Commission discussed ways to promote Town properties and goals for creating a business survey, newspaper notices, emails, presentations by realtors or business owners to the Commission, and how to promote the Town, as listed by Commissioner Davis. Commissioner McCarthy noted challenges such as rising rent, lack of inventory and lack of fuel to business development. Potential tax adjustments to local businesses as asked by Commissioner McCarthy should be addressed to the Town Council per Town Councilor Yuchniuk. Asst. Planner Bezanson will research whether a fee is paid to Advance CT for a Town property listing as asked by Commissioner Davis. Co-Chair Napierski concluded the Commission should discuss and its goals prior to hiring a consultant.

7) Unfinished Business -- *None*

8) New Business

a) Leadership Coach Pro Presentation by Michelle Hartley.

This item was moved up on the Agenda to Item 6b.

b) New Business Report

A dog grooming business and a flower farm were noticed as new Town businesses in May 2022. Asst. Planner Bezanson spoke on the difficulty of tracking home businesses. She agreed to adjust the gridlines on the report as noted by Commissioner Hewitt for consistency.

c) Discussion of Business Spotlight

Co-Chair Napierski reported on the business recognition by the Commission and presented on a monthly basis prior to the pandemic. There was no application process instead the Commission discussed and kept a proposed list of businesses for recognition, notified the Town Council who presented the plaque at an approximate cost of \$35 as purchased in 2020 by the Commission. Commissioner Hewitt reported he submitted the invoices for the plaques where submitted to Finance. Discussion prior to the pandemic concerned quarterly versus monthly awards presentations. The positive experience of the award, locating a vendor to supply the plaques, and noting the honorees on Facebook and the EDC blog (Commissioner Hewitt suggested shutting it done) was considered. Asst. Planner Bezanson said the honorees can be put on the website. Obtaining the Commission budget and businesses to highlight can be discussed at the next meeting per Commissioner Hewitt and he will send a list of the businesses highlighted.

d) Staff Updates:

a. Planning and Zoning Commission application update.

Asst. Planner Bezanson reported including this report to the Commission was the result of discussion at the last meeting. Projects approved and currently on the books will be presented the Commission monthly and was reviewed by the Planner. Also, all documents related to the projects can be found on the Town website. Commissioner McCarthy addressed a question concerning a developer to Asst. Planner Bezanson.

b. Discussion about town passport

Assistant Planner Bezanson asked whether the Commission had reviewed the list of Town businesses supplied to them at a prior meeting. Her suggestion was not to consider the whole town for the passport program. She referenced businesses that rest in the winter versus retail, entertainment and others that benefit from the warmer weather. Funding the project must also be considered and will be discussed.

c. Sustainable CT updates

Asst. Planner Bezanson reported the Town Sustainable CT plan for certification has been extended. She spoke of C-Pace, an energy program that helps town assessment and financing of clean energy. Information on the program will be sent to the Commission. She also referenced the webinar information she sent. Commissioner Hewitt attended the infrastructure webinar that he enjoyed. Asst. Planner Bezanson noted Commission related webinars are offered at a discount or can be watched after the actual webinar date.

d. Business Survey Discussion.

Asst. Planner Bezanson found the business survey she emailed to the Commission included a lot of very good questions. She spoke of an intern who could assist with creation of a survey in addition to staff at Youth Services who has experience with Survey Monkey. Commissioner Hewitt commented on the incentive for completing the survey and about information on its success; Asst. Planner Bezanson agreed to seek that data. Press releases, flyers, and word-of-mouth were suggestions to advertise the survey. This item will be added to the next month agenda for discussion of the best questions to ask on the business survey for release potentially before the end of summer.

9) Report from Town Council Liaison

Town Councilor Yuchniuk reported on drive-in property that is advertised for sale.

10) Remarks from the Public (3-minute limit)

Co-Chair Napierski asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

11) Remarks from the Commissioners and Town Council Liaison

Commissioner McCarthy remarked on the Gateway development across the street from the Town Hall and the information sent to Commissioner Davis on the same. He spoke of the owner of Critical Signs who he has known for a long time and is interested in purchasing and developing the whole area. The business owner has contacted seCTer concerning financing but is seeking a tax freeze at the current assessed value of the property, not an abatement, from the Town. Town Council Chairman McNally told Commissioner McCarthy that a formal recommendation must come from the Commission concerning the same. Commissioner Davis suggested the business owner present the proposal to the Commission.

Asst. Planner Bezanson reported Meredith Badalucca is the new Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) and T. Williams will be working at the WPCA where there is an opening. She also suggested to Commissioner McCarthy that the business owner discussed previously contact Co-Chairs Davis or Napierski.

12) Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Lapinski; seconded by Commissioner Davis to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.