

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes – July 18, 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 Davis called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

All stood and pledged the flag.

3) Roll Call

Present were Commissioners Sierra Davis, Mickey Gillette (by phone), Meracus Hernandez (by phone 6:06 p.m.), Thomas McCarthy, and Christopher Napierski (by phone). Absent were Commissioners Walter Hewitt and Sheelagh Lapinski. A quorum was present.

4) Alterations to the Agenda -- *None*

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

Co-Chair Davis 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 June 20, 2022.

Motion by Commissioner Gillette; seconded by Commissioner McCarthy to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 20, 2022. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

7) Unfinished Business

a) Discussion of Business Spotlight.

Co-Chair Davis referenced discussion at the last Commission meeting concerning restarting the business spotlight formerly known as the EDC Award. In its meeting the packet, the Commission received Sportees invoices for the plaques and a list of businesses who were honored with the EDC award and potential ones received from Commissioner Hewitt. The Commission discussed presenting the award quarterly and not monthly as done previously. Commissioner Napierski addressed the question about the standard for presenting the award. He explained the awards previously were given to businesses known or visited. Parameters for the award were discussed such as giving back to the community or to youth as mentioned by Commissioner Gillette and renovation or beautification of a business as mentioned by Commissioner Napierski. The Commission discussed home businesses, small businesses, the

length of time a business has existed, and a business owner being a Town resident that was deemed exclusionary. Commissioner Napierski also spoke of having a list of named businesses planned but not publicized. Consideration of the proposed quarterly award would require a Commission vote in advance if presented at a Town Council meeting per Commissioner McCarthy who also suggested February, May, August, and November, mid-quarter months for presentation. Awarding the plaque at the Town Council is not a requirement as mentioned by Commissioners Gillette and Napierski who reported on presentations at the actual business and the convenience of it for business owners who can invite those of their choosing. The homework for each Commissioner for the next meeting is the name of a business that meets the criteria for the award—1) a brick and mortar business, 2) giving back to the community, and 3)----- Co-Chair Davis with check with Critical Signs about plaques and report back to the Commission.

8) New Business:

a) New Business Report

Commissioner McCarthy noted the July report information had no business name for the one owned by the Barnes.

b) Discussion of presentation from Life Pro Coach.

Asst. Planner Bezanson reported on the request for references from Ms. Hartley at the last meeting. She emailed to the Commission an emailed received today from Ms. Hartley with additional information about her company and a reference regarding her work with Roosevelt Village in New York. Asst. Planner Bezanson will try to get additional presenters with different pricing for Commission review adding that seCTer may do some projects for free and as well mentioned C-Pace a topic on tonight's Agenda. The current EDC budget was also emailed to the Commission.

c) Discussion of Commission goals and creation of a strategic plan.

Asst. Planner Bezanson asked about the status of the homework assigned to the Commission at its last meeting. Co-Chair Davis stated the Commission is a stalled group with no action and mentioned the Sustainable CT deadline that was missed. She asked for more action and less conversation to do was the Commission is tasked to do. Asst. Planner Bezanson reported on comments from the Town Sustainable CT Commission tasked to the EDC that was deemed good but could be better. Choosing a priority to take action was proposed by Commissioner Napierski; Commissioner McCarthy said the next argument would then be what the Commission thinks is important. Commissioner Gillette noted the Commission as being one of recommendation and about the need for a paid person, staffing, to bring business to the Town. Guidance was sought previously from the Town per Commissioner Napierski.

Co-Chair Davis commented on her having worked with seCTer and the Town when starting her business and her goal for it. She suggested the Commission choose a goal, even a small one, and then work on it and also spoke of word-of-mouth and social media as draws for business to the Town. Commissioner McCarthy proposed the Commission seek monthly, quarterly, and yearly goals for completion. Asst. Planner Bezanson responded to Town Councilor Yuchniuk about EDC staffing for other municipalities; she stated Waterford and Groton have paid staff; Co-Chair Davis suggested supporting what the Town has as being more realistic. Asst. Planner Bezanson mentioned the business map she previously presented to the Commission including details and options which can be added to and/or deleted as preferred

as well as the limitations to the map program as it is free. She agreed to again present that information to the Commission at its next meeting and where additional data can be included. The Commission discussed the current breakdown of businesses on the map by criteria (it includes name, address, phone, web address, and category); the need for a business/or owner email address; a picture of the business that can be zoomed on by location. Trails will eventually be included on the map with input from Town Councilor May and Parks & Recreation. Asst. Planner Bezanson responded there are currently approximately 700 brick and mortar businesses in Town and some home businesses do not want people coming to their door.

Co-Chair Davis proposed a goal of 500 businesses on the map by December 2022. Asst. Planner Bezanson reported on the time it took for her to drive Route 32 to obtain the data currently included on the map stating staffing is an issue. She also referenced again the turnaround of businesses at the strip malls not officially noticed to her office. The Commission was charged with homework for its next meeting to create content for the map so it can move forward.

d) Discussion about creating a business survey.

Co-Chair Davis noted the Ledyard sample survey was lengthy and proposed a shorter one for the Town and less wordy per Commissioner Napierski. Asst. Planner Bezanson reported she has never done a survey but does have a staff person for the summer who does. Commissioner McCarthy suggested have that person prepare a survey for approval by the Commission at its next meeting. The Commission and Asst. Planner Bezanson reviewed the sample survey with additions, deletions, and changes to reduce the survey and discussed demographics for administering the survey via social media. The Town survey will be duly referenced as being drafted from the Ledyard sample survey.

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy; seconded by Co-Chair Davis, to charge Asst. Planner Bezanson have the Planning & Zoning Department summer intern craft a preliminary business survey for review and action by the Commission at its August meeting. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

e) Discussion about having C-Pace (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy) presentation for Commission.

This item was verbally tabled for the next meeting.

f) Staff Updates:

a. Planning and Zoning Commission application update.

Asst. Planner Bezanson asked about questions to the monthly application report. Commissioner McCarthy asked about the ACO facility project; Town Councilor Yuchniuk reported on the approved project and a meeting last week with the ACO concerning layout/design, a zoning formality approval, and a cost estimate for the build. Documents for the project can be found on the Town website according to Asst. Planner Bezansonm.

b. Discussion about Town Passport

This Agenda was verbally tabled until the next meeting.

c. Sustainable CT updates

Asst. Planner Bezanson reported certification for the Town Sustainable CT plan for certification has been extended until spring of 2022. She reported on the trail system being developed and mentioned C-Pace efforts and what it can do to help business in Town.

9) Report from Town Council Liaison – *No report*

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

Co-Chair Napierski asked three (3) times for remarks. Alex Balkcom accompanied by his mother Michelle of 89 Maple Avenue; Uncasville suggested using Facebook to show what a business is doing in Town. He said the Facebook page can be operated by the Town with business information and how it can be helped. Michelle Balkcom suggested an individual Town Facebook page for businesses only to which a survey can be attached.

11) Remarks from the Commissioners and Town Council Liaison.

The EDC email address and its comments go directly to Asst. Planner Bezanson as she reported. Town Councilor Yuchniuk said IT can create an email specifically for the Commission. Co-Chair Davis thanked Commissioner McCarthy for coming to the meeting and remarked the Facebook page suggestion by A. Balkcom was a good idea. She said to have an online presence the EDC needs an email address.

12) Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy; seconded by Commissioner Davis to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.