

**Town of Montville
Ad-Hoc COVID-19 Impact Study Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2022, 5:00 p.m.
Town Council Chambers – Montville Town Hall**

**Town of Montville has lifted the mask mandate effective Monday, February 28, 2022
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.**

1. Call to Order

Chairman Mandler called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call (Councilors Caron, McNally, Mandler)

Present were Councilors Caron, McNally, Mandler.

4. Approval of Minutes of August 9, 2022

Motion made by Councilor McNally, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: None.
Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor.

5. Remarks from the Public relating to matters on the agenda. (3-minute limit)

Jessica LeClair, 1650 Bozrah Road, Oakdale, a member of the Inland Wetlands Commission, spoke as a resident of the Town in support of the Avalonia Land Conservancy's request for funding the purchase of the Bond property. Having taken a tour of the property, she felt that the land is a remarkable treasure and should seize the opportunity to preserve the property and create a landmark for the Town, in particular, and the region, as a whole. The purchase would provide numerous educational and recreational opportunities for all, including those who are mobility challenged. The benefits are numerous and timeless. The purchase would also support wildlife habitat, improve the air and water quality of the town, and positively impact and enhance the town's aesthetics supporting the economic vitality of the area. The Avalonia Land Conservancy is a trusted partner. She believed that such an opportunity to preserve and protect such a valuable piece of land would not be presented to them again and felt that the timing of its availability was fortunate as it came about at a time when the municipality has received ARPA Funding. She

urged the Councilors to support the preservation of the property and thanked them for their consideration and time.

Councilor Tim May, 1297 Route 163, Oakdale, Conservation Commission Liaison, also spoke in support of the Avalonia Land Conservancy's request for funding the purchase of the Bond property. Due to its magnitude, he stated his initial trepidation about the proposal. After visiting the property, he was immediately amazed at the quality of the land, which is near park-ready, would be all-inclusive, and offer a variety of recreational activities. He felt the purchase would be a good asset for the town, creating nearly 900 acres of open space. He encouraged everyone to visit the property and support the Conservancy, which stewards numerous properties in the region, and their efforts.

Terri Eickel, Director of Development & Programming, Avalonia Land Conservancy, expressed her appreciation to those who attended their recent site walks. She reported that the Conservancy recently received its re-accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance, which speaks to its efforts in land conservancy and stewardship. The Bond property, in particular, is a special piece of property that stands out as a jewel among the 4,700 acres of land in Southeastern Connecticut currently under their care. She agreed with Ms. LeClair who felt that the opportunity to preserve land of this quality will not arise again. The property includes carriage roads, general roads, parking areas, and trails that could be enhanced, allowing them to open the property for outdoor activities and educational opportunities within a short time frame. She hopes that the Town will support them.

6. Old Business – Avalonia \$560,000.00

Motion made by Councilor McNally, seconded by Councilor Caron, to table the allocation of \$560,000.00 in ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funding to the Avalonia Land Conservancy for the purchase of the Bond Property. Discussion: Councilor McNally stated that the Committee supports the allocation of funds and agreed with the value of the property, which is located near the watershed. The primary issue is the funding. He wished to table the item until they could determine the status of their ARPA Funds. Councilor Caron, who recalls visiting the property as a child, agreed with the beauty of the land and its benefit to the Town. He stated the possibility of seeking other funding sources. Councilor Mandler questioned whether the Conservancy has sought funding from the other towns or sources. Avalonia Land Conservancy Director of Development & Programming Eickel stated that a meeting is scheduled with the Waterford First Selectman and they have reached out to the Towns of East Lyme, Salem, and New London. It is hoped that the Town of Montville's support will help encourage the other towns to support them as well. They also plan to reach out to Pfizer and other businesses and the Mohegan Tribe for sponsorship. In response to Councilor McNally, she stated that the final purchase price of the property is \$5.5 million. A \$2.3 million CT DEEP (Connecticut Department of Energy and

Environmental Protection) Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) Grant was awarded and multiple private funders will be providing funding. They also recently applied for Federal Funding for a percentage of the easement value to protect unfragmented forests and drinking water through the Connecticut Land Conservation Council. Councilor Mandler stated that he plans to e-mail some additional questions, adding that all four (4) Town Councilors present at this meeting support the request. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor. Motion tabled.

7. New Business

a. Request from Montville Police Appreciation for “First Responder Employees”

Motion made by Councilor McNally, seconded by Councilor Caron, to deny the Montville Police Department’s request to offer an appreciation for the First Responders. Discussion: While he agreed with the gesture, Councilor McNally stated that all of the Town’s employees worked during the pandemic and, as such, would also need to be considered. Councilor Mandler stated that an opportunity to apply for State funding for the First Responders was not pursued. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor.

b. Request from Murphy School PTA \$2,000.00

Councilor Mandler stated that the Murphy Elementary School PTA is requesting funding to help fund their clubs, programs, and events as they were unable to fundraise for the last three (3) years due to the pandemic. The PTA supplied extensive supporting documents and the Superintendent of Schools has stated that the other schools’ PTAs are not requesting any additional funding. Councilor Caron expressed his support for the request, stating that the PTAs work very hard to raise funds for the town’s schoolchildren. He recommended speaking with the other elementary schools to confirm that they do not need any funding. Councilor McNally agreed and, as such, reported that he did speak with Oakdale Elementary School who stated that they would not need any funding.

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor McNally, to allocate \$2,000.00 of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds to the Murphy School PTA.

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor.

8. Remarks from the Public (3-minute limit) – *none*

9. Remarks from the Councilors

Councilor Caron stated that he is looking forward to their next meeting and thanked the public for attending this evening's meeting and speaking. He recommended they also attend the Town Council meeting to share their thoughts.

The Councilors stated that they have allocated ARPA Funds for items that have not yet been spent that could, possibly, be allocated for other items. Other funding sources might also be available.

10. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor McNally, seconded by Councilor Caron, to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by: Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville

AN AUDIO RECORD OF THE MEETING CAN BE FOUND ON THE TOWN'S WEBSITE LOCATED UNDER RESOURCES