

Town of Montville
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, January 20, 2016
7:00 p.m. – Montville Town Hall - Room 102

1. Call to Order
Vice-Chairman Protz called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. after establishing a quorum.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
Present were Commissioners Walter Hewitt, Christopher Napierski, John Protz, and Jim Toner. Absent were Commissioners Marge Gatheral and Dianne Williams. Also present was Town Council Liaison Joe Rogulski.

Vice-Chairman Protz will confirm the status of Commissioner Karl Butzgy's membership, which was questioned.
4. Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (3 Minute limit) – *none*
5. Alterations to the Agenda – *none*
6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to approve:
 - a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of Monday, December 21, 2015
Motion made by Commissioner Toner, seconded by Commissioner Hewitt, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of Monday, December 21, 2015, with the following amendment:

Page 2, Item 8(a), 1st sentence:
Commissioner Toner spoke with Zoning Enforcement Officer/Assistant Planning Director Randy Benson, Town of Colchester regarding their Tax Incentive Plan.

Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
7. Unfinished Business
 - a. EDC Website Design (Commissioner Protz)
Chairman Protz stated that he is planning to meet with Town Planner Marcia Vlaun regarding any suggestions, ideas, and recommendations she might have regarding the content and design of the EDC website. Webmaster Donna Geary made the following suggestions:
 - Defining what is Montville EDC is in terms that are understandable to the public
 - Define the highlights of the Town, its location, and services
 - Note how the EDC can assist the businesses in the Town

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- Reviewing and providing additional links on the Links of Interest webpage to include additional organizations with a short description of the role(s) of each of the organizations and what they have to offer
- Expanding the scope of their letter to new businesses to include social media and the website
- Creation of a Welcome Packet for new businesses.

b. Blight Ordinance

1) List of Properties along Routes 32 and 163

Commissioner Toner provided the following list of blighted properties along Route 32:

Behind Dot's Cafe

Chen's, which has been under construction for several years

Ski's Garage

Houses across from Uncasville oil

The old BT Tile

The old Delia's Pizza across from the Golden Palace

Whether the appearance of such properties is (one of) the reason(s) for a prospective business to not establish a business in the area was raised. The idea of finding ways to help and support them by either locating programs, providing volunteer support, or helping raise funds, rather than creating a "hit list" of properties, was raised. In addition, the role of the EDC regarding blight was questioned. It was noted that Building Inspector Vern Vesey has been actively working on dealing with the blight issue, successfully leading the cleaning up of approximately 200 blighted properties. In addition, the Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) recently reported that she has processed approximately 400 complaints received by the residents regarding blight. Discussion ensued regarding the roles of the ZEO and the Building Inspector as related to blight. A soft campaign utilizing the website and social media encouraging residents to get involved and report any blight was suggested. It was agreed that the EDC would need to take a blended approach, beginning with the list of properties and finding a way to determine the reasons behind their inability to clean up their property and work with the owners to do so.

Commissioner Hewitt was tasked with investigating possible organizations that assist with blight clean-up that they might forward to these businesses as part of their soft campaign. Chairman Protz will also discuss the issue and their ideas with Town Planner Marcia Vlaun and ZEO Liz Burdick for any thoughts and suggestions they might have.

8. New Business

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a. Tax Incentive Plan

The Tax Incentive Plan affords qualifying businesses to obtain certain tax incentives for proposed updates. A sub-committee would be created to review and determine the cost/time of the tax incentive(s), which would, then, be presented to the EDC, who will review their determination and vote to send the item to the Town Council, who will, then, review and vote to send the item to a Town Meeting for a final vote. It was agreed that the EDC would having nothing to lose be moving the issue forward and that the ultimate goal of the Plan would be to open a conversation with the business(es) and begin a dialogue.

Motion made by Commissioner Toner, seconded by Commissioner Hewitt, to send the Tax Incentive Plan to the Town Council for further consideration. Discussion: None. Voice Vote, 4-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

b. Review of Current How to Start a Business form

The item has been completed and will be removed from the agenda.

c. Communications Plan

The need for a multi-faceted strategic plan to welcome and assist new businesses, communicate with existing businesses, and work in conjunction with the Town Council and Town Offices was discussed. The Plan should follow the Commission's charge, goals, and objectives and include a timeline as the Commission works on reconstituting itself. The possibility of scheduling a series of brainstorming sessions or Special Meetings to discuss the Communications Plan was discussed. It was agreed to schedule the meetings for the First Mondays of every month at 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. in Room 102, if available, and the presence of the Recording Secretary and Councilor Rogulski was requested. The working group would be comprised of the EDC members and no quorums will be necessary.

The Commissioners were tasked with reviewing the EDC's Rules and Regulations and Charge and introducing at least three goals that the Commission feels the Communications Plan should meet.

d. Letter to 2015 New Businesses

Motion made by Commissioner Toner, seconded by Commissioner Napierski, to approve the letter to new businesses as drafted by Chairman Protz and inform the Town Council regarding the letter prior to it being mailed. Discussion: Commissioner Toner suggested sending the letter to the Town Council to inform them and the Mayor that the letter is being mailed should any of them be contacted. Councilor Rogulski will include the letter in his report during the Town Council's Regular Meeting so as to ensure that both the Mayor and Town Council are informed. Similarly, Chairman Protz will inform Town Planner Vlaun. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

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9. Status of Businesses

a. Existing Properties/Businesses

1) Drive-in Property

Councilor Rogulski reported that, to date, no official filings regarding the sale of the Drive-in Property have been received nor have any site plans been filed with the Planning & Zoning Department. He also reported that Oakdale Plaza is continuing their search for tenants and the owner is continuing to work on the Plaza. The owner has also purchased the property located across the street.

b. Report on New Businesses (Commissioner Toner)

No new businesses have been filed/started this month, per the Zoning office.

c. Lost Businesses

1) Targeted Mailings

Commissioner Toner spoke with the Mayor and contacted three agencies to determine possible options for *Long Shots Sports Café*, which, according to the judicial website, was served with an eviction notice. He spoke with the owner and discussed her options, including the Patriot Express Program, which requires no credit scores and was deliberately created for unbankable businesses. She stated that she would speak with her partner and Commissioner Toner provided her with his business cards for both the EDC and SCORE along with his home phone number. She has not yet contacted him.

d. Prospective Businesses

1) Water Park Rumors – *no information*

10. Feedback from the Townspeople and Businesses – *none*

11. Proposed Recipients for Business Recognition Award – *none*

12. Report from Town Council Liaison Joe Rogulski

The business profile for the State of CT was reviewed and a PowerPoint presentation by Town Planner Vlaun at a recent Planning & Zoning Commission meeting regarding the Economic Development/Plan of Development was presented and the need for the locally-elected officials to go to the State Assembly and make a difference was discussed. An article entitled, “Is Connecticut Self-Destructing?” from the *Manhattan Contrarian* was also introduced.

Motion made by Commissioner Toner, seconded by Commissioner Hewitt, to discuss the presentation with the Town Council in an effort to start making a difference, starting with the Town of Montville. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

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13. Communications

Councilor Rogulski informed the Commissioners regarding a *Business Breakfast: Small Business Update with Seth Goodall, SBA, and Catherine Smith, DECD*, hosted by the Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce this Friday, January 22, 2016 at 7:45 a.m. at Groton Inn and Suites.

14. Remarks from the Public (3 Minute limit) – *none*

15. Remarks from the Commissioners – *none*

16. Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Toner, seconded by Commissioner Protz to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville