

Town of Montville
Economic Development Commission
Special Meeting Minutes for April 25, 2016
7:00 p.m. – Montville Town Hall - Room 102

1. Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Protz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Present were Commissioners Marjorie Gatheral, Walter Hewitt, Christopher Napierski, John Protz, Jim Toner, and Dianne Williams. Absent was Commissioner Karl Butzgy. Also present were Mayor Ronald McDaniel and Town Council Liaison Joseph Rogulski (7:02 p.m.).

4. Presentations

a. Mayor Ronald McDaniel – EDC Vision

Vice Chairman Protz introduced Mayor McDaniel and stated that, on behalf of the EDC, he has been regularly meeting with Town Planner Marcia Vlaun and would like to hear from the Mayor what and how the EDC can do to assist the Town of Montville.

Mayor McDaniel stated that he is often approached by and meets with a number of potential developers, who have a genesis of a concept or a plan and are interested in the Town due to its ideal location with the Route 32 corridor and being halfway between New York and Boston. While these developers are armed with the genesis of a concept or plan, the Town is unable to release any information, until a site plan has been submitted, for a variety of reasons, including respecting the privacy of the developer, who has not yet made any final decisions. Both the Planning & Zoning and Building Departments work diligently with the developers to help streamline the process.

In terms of the EDC's proposed Tax Incentive Plan, the Mayor stated that part of the problem is that the plan creates winners and losers and lacks the inclusion of any incentives for existing businesses. He recommended the Commission involve themselves with the various regional organizations, including SCORE, seCTer (Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region), and the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) Commission. He is also happy to arrange for seCTer Executive Director Stephen MacKenzie to speak with the EDC. He commended the Commission's efforts in organizing the Business Forum, which offered resources to businesses and provided the EDC with necessary exposure. Other programs for businesses include the C-PACE (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy) Program for energy cost savings and the PTAP (Procurement Technical Assistance) Program.

Commissioner Toner agreed that he has learned from attending CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy), seCTer, and CERC (Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Inc.) meetings that the Town is situated in an ideal location for businesses, including a waterfront area, which, if developed, would significantly increase the manufacturing industry,

and the large vacant properties located south of the Mohegan Sun Casino and the old Drive-In property, which would be ideal for the establishment of a Convention Center. In response, the Mayor informed the Commission that the Town's infrastructure is currently unable support such large complexes. While the Town has made efforts to expand their infrastructure to support such developments, the affordability and the amount of red tape one must go through with the State often hinders and stifles the process. Additional issues include a lack of resources, including the lack of a sufficient number of hotels and public safety staffing. As such, the only currently developable area in the Town is along the Route 32 corridor. He continues to support the Town's economic development by serving on a number of various regional boards and commissions, all of which work together to make things happen. Plans to further develop the necessary utilities for the Town is primarily dependent upon the priorities of the State.

Also discussed was the rewriting of the Blight Ordinance so that it conforms and adapts with the State's Ordinance and its respective changes and designates the Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) and Wetlands Enforcement Officer (WEO) as the enforcer of the Ordinance, rather than the Building Official. For the most part, the Town visits and speaks with the owners of the property and the issues are resolved, but should the owners not voluntarily comply, fines are assessed or people are hired to clean up the area and efforts are made to recoup those funds. A Town Blight Campaign Day was also discussed, but, due to liability and permission issue, such a campaign may not be possible.

Discussion ensued regarding the Commission's lack of proper tools to help encourage the development of businesses and the overall challenges and frustrations the Commission has been/is facing in their efforts. To this end, the EDC has been working on developing a strategic communications plan in an effort to better communicate and work with the Town so that they can accomplish their goals. Vice Chairman Protz requested that when projects come to his attention with which he feels the EDC could help to forward them to the Commission, which is filled with a broad base of members of various backgrounds and expertise. The Mayor agreed that the input of the EDC is invaluable and the involvement and engagement of the Commission with the various regional organizations will be most fruitful and reiterated extending an invitation to seCTer's Executive Director MacKenzie to one of their meetings.

The Commissioners thanked the Mayor for his time.

5. Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (3 Minute limit)
Bruce Duchesneau, 45 Sharp Hill Road, a former business owner and resident of Montville, commented on the issue of blight along Route 32 and the need for enforcement.

Councilor Rogulski departed from the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

6. Alterations to the Agenda
Items 7(a-c) were eliminated from the agenda as they have already been approved.

7. To Consider and Act on a Motion to approve:
 - a. The Special Meeting Minutes of February 1, 2016 – *removed*
 - b. The Regular Meeting Minutes of February 17, 2016 – *removed*
 - c. The Special Meeting Minutes of February 29, 2016 – *removed*
 - d. The Regular Meeting Minutes of March 21, 2016 – *tabled*

8. Unfinished Business
 - a. EDC Website Design (Commissioner Napierski)

Commissioner Napierski presented a map indicating over 100 existing businesses located along the Route 32 corridor. The map can also be color-coded based on the business type as well as a pop-out window indicating the locations of available properties. Webmaster Donna Geary informed the Commission that the website policy will need to be reviewed and approval will need to be obtained by Information Systems Director Bill O’Neill. Any updates regarding the available properties will be obtained from the Town Planner. Detailed information regarding the available properties will not be posted.

 - b. Blight Ordinance
 - 1) Organizations assisting with blight cleanup (Commissioner Hewitt)

Commissioner Hewitt recommended that the scope of the issue should first be defined, followed by the development of a strategy and an investigation of the available and appropriate resources. It was suggested to invite Building Official Vernon Vesey to determine the scope of the problem and speak with the Commission regarding how the Commission might be able to help him in his efforts.

 - c. Tax Incentive Plan

Reviewing and revising the Tax Incentive Plan, including renaming the plan as a Business Incentive Plan, was discussed. The primary idea of the plan, being one that not only entices new businesses, but also encourages a dialogue with existing and prospective businesses was reiterated. A special brainstorming meeting to discuss the Plan was suggested.

Motion made by Commissioner Hewitt, seconded by Commissioner Toner, to schedule a Special Meeting to discuss the Tax Incentive Plan on Monday, May 2, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. Voice vote, 5-0-1. Voting in Favor: Commissioners Hewitt, Napierski, Protz, Toner, and Williams. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Commissioner Gatheral. Motion carried.

 - d. Strat Comms Working Group update (Commissioner Protz)

The two remaining items for discussion are: Maximize Opportunities Available and Collaborations. The importance of getting involved and collaborating with the regional organizations and making connections with surrounding towns was discussed. Listing each of the regional organizations’ programs and a short description of their respective offerings on the EDC website as well as utilizing the existing avenues of communication, such as *The Day* and *The Montville Times*, was discussed.

9. New Business

Commissioner Williams requested these items be presented and discussed at the Special Meeting due to time constraints. Commissioner Hewitt will scan and send the handouts received from the Regional Forums to the Commission for review.

- a. Discuss EDC Duties and Powers
- b. SECTER SWOT Event and CERC Regional Forum
- c. Highlights of CERC Regional Forum
- d. Highlights of the seCTer SWOT event – Development of the 2016 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

10. Status of Businesses

- a. Existing Businesses – *none*
- b. Report on New Businesses (Commissioner Toner)
Commissioner Toner reported on two (2) new businesses, B&D Autobody Repair Shop and a home repair business. He also reported that a property located on Old Colchester Road is being cleared, surveyed and staked.
- c. Lost Businesses – *none*
The Town does not receive information regarding lost businesses until the paperwork has been filed, which can occur months following the closing of a business
- d. Prospective Businesses – *none*

11. Feedback from the Townspeople and Businesses

- a. Proposed Recipients for Business Recognition Award
Commissioner Gatheral, whose term is due to expire, handed the vendor information for the award plaques to Vice Chairman Protz.

12. Report from Town Council Liaison Joe Rogulski – *not present*

13. Communications – *none*

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

15. Remarks from the Commissioners

Commissioner Gatheral stated that it has been a pleasure working with the Commission, on which she has been serving for the past eight (8) years. She commended the group and wished them well. The Commission thanked her for her service and words of encouragement.

16. Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Toner, seconded by Commissioner Napierski, to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 p.m. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.