

**TOWN OF MONTVILLE  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Regular Meeting Agenda – July 30, 2020 -- 6:30 p.m.  
VIRTUAL MEETING**

The Town of Montville will be utilizing a virtual GoToMeeting service for this meeting.

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On March 14, 2020 Governor Ned Lamont issued an Executive Order 7B suspending in-person open meeting requirements, and to hold such meetings or proceedings remotely by conference call, videoconference, or other technology.

Link: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/Executive-Orders/Lamont-Executive-Orders/Executive-Order-No-7B.pdf>

For all publicly broadcasted meetings, public comment on agenda items or topics in accordance with the Town charter may be submitted in writing in advance or by live audio via GoToMeeting.

Written comments must be emailed to the Town Clerk's Office at [townclerk@montville-ct.org](mailto:townclerk@montville-ct.org) at least **1 working day in advance** (if the meeting is on a Monday the questions must be submitted by close of business the previous Friday).

Written comments may not be read in their entirety, but rather similar messages may be aggregated or paraphrased for submission to the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Live audio comments may be made via GoToMeeting by calling from your telephone.

Comments will only be accepted at times designated for public comment by the Chair of the meeting. The Parks & Recreation Commission Rules of Procedure, decorum, timeliness, and suitability shall be followed and enforced in the same manner as if the meeting were held in person.

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**1. Call to order.**

Chairperson Hajj called the meeting to order at 6:42 p.m. (due to technical difficulties with the recording equipment).

**2. Pledge of Allegiance.**

All stood and pledged the flag.

**3. Roll Call.**

Present were Commissioners Matt Beaupre (by phone), Noah Carver, Jon Chase, Jennifer Hajj, Heather Kenniston, Morgan Matthewson, Kate Southard, and Rocky Stone. Also present was Town Council Liaison Colleen Rix and Parks & Recreation Director Peter Bushway.

**4. Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (3-minute limit).**

Resident Scott LaVallie remarked that as a former Commission member he never had a communication issue with Director Bushway. He said a small group could make positive changes but said former Commissioner Karen Perkins was combative and made demands of Director Bushway who works for the Mayor.

**5. Discussion of Director Bushway's response to recent commissioner resignations.**

Commissioner Stone referenced Director Bushway's response to the commissioner resignations by summarizing communications regarding tents for summer camp initiated by Director Bushway at the May 20, 2020, Commission meeting. That communication was followed by the Director's email of June 6 to parents and Mayor McDaniel about the tents. Commissioner Stone questioned when the decision about the tents was made; why they were needed; the cost of the tents (\$10,000) for 30 children and whether more would attend camp; and the State waiver. He then spoke about the email exchange thereafter but said he understood funds were not to be spent until a parent survey was done. Commissioner Stone then referenced a Director email on June 4 on State camping guidelines that was dated in March and differed from the information reported by Director Bushway and shared untimely to the Commission six (6) weeks later; in addition to a June 5 email regarding the agreement. Commissioner Stone said although he believed Director Bushway was doing a good job he stated communication must go both ways. He spoke of his having asked several times about the cost of the tents and being told by Director Bushway that Mayor McDaniel had authorized him to get the tents and spend the funds for them. Commissioner Stone questioned if the Mayor had the authority to spend Parks & Recreation funds.

Commissioner Chase had questions regarding Director Bushway's response letter and focused on the content about commissioners having not attended Commission events although former ones had. He stated he did not join the Commission to sell hotdogs and referred to the roles of volunteers per the Town Charter and not to the perspective posed by Director Bushway.

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Commissioner Beaupre echoed the comments of Commissioner Chase and said Director Bushway was doing a good job running the Department. He stated he did not attend every event but did what he could to be present and/or help out. He said he found the comment regarding attendance at events to be offensive and asked if it was targeted to the Commission or those commissioners who resigned. Commissioner Beaupre also commented on attendance at meetings which he said he did not find in the Town Charter or bylaws. He also concurred with Commissioner Stone about the timeliness of information received stating it could be better. He spoke of being approached and questioned by community members about Parks & Recreation events of which he had no knowledge. Commissioner Beaupre said Department updates cannot be detained until Commission meetings.

Chairperson Hajj commented by stating she wanted a professional working relationship with the Department but said “gaps need to be filled” and things need to be out in the open. She spoke to her issues with the Director’s response letter regarding prior commissioners not having concerns although she had heard feedback to the contrary. Chairperson Hajj spoke of having a healthy, working relationship and the sharing of information at or in advance of meetings. She commented on time spent at meetings asking questions about details not included in reports and time spent proofreading/editing the newsletter that should be done beforehand with more time being spent discussing programs. Chairperson Hajj also commented she was not aware Director Bushway welcomed calls, spoke of the good job he did running the programs, but said a lot of the heavy work for the carnival and Trick-or-Trunk was done by the Commission. After having said Director Bushway’s letter would be filed with the meeting minutes, Chairperson Hajj spoke to the Commissioners’ diversity of opinions, lives, background, professions, open minds, and perspective as to why they do not see eye to eye adding that Commissioners were critical when information was not forthcoming or no feedback was received but said she was willing to move forward.

Director Bushway spoke about the differing expectations of the different Commissions stating there has always been someone attending events in the past. He acknowledged the current Commission having new members and to moving forward. He also commented on the defined, different personalities of the four (4) former commissioners who were vocal, and he admitted to being frustrated and not knowing what to do, to which he said his letter attested.

**6. Discussion of Commission Roles and Responsibilities.**

Chairperson Hajj said she wanted the roles and responsibilities of Parks & Recreation Commissioners available to all members and filed with the minutes. Commissioner Chase spoke of having received all of the letters of resignation but said he focused on the recent ones noting previous letters gave no reason for the resignation. He provided statistical percentages on the overall resignations noting varying reasons for them on none at all. He did note that all of the resignations in 2014 were by women and cited the Director as the reason. Commissioner Chase said the Commission and Director Bushway should reflect and learn from what was said.

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**7. Review of recent commission members resignations.**

Chairperson Hajj spoke to the informational documents including the Commission Bylaws and the 2008 memo that all had received and asked what it meant for the Commission and its purpose. Communication concerning finance reports was discussed with Director Bushway stating the Finance Director monitored and prepared the Department budget with him that was a cause of confusion as the Bylaws address a Commission Finance Committee in that role. Director Bushway said there had not been one under his purview. Also, the Nominating Committee as addressed in the Bylaws is chaired by the Commission vice-chair. Commissioner Chase said the Bylaws outline the subject of FOI requests and the posting of agendas and minutes but asked whether changes may or may not be applicable. Chairman Hajj spoke about the approval of plans and to the level of involvement of the Commission in daily operations versus that of oversight with discussion about the summer concert, the carnival, and holiday parade and decorations. Questions were asked whether the involvement of the Commission in these activities was legal per the Town Charter and the Commission Bylaws. Director Bushway explained how the Commission became involved with the holiday decorations. He said the Town Council approved the funds for the decorations that were put into the Department budget and are installed by Public Works. Commissioner Chase spoke to past interest by the Commission with the holiday decorations and whether it is the responsibility of the Commission or oversight instead by the Town Council, a consideration for the Town Council liaison. Per a question by Commissioner Stone, Director Bushway said the time involved with the holiday decorations was not really an issue. He spoke about the holiday decorations and the seasonal ones, the flags, but said relinquishing the task may result in a display of decorations the Commission does not want. Similarly, the Commission considered the same in context to the carnival as posed by Commissioner Chase who spoke of having the Town Council establish a carnival committee. When asked by Commissioner Stone whether the carnival and holiday decorations could be added to the Bylaws, Commissioner Chase talked about the legal hierarchy—the Charter, ordinances, bylaws, and rules and procedure documents—and the proximity for change of these documents. He said he would defer to the Commission’s desire. Commissioner Matthewson countered with the argument for having events that the Town enjoys and Commissioner Stone suggested formulating questions to the Town Council. Town Councilor Rix reported that the Commission establishment of the carnival and holiday parade were approved by the Town Council and said relinquishing them may disband the Commission. She added the decisions for these events are made by the Commission and suggested focusing on one specific item per month. She also said that of the meetings she attends as liaison the Commission meetings were the longest and she also clarified that the Nominating Committee is formed the day of that meeting. Director Bushway then gave history on the start of the carnival which was originally started by a volunteer committee that faltered because of an issue regarding funds. He was asked by the Commission to restart it and it was then approved by the Town Council. Commissioner Beaupre added comment on the holiday decorations and the carnival and reiterated Town Council approval of it. He said prior commissions ran it as a non-profit that created issues with funds. He also said the carnival subcommittee was formed to do the leg work for the

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event and said although it is a lot of work, he supports it as a Parks & Recreation function. Per discussion, Commissioner Matthewson asked about the distinction between lengthy requests versus questions to the Mayor to which Director Bushway responded he did not know as it had not been previously posed. Chairperson Hajj concluded the discussion by speaking about the defined agreements by the Commission with the Board of Education and other entities; formalizing plans for the Director's review; and the Director having spoken with the Public Works Director about the status of some of the recreational fields—she said all of these excited her.

**8. Appointing committee members (Nominating, Maintenance, By-laws)**

Motion by Commissioner Stone; seconded by Commissioner Carver to table *Appointing committee members (Nominating, Maintenance, By-laws)* for further discussion. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 8-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

**9. To Consider and Act on a Motion to approve creation of Orientation Packet and maintenance plan of packet.**

Chairperson Hajj spoke of the information packet compiled by Commissioner Stone. The packet included documents such as the Commission Bylaws and the Montville Code of Ethics. Town Councilor Rix confirmed that all of the documents were available online on the Town website and said if the aim was to create an informational packet, she suggested the Commissioners read the information and then talk more about it.

Motion by Commissioner Southard; seconded by Commissioner Matthewson to create a Parks & Recreation informational packet as a resource for new commissioners. Discussion: Commissioners Carver and Chase complimented Commissioner Stone for all the work he did. Chairperson Hajj proposed consolidating the information into a PDF formatted record for depository and making it available to new commissioners. Roll Call vote: *In favor:* Commissioners Beaupre, Carver, Chase, Hajj, Kenniston, Matthewson, Southard, and stone. *Opposed:* none. Motion carried.

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

Resident Scott LaVallie, 727 Old Colchester Road, referenced a comment by Commissioner Beaupre stating he was not required to attend a certain number of meetings upon joining the Commission.

**11. Remarks from Town Council Liaison.**

Town Councilor Rix remarked on Chairperson Hajj's statement concerning Item #5 of the Agenda referencing her drive and professionalism and then expressed her excitement for the Commission. She also spoke about her meeting with Town Clerk Sandberg about the letter from former Commissioner E. Cicchese who was dismayed her letter was not read into the record of the Town Council meeting concerning the Commission resignations. Town Councilor Rix confirmed the letter was read and as a courtesy read the letter into the Commission record. She also spoke about an email she received from former Commissioner Nancy de la Cruz who asked why no commission members attended the

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Parks & Recreation concert. Town Councilor Rix commented on the positive energy of the Commission and her feedback to the Town Council on the same.

**12. Remarks from Parks & Recreation Director Bushway. -- *None***

**13. Remarks from the Commissioners.**

Commissioner Stone remarked he attended the high school graduation on the concert date and spoke on the Commission moving forward, as did Commissioner Beaupre who added that attacks on commissioners was “unfortunate: and “not the right way to go.” Chairperson Hajj commented she was excited about going forward and said commissioners need not defend why they are not at a public event. She commented on the letter read into the record stating negative people are unfortunate and said allies on the Commission is the wrong way to go.

**14. Adjournment.**

Motion by Commissioner Chase; seconded by Commissioner Carver to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 8-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Gloria J. Gathers  
Town of Montville Recording Secretary/Minutes Clerk

**AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE ON THE TOWN  
OF MONTVILLE WEBSITE.**