

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Agenda – February 16, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

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

Please call number below to attend the meeting at:

[1-\(605\) 313-5935](tel:1-605-313-5935)

[PIN # 401237](#)

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 FreeConferenceCall.

Written comments must be emailed to the Town Clerks Office at 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 Economic Development Commission.

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

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

1) Call to Order

Chairman Hewitt called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

All stood and pledged the flag.

3) Roll Call

Present were Commissioners Sierra Davis, Heather Harris, Sheelagh Lapinski, Thomas McCarthy, Christopher Napierski (7:07 p.m.), and Chairman Walter Hewitt. Also present was Town Planner Marcia Vlaun. Commissioner Mickey Gillette and Town Council Liaison Colleen Rix were absent. A quorum was present.

4) Alterations to the Agenda -- *None*

5) Remarks from Marcia Vlaun

Town Planner Vlaun reported the current unemployment rate for the Town is 7.8% that represents 686 people who are unemployed are tied to layoffs at the casinos. She then gave an overview of the Town 2022 Grand List representing 2.1% or 28 million with real estate 13.5%, and an increase in personal property of which motor vehicles (mostly pickup trucks) are 7.9%. Town Planner Vlaun said the numbers will be better next year for real estate. She reported on permits for wetlands permits this month—1) Chapel Hill Road a 34-lot unit; 2) apartments across from the Polish Club, and 3) apartments on Jerome Road and Maple Avenue. She also said FTD Foreign Trades was approved for New London with the benefit to store parts and save tax dollars until assembled. Also, the Roc-Ten property was cleared and was said to be a great site for a wind project given it is the only pier after New London. Town Planner Vlaun said she would contact the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Inc. (CERC) to upgrade promotion of the site. She also reported on the top 10 taxpayers on the Grand List of which the Montville Power Station, Rand-Whitney, Home Depot, and Yankee Gas were on the list. She also responded to Commissioner McCarthy on the status of the Roc-Ten property that is listed for industrial use. Commissioner Lapinski commented the mobile park on Meetinghouse Lane was sold. Town Planner Vlaun said there was not a lot of expansion that could occur at the park but said newer, improved mobile homes could be acquired. Chairman Hewitt thanked Town Planner Vlaun for her updates and she then left the meeting.

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

Chairman Hewitt asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

7) To Consider and Act on a Motion to approve:

i) The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 19, 2021.

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy; seconded by Commissioner Lapinski to approve the Regular Meeting Minute of January 19, 2021. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

8) Unfinished Business

a) Montville real-estate properties for development

Chairman Hewitt reported on speaking with an interested party on the Connecticut's Sitefinders list who was looking for a property for garages in Town. He said the resident

decided to not move forward and instead found a site out-of-town. He also said another Sitefinder came out today but nothing that was Town ready. Commissioner Napierski reported on the searcher from last month looking for an understanding of Town daycare needs. Commissioners discussed closed, open, and shuttering daycare sites in Town; a fact that many parents are working from home; and potential Town sites that would be a good fit for one.

b) New Business Report

Chairman Hewitt commented on two (2) new businesses on the report—a woodworking/farmhouse décor and a powder coating/graphic design. Commissioner McCarthy reported Pennell’s was expanding into the former Montville Auto location.

c) Business Survey – TBD

Commissioner Harris stated until regular hours return, and things stabilize the survey was on hold. She responded to Commissioner McCarthy about the purpose for the survey which was to get feedback as to whether the business was doing well, would they consider moving, etc. She explained she received no responses by email but had planned to make personal visits and or send out correspondence until the pandemic began. Commissioner Harris spoke of a possible help sheet for businesses struggling with Covid restrictions but was not sure if it would be appropriate at this time. She said the help sheet would include links through the State and CDC that would be posted to EDC page on the Town website. Chairman Hewitt spoke about Covid-19 and reopening resources on the Eastern CT Chamber of Commerce website. Commissioner Harris asked if anyone found information to send it to her. Commissioner McCarthy said businesses would love to know they are supported. Chairman Hewitt said he would forward Commissioner Harris’ updated email address and information about a new grant application to benefit children and families.

d) Chamber Business After Hours. --TBD

Commissioner Harris said nothing has restarted and it was likely the subscription for it has lapsed.

e) New Business Report (***This Agenda item is a duplicate of Item 9.c.and can be removed from the Agenda.***)

9) New Business

a) Webinar: Introduction to New London Foreign Trade Zone.

Chairman Hewitt spoke of the link to the webinar sent to him by Mayor McDaniel and said he would put it on the EDC blog. He also spoke of the email from Commissioner McCarthy having contacted the company regarding road salt and truckers are complaining about the wait for it. Commissioner McCarthy said he spoke with Steve Farrelly who had looked at Roc-Ten as a potential site for road salt but said he was still looking. Commissioner McCarthy also said Steve’s site in Ledyard is in a watershed and he was told to remove it. Chairman Hewitt asked if Commissioner McCarthy could reach out to Mr. Farrelly about the potential salt location. Commissioner McCarthy also spoke of his conversation with and email to Tom Cook of Performance Computer of New England who responded with his reasons for closing his business. This email was shared with the Commission. Per Commissioner McCarthy, Mr. Cook explained that the main reason for closing his business was Covid-19 and the “undesirable business wackery” where his business was located. The incriminating business

was investigated and shut down, but another like business has moved in. Commissioner Davis spoke of watching the State Police and the Department of Labor in the process of their investigation. The Commission discussed municipality ordinances regarding types of businesses such as a massage parlor, relegating them to certain areas, and how to prevent that type of business in Town and the legality of the same. Commissioner Napierski mentioned the shortage of parts addressed in Mr. Cook's response that he said effects processors for use in electronic items. Chairman Hewitt suggested finding other kinds of businesses for storefronts and working with those business owners. Commissioner Harris spoke of her confusion about Mr. Cook's email and whether he is looking for a temporary or permanent space for his business. Commissioner McCarthy inquired if the Commission had a realtor to promote Town properties; Chairman Hewitt commented on a residential and commercial ones who have presented at the Commission. Commissioner McCarthy agreed to contact Lt. Radford as to whether there is an active investigation of the new massage business and Mr. Cook as well to find out if he needs help from a realtor. *Commissioner Davis left the meeting at 8:02 p.m. due to a personal reason.*

10) Report from Town Council Liaison -- *None*

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

Chairman Hewitt asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

12) Remarks from the Commissioners and Town Council Liaison

Commissioner McCarthy remarked that as a new member he was trying to get a sense of the roles of the EDC. Specifically, he wanted to know what the Commission is allowed to do, whether it had the ability to push new business to the Town, if there was a list of empty storefronts; and said he spoke with Colleen in the Town Planner office to learn of businesses wanting to expand. Chairman Hewitt addressed the questions by saying lists of properties are found on Sitefinders, the Commissioners ask each other about available properties, and said Town Planner Vlaun has good incite about properties. He then referenced the Town website as a source of information of the EDC's purpose as stated in the Town Charter and said the EDC page on the website gives examples of the Commission duties. Chairman Hewitt said there is a lot the Commission can do but it must decide how to act—he referred to the follow up with Mr. Cook. He then spoke of what the condition can do—propose ideas, advertise, prepare books, attempt to find developers for properties, and maintain contact with Mayor McDaniel and Town Planner Vlaun. He also commented on his idea for a nonprofit to form/move ideas. Chairman Hewitt also explained the Mayor is invited once a year to speak with the Commission addressing the direction of the Town and the Town Plan for Development that utilizes census data. He stated the current Plan of Development is on the Town website that he encouraged the Commission to review. He also suggested review of the GIS that includes a wealth of information and a good tool to identify zoning, flood zones, and other topographical data and tax information. Commissioner Hewitt said the EDC is part of the Plan and also commented on tax incentives. He asked the Commissioners to send their questions for the Mayor to him over a two-week period and said he would invite Mayor McDaniel who he would contact to the next Commission meeting. He informed the Commission of the Mayor's last EDC idea that was to deal with blighted properties. Commissioner McCarthy spoke of the new Town position for an assistant blight officer who would be working 15 hours a week.

13) Townspeople and Business Feedback

a) Proposed Recipients for Business Recognition Award

This item has been tabled due to the pandemic.

14) Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Lapinski; seconded by Commissioner McCarthy to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Gloria J. Gathers
Recording Clerk, Town of Montville

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