

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes – April 18, 2022 – 6:00 p.m.

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. Comments will only be accepted at times designated for public comment by the Chair of the meeting. The Montville Town Council Rules of Procedure, decorum, timeliness, and suitability shall be followed and enforced.

1) Call to Order

Acting Chair Hernandez called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

All stood and pledged the flag.

3) Roll Call

Present were Commissioners Mickey Gillette, Meracus Hernandez, Walter Hewitt (by phone), Sheelagh Lapinski, and Christopher Napierski (by phone). Absent were Commissioners Sierra Davis and Thomas McCarthy. A quorum was present.

4) Alterations to the Agenda -- *None*

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

Acting Chair Hernandez asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

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

a) The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 21, 2022.

Motion by Commissioner Lapinski; seconded by Commissioner Gillette to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 21 2022. Discussion: Commissioner noted a correction to the title of the book on web design *Information “Architecture” for Web & Beyond*, not “Art” that he referenced. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Gillette; seconded by Commissioner Gillette to approve the March 21, 2022 minutes, as amended. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

7) Unfinished Business

a) Leadership Coach Pro Presentation by Michelle Hartley.

Motion by Commissioner Gillette; seconded by Commissioner Lapinski to continue the Leadership Coach Pro Presentation by Michelle Hartley to the May Commission meeting due to the absence of Ms. Hartley. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

8) New Business

a) New Business Report – *No discussion*

b) Staff Updates:

a. Discussion about town passport – Peter Bushway, Parks & Recreation Director Introduced by Asst. Planner Bezanson, Parks & Recreation Director Bushway spoke on his Department's passport event, a scavenger hunt involving local businesses that took place between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Stuffed polar bears (50) each with a name were hidden inside local restaurants; participants returned the completed passport with the names of the bears and earned a prize. There are no specific rules for passports. A printed one was circulated by Director Bushway who mentioned cost for passports, prizes (gift cards), there being no set rules for participating businesses, choosing a time frame for the event with the key being to drive people to businesses. The passport can also include a comments section and a vote for the best business. Per discussion, the following was considered: 1) include all local businesses; 2) put the passport online; 3) include QR codes for cell phone use; 4) include Town trails for outdoor activity or places that are free; 5) seasonal passports; and 6) limiting the number of patron business visits. Asst. Planner Bezanson proposed partnering with Parks & Recreation, inquired about communication with the businesses, cost estimates and advertising. Family friendly businesses and excluding casino businesses was discussed. Director Bushway was thanked for the information he provided.

b. Sustainable CT

Asst. Planner Bezanson reported having reviewed the current list of Town businesses and compared it to GIS. She spoke with representatives of the Towns of Norwich and Groton as to the setup for their EDC web page. Town of Groton has a GIS team of five (5)—three (3) full-time and (2) part-time. Their cost for the web page development was \$25,000; it has an in-house technician who does upgrade for \$5,000 a year; and has a membership with Advance CT that can tailor web pages according to needs. Asst. Planner Bezanson proposed marketing through seCTer and the Eastern Chamber of Commerce. A presentation by seCTer will be given at next month's meeting concerning their new program that offers free marketing and website development. Also mentioned was CTPASS that provides data for municipalities that help small businesses, veterans, women, and minorities. The Town of Norwich does not have an EDC; it works directly with CT Economic Development and communicates information publicly via social media posts mostly for traffic notices. Commissioner Gillette asked Asst. Planner Bezanson to send her handout for the information she obtained to the Commission and the Recording Secretary.

As to updating the EDC web page, Asst. Planner Bezanson suggested speaking with local businesses as to their vision for the page but doing research beforehand. She also mentioned the 2022-2023 budget emailed to the Commission in addition to telephone versus website surveys and asked for permission to contact Ms. Hartley. Also, the deadline for Sustainable CT certification has been moved from August to spring 2023. An update was given on the new flyer by Parks & Recreation and senior services and including them on the Town Calendar and the Montville Times. Acting Chair Hernandez referenced Arist.co, a company specializing in text message survey. Asst. Planner Bezanson spoke of uploading flyers to the website, visiting CT.gov for its calendar of events, working with the Norwich Chamber of Commerce and the Eastern CT Chamber of Commerce, and thanked Commissioner Hewitt for the information he sent her. Proposal was made by Commissioner Gillette to promote the Farmers Market to local vendors for their produce. Commissioner Hewitt expressed the importance of frequent website updates, timely information on events, and links to other sources to drive information traffic to the EDC website. Also, the EDC argued for the same when the Town

website was updated; Asst. Planner Bezanson will speak to IT. Spotlights on specific town businesses and posting to Facebook from calendar events was mentioned. Asst. Planner Bezanson also reported as staff she would be preparing the meeting agenda and asked the Commission to email postings for it to Co-Chairs Davis and Napierski. Also, she asked the Commission to please do not “respond all” to emails that would be troublesome concerning meetings. When questioned by Commissioner Gillette as to why she was now preparing the agenda, she referenced posting of the agenda within 24 hours of a meeting that was not always done. Also, a link will be on the website for those needing to call-in to the meeting.

9) Report from Town Council Liaison

Town Councilor Yuchniuk reported the Norwich Chamber of Commerce is back from its pandemic hiatus.

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

Acting Chair Hernandez asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

11) Remarks from the Commissioners and Town Council Liaison – *No remarks*

12) Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Gillette; seconded by Commissioner Lapinski to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.