

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes – November 21, 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

Co-Chair Napierski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

All stood and pledged the flag.

3) Roll Call

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

Also present were Asst. Planner Colleen Bezanson and Town Council Liaison Robert Yuchniuk (7:10 p.m.).

4) Alterations to the Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Davis; seconded by Commissioner Gillette to add Item 8.b.f, Scavenger Hunt for Local Businesses to the Agenda. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 4-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Gillette; seconded by Commissioner Davis to move up Item 8.b.e, Election of Officers to Item 5 and renumber the remaining Agenda items accordingly. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 4-0, all in favor.

5) **Election of Officers**

Nominations for Chair

Commissioner Davis nominated Commissioner Gillette for Commission Chair. There were no other nominations for chair.

Motion by Commissioner Davis; seconded by Commissioner Gillette to close the nominations for Chair and appoint Commissioner Gillette as Chair. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 4-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

Nominations for Vice-Chair

Commissioner Gillette nominated Commissioner Hewitt for Commission Vice-Chair—he declined the nomination.

Commissioner Napierski nominated Commissioner Davis for Commission Vice-Chair—she

declined the nomination.

Commissioner Hewitt nominated Commissioner Napierski for Commission Vice-Chair.

Motion by Commissioner Hewitt; seconded by Commissioner Gillette to close the nominations for Vice-Chair and appoint Commissioner Napierski as Vice-Chair. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 4-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- 6) Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (3-minute limit)
Vice-Chair Napierski asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.
- 7) To Consider and Act on a Motion to approve:
 - a) The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 17, 2022.
Motion by Commissioner Davis; seconded by Commissioner Gillette to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 17, 2022. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 4-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- 8) Unfinished Business
 - a) Improve Business Awareness
 1. Discussion of business survey results
Asst. Planner Bezanson reported the business survey resulted in one (1) response from Montville Animal Hospital and a call came from someone with a question about the actual survey. The original deadline for the survey was today and feedback was requested from the Commission as to next steps for the flyer. The suggestions were to email it, post it on the webpage and mail the returned ones to businesses. The cost for mailed was questioned. Asst. Planner Bezanson will have the mailing cost for the next meeting.
 - a. Discussion of Business List and Mapping
Asst. Planner Bezanson asked for feedback from the Commission for changes for the business list and mapping. She will work with Meredith to make updates to businesses particularly those in the strip malls.
 2. Discussion of webpage.
 - a. New website design ideas
Asst. Planner Bezanson remarked the homework for the Commission last month to provide their likes and dislikes of the updates to the website. She noted the changed background to aerial view and by clicking on the business name a pop-up of business or webpage will appear. Also mentioned was the search that will access the EDC webpage. Changing the names of categories, a breakdown of the services categories, redefining health/beauty versus wellness, medical facilities, and recreational activities were discussed. Specific businesses in the services categories were also referenced. The Commission will consider further a categorical breakdown depending on public use of the website and as long it meets sustainability requirements.
 - b. Adding Funding Sources to current webpage—Connecticut Small Business Boost Fund & CT State Small Business Seminars
Asst. Planner Bezanson remarked the funding information on the EDC page is a bit outdated. Also mentioned was available CT State Small Business Seminars and the CT Small Business Boost Fund, a resource that provides funding to small businesses and nonprofit organizations

that can be borrowed between \$5,000 - \$500,000 depending on eligibility. Other requirements for the Boost Fund include businesses with less than 100 employees and annual revenues of less than \$8 million. Loan rates for this new resource are fixed at 4.5% with repayment period with interest over a 60-72 month term. The seminars and the Boost Fund information will be posted in the news section of the Town webpage and on the EDC webpage.

c. Updates of Links on website

Asst. Planner Bezanson highlighted links on the Town website from information on the EDC brochure. Workforce and business resources with links were discussed and whether the business resources should include descriptive information. Transportation such as SEAT was proposed for the Business Directory. It was agreed contact names would be removed. Asst. Planner Bezanson will work with IT to get the changes done and the Commission will then review them.

3. Maintaining a social presence

a. Discussion of a business forum

Vice-Chair Napierski reported on prior EDC business forums and explained business presenters had their own brochures to promote their businesses. Commissioner Hewitt explained the one-to-one approach used by former Commissioner Toner when contacting and speaking with businesses or agencies.

b) Welcome New Businesses

1. Review of Business Report

Asst. Planner Bezanson commented on the new business listed on the report added after the last meeting and noted on the report.

2. Brochure for new businesses

Asst. Planner Bezanson and the Commission discussed the current EDC brochure and ways to shorten the business contacts. New ideas for a single sheet pamphlet that includes business categories as links was mentioned. EDC business cards obtained by former Commissioner Toner was mentioned and his approach by calling an agency and obtaining information published on the EDC webpage. Commissioner Hewitt remarked that when speaking with an agency obtaining the person's name is still important in addition to their contact information that is a good resource. Asst. Planner Bezanson explained the EDC brochure would be updated and still exist. Vice-Chair Napierski proposed updates to business names, phone numbers, and a hyperlink that will not be a name.

c) Recognition of Businesses

1. Discussion of Presentation of Excellence Award

Commissioner Davis reported the cost for the award would not be more than \$45 but the comments for the plaque must be obtained from Commissioner Lapinski. Presentation of the award at the December Town Council meeting will probably not happen.

2. New Business Introductory Letter

Commissioner Davis reported she is still working on the introductory letter.

9) New Business:

a) Staff Updates

1. Planning and Zoning Commission applications update

Asst. Planner Bezanson summarized the report sent to the Commission on Planning and Zoning applications and acted upon at their October and November meetings.

2. Scavenger Hunt for local businesses

Asst. Planner Bezanson reported she spoke with Director Bushway regarding the Parks & Recreation scavenger hunt. The flyer for the event was originally to be dispensed today. The Commission was asked if it wanted to be included on the flyer. She explained how stuffed bears are hidden in local participating businesses requiring participants to enter the store, locate the bear and complete their registration sheet. Vice-Chair suggested the Commission come up with its own idea to support local businesses.

b) Discussion of CPACE presentation and future informational presentations for business

Asst. Planner Bezanson inquired if the Commission wanted to hold a CPACE presentation for specific businesses or one like the presentation to the Commission. It was agreed the topic would be revisited in a couple of months.

c) Discussion of Budget FY 2024

Asst. Planner Bezanson gave an overview of FY 2024 that will be finalized by Town Planner Burdick. Costs were discussed concerning prior EDC forums for coffee, donuts, and advertising for the event; the costs for the business award on a quarterly basis, training/conferences, printing, reference material, and the salary of the recording secretary.

d) Meeting Dates for 2023

Motion by Commissioner Gillette, seconded by Commissioner Davis to approve the Commission 2023 Meeting Dates. Discussion: The January 16 meeting date will be moved to January 18. Commissioner Hewitt asked whether there was a holiday in February that would require changing the meeting date. Voice vote: 4-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

Commissioner Davis left the meeting at 7:58 p.m.; the remainder of the meeting was informational.

e) Election of Officers – *This item was moved up on the Agenda.*

10) Report from Town Council Liaison

Town Councilor Yuchniuk had no report and apologized for his tardiness.

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

Vice-Chair Napierski asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

12) Remarks from the Commissioners and Town Council Liaison. -- *None*

13) Adjournment

The meeting ended at 7:58 p.m.