

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes – July 17, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.

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

1) Call to Order

Chairperson Gillette 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), Meracus Hernandez, and Sheelagh Lapinski. Commissioners Thomas McCarthy and Christopher Napierski were absent.

Also present was Town Council Liaison Robert Yuchniuk (6:27 p.m.), Alternate Serg St. Felix who is awaiting swearing in and wants to help with economics, and Robert Santy, an independent consultant.

4) Alterations to the Agenda -- *None*

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

Chairperson Gillette 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 May 15, 2023.

Motion by Commissioner Hernandez; seconded by Commissioner Davis to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of May 15, 2023. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 5-0-0, all in favor.
Motion carried.

7) Unfinished Business

a) Discussion of status of New Business Introductory Letter.

Director Burdick of the Land Use and Development Department reported there were no updates on the new business introductory letter. The Department is currently short-staffed.

b) Review of Business Report

Director Burdick remarked that questions from the Commission concerning the business report may be directed to Asst. Planner/Interim Wetlands Officer Meredith Badalucca in her office.

c) Discussion of Presentation of Excellence Award.

Chairperson Gillette reported that he would deliver and present the Excellence Award to Breakfast at Diana's between 9 a.m. – 12 noon and asked the Commission if anyone wanted to join him on a day to be determined. Director Burdick reported the Town Council recognized the award recipient at its June 10 meeting.

d. Discussion of status of Town Hall "Business Spotlight" policies.

Director Burdick reported she had no update on the Business Spotlight policies.

8) New Business:

a. Introduction of and presentation by Montville EDC Support Services Consultant, Robert W. Santy.

Director Burdick reported on having excess funds in her department budget and contracting with Consultant Bob Santy for economic development support. Consultant Santy gave a brief summary of his work in the field of economic development that included working at SERC, now known as AdvancedCT, where he ended his career. That job entailed visiting the 169 Connecticut towns and municipalities and educating them on the ABC's of economic development. Consultant Santy explained the premise of economic development as a benefit to keeping taxes down. Commission specific economic development criteria included strategic planning and the role of the Town and its assets in the region as well as establishing or exploring goals as questioned by S. St. Felix. Consultant Santy's proposal to provide economic development services, a community scan that would include interviewing key community leaders and determining roles and responsibilities for economic development, training on the fundamentals of municipal economic development, and continuing economic development support were reviewed. Director Burdick remarked on the Town Plan of Economic Development that was started in 2021 and outlined the separate areas of the Town, infrastructure, the wells in the Chesterfield area and developer expansion for a tax incentive.

Chairperson Gillette asked that a copy of the PowerPoint presentation by Consultant Santy is forwarded to Commissioners Hewitt and Napierski.

b. Discussion of seCTer competitive grant program materials.

Director Burdick reported on her attendance at seCTer meetings noting that small towns do not have adequate staff, which is also a factor in economic development. Consultant Santy noted the Town has assets in real estate with its different village centers and is one of the largest at 42 sq. miles. She also remarked on seCTerRise, a competitive grant program, funded through the Department of Economic and Community Development designed to help small business growth. Businesses may apply for a grant up to \$20,000. Fifty percent of the grant awards will be administered to minority, veteran, or women-owned or businesses in a distressed municipality. Montville is #15 on the distressed list. Director Burdick will speak with IT about adding this information to the EDC webpage.

c. Discussion of CT Small Business Boost Fund materials.

Director Burdick remarked on the Connecticut Small Business Fund that will be a "one-stop shop for business owners and nonprofits to get support before, during, and after the loan application process." Support to businesses will come from lenders and technical assistance providers who have worked with small businesses.

d. Staff projects updates.

Director Burdick updated the Commission on Town development projects that included a solar project, a gas station at the Home Depot driveway, a vacant lot next to Chili's, and industrial buildings proposed at 69 Fitch Hill Road in addition to the potential from waterfront properties. Industrial inquiries received via GIS data has been outsourced to GAI that provides more data to the public. Consultant Santy suggested the use of Sitefinder at AdvancedCT and will facilitate talks with potential businesses. Sitefinder does not charge a fee although there are two (2) national sites that do according to Consultant Santy. He also reported that AdvancedCT at a state level markets to businesses internationally and stated towns to the best job of selling their assets. Additionally, he commented on regional and state conference availability on economic development. S. St. Felix inquired about having an Arby's location in town; Consultant Santy replied that commercial business ventures use demographics to collect data for potential sites. Commissioner Davis remarked on the number of pizza and Chinese food establishments in Town and discussion of the same on social media. She equated limiting them by comparing it to the issue with the current cannabis business moratorium in Town. Director Burdick noted that potential businesses also obtain data on traffic, utilities and other criteria. S. St. Felix remarked on a smaller, mid-tier grocery that will provide fresh fruits and vegetables as a potential for the Town.

9) Report from Town Council Liaison

Town Councilor Yuchniuk reported on the Excellence Award issue to Breakfast at Diana's at the Town Council meeting and asked if the award would be presented monthly or quarterly. Chairman Gillette clarified that the award would be presented quarterly. Town Councilor Yuchniuk also asked about the Business Spotlight; Director Burdick replied that help would be obtained from Consultant Santy on the same. He also reported on receipt of a signed, State contract for the boat launch and the possibility of construction y next year.

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

Chairperson Gillette asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

11) Remarks from the Commissioners and Town Council Liaison.

Commissioner Davis inquired about presentation of the next Excellence Award; Director Burdick asked about the criteria for the award. The recipient must work in Town, give back to the community, have window and door appeal in a brick and mortar structure. The Commission will vote in August for presentation of the next award in September. The names of proposed businesses can be obtained by reviewing prior minutes, per Commissioner Hewitt.

12) Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Lapinski; seconded by Commissioner Davis to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 p.m. Voice vote: 5-0-0, all in favor. **Meeting adjourned.**