

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes – June 17, 2024 – 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 Chairperson Mickey Gillette, Vice-Chair Serg St. Felix (by phone), Commissioners Sierra Davis, Walter Hewitt (by phone), Meracus Hernandez (by phone), Sheelagh Lapinski and Christopher Napierski. A quorum was present.

Also in attendance were Matthew Davis, Director of Land Use and Development and Town Council Liaison Kevin Lathrop. Absent from the meeting were Assistant Planner Meredith Badalucca and Mayor Leonard Bunnell who was attending a Town Board of Education graduation ceremony.

4) Alterations to the Agenda -- None

5) Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Lapinski; seconded by Commissioner Davis to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 15, 2024. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 7-0-0, all in favor.
Motion approved.

6) Remarks from the Public (3-Minute Limit)

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

7) Standing Business

a) Report from the Town Council Liaison

Town Councilor Lathrop reported on the housing construction across from the Town Hall, the drive-in property of which there is no status, the plans for Route 32 development, and the acquisition of funds for the Animal Shelter.

b) EDC Commission Communications -- None

c) New Business Report

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The Business Report was submitted to the Commission in the meeting packet. The new businesses for May were all home-based—painting, 3D design, photography, and construction and remodeling.

d) Project Updates

Director Davis provided updates on going projects as follows:

1. The application for the CIF Planning Grant in the amount of \$250,000 was submitted last week. The purpose for the Grant is a planning study for review of the Route 163 corridor and north/south of the Casino on Route 32 as well as east/west of it. Although a decision about the Grant will not occur until the fall, plans will move forward with preparation and a Request for Proposal (RFP). If the CIF is granted, work will not begin until early 2025 under the purview of Planning & Zoning by the establishment of an ad-hoc steering committee. A Commission member will participate on the committee; Commissioners were asked to give thought on the same.
2. Discussion will start with Planning & Zoning for amendments to regulations as they are not user friendly, specifically the text and reconfiguration of them. Some revisions were made in 2018 but areas for improvement will include the Overlay Zone from Route 32 to move the corridor to promote development. It was noted that some areas are established residential and that will be reviewed in addition to the scope of uses of the Zone. Administrative site plans will be considered and put on the agenda but there is a cost factor. It was explained that most Planning & Zoning Commissions meet twice a month unlike the Town. A house extension was used as example for timeliness concerning regulations for administrative site plans and for those applicants making minor changes. Revisions to Town regulations will begin and the Commission will be kept apprised as it will need to provide feedback on a formal package of revised regulations.
3. Director Davis and Mayor Bunnell have talked about an EDC Tool Kit, i.e. tax abatements and other tools to offer to perspective developers. Having that ability and means for competing with other towns in addition to reaching out to seCTer and others is key to the advancement of economic development.
4. The Town will also conduct a review for road bonds. Per a meeting with Public Works Director John Carlson, the process will be reviewed holistically to include things the Town should have done, i.e. Dock Road. Improvements that will supplement the pier project are estimated to be done by next year. More conversations will be had with the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) Supervisor Derek Albertson concerning their plans and limitations and the CIP Grant land study.
5. Paving road work began on Route 32 today.
6. A meeting was held with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) about the Community Connectivity Grant pursued by former Director Vlaun that has gone dormant. Multi-use sidewalks on Route 32 did not move forward and a meeting with Public Works will be held on this matter.

7. The State Conservation Commission is reviewing regulations for open space. Comments from the Commission will be submitted by Director Davis to insure there are no problems. The State updates its Open Space Plan for future land use. It is important as a plan must be consistent with its objectives as comments were sent that did not comply with Route 32 and Route 163.
8. Speakers will be sought to debrief the Commission on topics with a more technical aspect. Familiarity with the WPCA and State statutes and plans should be known. Sewer capacity and ground water distribution has input on development and is necessary information to understand why they are important. Other topics include the legal aspects of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG), demographics, industry trends, i.e. AI, and online shopping that precipitated the demise of the Crystal and Enfield Malls.
9. Next week on June 24th, the new bakery that is an offshoot to its East Lyme location, will open in Town. Director Davis spoke at the last meeting about having the Commission greet/meet with new Town businesses.
 - e) Business Excellence Awards – No action

8) Ongoing Business

a) CIF Planning Grant Status and Endorsement

This item was discussed under Agenda Item 7d. Director Davis noted that the grant application process closes on June 21 and he will send the Commission an update on the same.

b) Consulting Services RFP

Director Davis reported he did not have the opportunity to look at this item having just gone through the budget process. There is an engineering line item of which the consultant would fall under but the Town Council did not approve it. Town Councilor Lathrop who sits on the Finance Committee reported that trends were looked at for what was being used in consideration for the budget. He noted that having talked with staff it was noted that the Fire Marshal plans were not being sent for review and that more funds may be needed due to salary changes.

c) Commission Work Program

Director Davis reported that he wants to develop a program for guidance of the Commission with hope that it would be engaged in it. He will prepare a formal memorandum on this program.

d) Appointment of member and alternate to CIF Grant Advisory Committee

Director Davis remarked that action this item was not needed at this time as the CIF Board will make its recommendations in October.

9) New Business -- None

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

Chairperson Gillette asked three (3) times for remarks. Director Davis thanked the

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Commission for responding to the Administrative Assistant on attendance at the meeting. He noted that if there is not a quorum, staff can be doing others things instead of preparing for the meeting.

11) Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Davis; seconded by Commissioner Lapinski to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 p.m. Voice vote: 7-0-0, all in favor. **Meeting Adjourned.**