

**Town of Montville  
Economic Development Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes – April 21, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.  
Room 203- Town Hall  
310 Norwich-New London Turnpike, Uncasville, CT 06382**

**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 Meracus Hernandez and Commissioners Sierra Davis, Walter Hewitt, Sheelagh Lapinski, and Rich Kohlbrecher. A quorum was present.

Assistant Planner Meredith Badalucca and Mayor Lenny Bunnell were also in attendance. Town Council Liaison Kevin Lathrop was absent from the meeting.

**4. Alterations to the Agenda**

**Motion** by Chairperson Gillette; seconded by Commissioner Davis to move up New Business Item 9A, 'Presentation by Kevin Brown of Norwich Community Development Corporation' on the Agenda. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. Motion approved.**

**5. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- a) December 16, 2024
- b) January 22, 2025
- c) March 17, 2025

**Motion** by Commissioner Davis; seconded by Commissioner Hernandez to approve the EDC Regular Meeting Minutes of December 16, 2024; January 22, 2025 and March 17, 2025. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. Motion approved.**

**9.a Presentation by Kevin Brown of Norwich Community Development Corporation**

Speaker Kevin Brown of the Norwich Community Development Corporation (NCDC) began his presentation by explaining that he did not know what the EDC is doing in Montville but would speak to what Norwich has done and the resources that are available for development. ARPA funds were used in Norwich to refresh its downtown spaces making them ADA compliant for retail spaces and/or living spaces downtown with 14 units on 1<sup>st</sup> Street plus 30 units on another. Explained was the use of ARPA funds, a public and private partnership or 1 to 1 match, in addition to a 2011 \$2.5 million bond for downtown revitalization that took 10 years to evolve in Norwich. The NCDC obtained \$10.3 million in ARPA funds. The movement of ARPA involves a relationship approach that sometimes creates clashes, but

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developers must comply as well as support the Building Official. Mayor Bunnell explained that the Montville EDC is a recommending Commission with its attention on new builds and in this endeavor attracting developers that has always been problematic. K. Brown noted that grants are available, but they require someone who knows how to find these funds. He reported on the Community Investment Fund (CIF) that began in Connecticut in 2021. In 2023, this fund proposed \$875 million for use in communities in distress—Norwich won \$32 million—and with a proposal for distribution of \$175 million over five (5) years. Responding to a question by Assistant Planner Badalucca concerning a grant writer, K. Brown explained that he had done some in late 2021 and set forth talks weekly about the CIF preparing a list of items for consideration that was whittled down for process and prioritization. Five (5) core persons plus himself and a grant writer were included in this process that was a hard, necessary component as the CIF does not pay for a grant writer nor for administrative and legal costs. (It was noted that the Town CIF application was prepared by the former director of Land Use and Development.) Round 7 of the CIF process opens this Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup> with three (3) additional rounds to follow. Per a question from Mayor Bunnell about moving the CIF process along, K. Brown suggested contact with lobbyists and politicians to lobby for CIF as some have funds but are not using it. The focus of the Town of Montville should be to keep chasing the money to get empty spaces working and procuring private investors to establish a partnership with the Town. The establishment of legalized enterprise zones which the Town has on its east and west side is outlined for development. Where is the largest land for utilization including brown fields via the Office of Brown Field Remediation, contact with American Business Cannabis (ABC) that has moved along strongly in Town at \$150,000 per year, and developing relationships were suggestions proposed by K. Brown; he also noted the need for a Town Planner for the long haul and communication with the CT Department of Economic and Community Development. The Mayor noted that the DECD was involved in the progression of the new Animal Control Facility in Montville. Other organizations to contact are AdvancedCT and to CT Main Street whose focus is working on suburban development. Lisa Mercurio of AdvancedCT holds a hybrid meeting monthly and the Town should get on its distribution list. K. Brown will facilitate the Town's contact with AdvancedCT and DECD in order to find ways to get funds for small businesses. He also uses and chairs seCTer that is tasked to rollout \$700,000 a year for RISE Grants. It requires a municipality to find one or two prime spots for that purpose. For small businesses, \$10,000 is available with no startup; \$20,000 for businesses of one (1) year and \$20,000 for businesses of three (3) years. These business loan amounts are at a rate of 4.5 %. At the conclusion of the presentation, K. Brown responded to questions posed by the Commission about developing key relationships and mentioned other development organizations in CT; specifically, the CT Municipal Development Authority and the Capital Regional Development Authority (formerly known as the Municipal Regional Development Authority (MRDA) that assisted with funding to help six (6) communities in the Hartford area and the CT Municipal Development Authority charged with development assistance to all 163 communities in CT totaling \$60 million but is expected to be \$90 million by the end of the current legislative session. Tax breaks for overlays was again mentioned and has been in effect since 2019 in Montville according to Assistant Planner Badalucca. Mayor Bunnell thanked K. Brown for speaking with the Commission and noted his particular interest in the RISE Grant. Many options through seCTer was again

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mentioned by K. Brown in addition to the biggest impediment to development which is parking and signage for it.

**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 had no report having missed the last meeting of the Town Council.

b) EDC Commission Communications -- None

c) New Business Report

Chairperson Gillette reported on one (1) new business in March—a candle studio and gift shop with sign.

d) Project Updates

Assistant Planner Badalucca reported on project updates before the Planning & Zoning Commission that include an 11-unit multi-family development at 145 Route 32 & 18 Powerhouse Road; modifications to a subdivision concerning drainage issues at 22 Sub 3 East Lake Road; a 4-lot subdivision at Silver Falls Road; and review of the FY2026 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

**8. Ongoing Business**

a) CIF Planning Grant Status and Endorsement

Assistant Planner Badalucca and Mayor Bunnell reported that a consultant was hired but there is still a question regarding funding and the paperwork involved. Jim Butler, who used to work with Southeastern Connecticut Council of Government (SECCOG), will be staying on. Per questions from the Commission there was discussion concerning Jim Butler's role as administrator; exploring private foundations for grant writing and development including independent grant writers; and movement of the Town in the right direction with CIF.

b) Consulting Services RFP

This item discussed under Agenda, Item 8.A.

c) Commission Work Program

Mayor Bunnell proposed that the Commission gives thought to the presentation by Kevin Brown, particularly the information pertaining to the Rise Grant. Assistant Planner Badalucca responded to interest in seCTer and remarked that alternates in addition to Chairperson Gillette are being sought for the Planning & Zoning Commission.

**9. New Business**

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a) Presentation by Kevin Brown of Norwich Community Development Corporation  
This item was moved up on the Agenda.

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

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

**11. Adjournment**

**Motion** by Vice-Chair Hernandez; seconded by Commissioner Davis to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 6-0-0; all in favor. Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted by,  
Gloria J. Gathers  
Recording Secretary, Town of Montville