

**Town of Montville**  
**Economic Development Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes – December 15, 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 6:01 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

All stood and pledged the flag.

**3. Roll Call**

Present were Chairperson Gillette, Vice-Chair Meracus Hernandez (by phone) and Commissioners Sierra Davis, Walter Hewitt and Rich Kohlbrecher. Commissioner Sheelagh Lapinski was absent. A quorum was present.

Land Use and Development Director Dennis Goderre, Assistant Planner Meredith Badalucca, Mayor Lenny Bunnell and Town Council Liaison Rachael Novak were also in attendance.

**4. Alterations to the Agenda -- None**

**5. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- a) September 15, 2025
- b) October 20, 2025 (Informational)

**Motion** by Commissioner Davis; seconded by Commissioner Hewitt to approve the EDC Regular Meeting Minutes of September 15, 2025 and October 20, 2025 (Informational). Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 5-0-0, 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 Council Liaison Novak had no report but remarked that she wants to learn about what the Commission is doing.

- b) EDC Commission Communications -- None

Assistant Planner Badalucca referred to a letter in the meeting packet from Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) concerning a program on Thursday, March 12, 2025 from 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM in Hartford. ‘Building A Main Street Business Ecosystem’ is the topic of the program as “**small businesses are the heart of every vibrant downtown.**” Experts and statewide

changemakers will present panel discussions, case studies of effective approaches, actionable insights to attract new and support existing businesses and networking opportunities to connect with leaders and partners. If the Commission is interested in attending this program, they were asked to please contact the Assistant Planner. Director Goderre also commented on a nice letter from Sign Pros, a Town business that has relocated near Home Depot.

c) New Business Report

Chairperson Gillette remarked on new Town businesses from the Business Report for the months of October and November 2025. Per the report, there were four (4) new home businesses in the month of October—a home bakery of sourdough breads, a cake pop home bakery, a home office bookkeeping service and home public relations / remote digital marketing. In November 2025, there were four (4) new businesses—a brick and mortar sign making shop and a tattoo shop, in addition to two (2) home businesses for sewing and rental arbitrage.

d) Project Updates

Assistant Planner Badalucca reported on the December 9, 2025 Regular Meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission. A redevelopment of site for mixed use was approved for 2227 Route 32 that will have two (2) 750 sf retail spaces on the lower level, and multi-family use on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> levels. New Business included approval for a Coastal Site Plan review for a single-family residence and improvements on shore land as a result of changes to State regulations. In other New Business, a public hearing will be set for January 27, 2026 for an Adaptive Reuse Regulation Application—an Amendment to add new sections requested by the Applicant, the Town of Montville. Specifically, applicants can propose and develop standards to meet their needs, i.e. use of brownfields. Director Goderre commented that the amendment is beneficial for properties not in use and is a common zoning process to help development and redevelopment.

**8. Ongoing Business**

a) CIF Planning Grant Status

Director Goderre reported on a recent meeting that had a good turnout of 50-60 people. He remarked that the vision for the Town Center is moving forward, a look toward the future, from the cove to Dunkin Donuts. The next public meeting will be in February or March and it was reported that the documentation for Round 8 of the Grant was submitted on December 8. Details were reported about the proposed Town Green, buildings, and the recreational trail from Camp Oakdale to the boat launch. Discussion was also had about the benefit of data tabulated from a survey. Marketing measures were mentioned in addition to the geographical location versus the traditional for a Town Hall and businesses.

b) Commission Work Program

Director Goderre remarked on having heard that discussion has been had about the role of the Commission, its purpose and its responsibilities per the Town Charter as well as the purpose

and what the Commission does for the Town—an overview and draft mission of the EDC Work Plan. Per discussion by the Commission, the role of the Commission is not understood as it was said to have no power along with the back and forth regarding the business honors as questioned by Commissioner Davis, who closed her Town business earlier this year. The advisory status of the Commission, promotion of small businesses and the problems that are trying to be solved was also a topic as well as how to get agency presence, ways to get matters before the Town and altering the Charter to clarify the role of the EDC questioned/discussed by Commissioner Kohlbrecher. Also, the voluntary status of Commission members, the proposal for a separate nonprofit as New London and Norwich did in the past that was a consideration, in addition to the Commission having sent letters to businesses and used State resources to bring businesses together and requesting manpower were mentioned by Commissioner Hewitt. The status of the Commission as a recommending body and the progress its made over the last three (3) months was noted as well as the overarching goal for things to happen was expressed by Vice-Chairperson Hernandez.

Director Goderre acknowledged the organization and vision for the Town as suggested by Commissioner Hewitt with the question raised as to how to get there. Staff members doing economic development, creating business partners and marketing can be a business model for the Town. Also, the Town website should include offerings to businesses and families about the Town; and further, creating a strategic plan the Commission wants to do. Commission engagement by communicating online was done until it was noted that it was Town-owned and having people on the website was not always realistic nor was there a lot of interaction. As well, the effectiveness of 10-minute Commission meetings, having a strong affinity for small business, the work done for autism, the rent on Route 32 and the increases of it allowing for a search out of town was all commentary from Commissioner Davis. Director Goderre emphasized a willingness for the tasks that the Commission wants to operate and accomplish by way of marketing and creating a business plan. Town Counsel Liaison Novak noted that a website for the Town was needed as a complement to the Town government website; something that tells the story of the Town of Montville according to the Director who noted he was there to help. Commission discussion included the following: the small EDC budget; getting the word out; refreshments for meetings, and business cards for the Commissioners (*Commissioner Hewitt*). Assistant Planner Badalucca remarked that business cards can be created from her office. Also, showing a need and increasing the Commission budget for a Commission that has been adrift; but plans mean more than just attending a meeting; it is also what is done outside of the meeting (*Mayor Bunnell*).

As a continuation of the EDC Work Plan under discussion by the Commission, Director Goderre referenced tasks that included a merchant association for the Town Center and making Route 32 more amenable for pedestrians. There is also a need for new web presence that will be getting national press for the Town including a request for funds, etc. and requests for funding in subsequent projects. As to the question from Commissioner Kohlbrecher

concerning a State EDC, the Director noted seCTer as a funding source as well a pipeline for funding to a statewide development corporation and CT Municipal Development Corporation. He noted that seCTer was interested in returning to talk with the Commission possibly in January, although they wanted to come in November. As to the question by Commissioner Kohlbrecher concerning a feedback process for the Town and things that do or do not work, knocking on doors was mentioned at the last Commission meeting as noted by the Director. Mayor Bunnell added that some will not cooperate. Lastly, at the January 12, 2026 Town Council meeting, the EDC will provide a report with the Chair that was to be done at its meeting last month. Director Goderre also stated that going door to door and taking inventory are priorities No. 2 and No. 3 on the EDC Work Plan. It is important to talk and volunteering to talk is a good thing as suggestion can be made for people to come and discuss issues at the Commission meeting, according to Commissioner Hewett. Assistant Planner Badalucca also referred to Town tax information for use as reference for a business moving out of town or having closed. Commissioner Hewitt reported on having created a domain some years ago, a web page that caught flack, but would be good as a repository for social media, etc. Mayor Bunnell will discuss the same with IT Director O'Neill, and a meeting will be scheduled by Director Goderre. He also noted that Assistant Planner Badalucca can make a template for the Commission business cards. A memorandum on the same will be sent to all Commissioners.

For the January 2026 meeting, Director Goderre charged the Commission as to what they want to do and how.

- c) The Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce – Empty Storefronts Listing Discussion

Discussion of this Agenda item was had in Item 8b.

- d) seCTer Discussion

Discussion of this Agenda item was had in Item 8b.

## 9. New Business

- a) Adoption of 2025 Meeting Schedule

**Motion** by Commissioner Davis; seconded by Commissioner Hewett to approve the Commission 2026 Meeting Schedule as follows: Wednesday, January 21, 2026; Wednesday February 18, 2026; March 16, 2026; April 20, 2026; May 18, 2026; June 15, 2026; July 20, 2026; August 17, 2026; September 17, 2026; October 19, 2026; November 16, 2026; December 21, 2026 and Wednesday, January 20, 2027. All meetings will begin in Room 203 at 6:00 p.m. Meetings that conflict due to holidays will be held on Wednesday. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 5-0-0; all in favor. Motion approved.**

- b) Election of Officers

**Nomination for Chair:** **Motion** by Vice-Chair Hernandez; seconded by Commissioner Hewitt to nominate Mickey Gillette as Chairperson. Discussion: No other nominations were

had for Chairperson. **Voice vote: 5-0-0; all in favor. Motion approved.**

**Nomination for Vice-Chair: Motion** by Chairperson Gillette; seconded by Commissioner Davis to nominate Meracus Hernandez as Vice-Chairperson. Discussion: No other nominations were had for Vice-Chairperson. **Voice vote: 5-0-0; all in favor. Motion approved.**

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

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

**11. Adjournment**

**Motion** by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Kohlbrecher to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 5-0-0; all in favor. Meeting adjourned.**

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