

**Town of Montville
Town Council
Public Hearing Minutes
June 8, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Montville Town Hall – Town Council Chambers**

1. Call to Order
Chairman May called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
Present were Councilors Brian Baker, Billy Caron, Joseph Jaskiewicz, Tim May, Rachael Novak, Nicholas Sabilia, and Kate Southard. Also present was Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr.
4. Public Hearing

**TOWN OF MONTVILLE
NOTICE OF ORDINANCE HEARING**

The following Ordinance, copies of which may be obtained at the office of the Town Clerk during office hours, was introduced at a regular meeting of the Town Council held May 11, 2026 and a public hearing thereon and for its consideration by the Town Council will be held at Town Hall Council Chambers, June 8, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.

**Chapter 370, Article III
All-Terrain Vehicles Ordinance**

§ 370-18 Declaration of Policy.

§ 370-19 Definitions.

§ 370-20 Prohibition.

§ 370-21 Penalties.

§ 370-22 Sign Posting Required for All-Terrain Dealers.

§ 370-23 Sale of Gasoline for Illegal Purposes.

§ 370-24 Appeal.

§ 370-18 Declaration of Policy.

As authorized under C.G.S. Section 14-390 and 14-390m, the Police Chief and Public Safety Commission have become concerned with unregistered and unsafe vehicle use in Montville. Therefore, all-terrain vehicles, mini bikes, mini motorcycles and dirt bikes on streets and public property are prohibited.

§ 370-19 Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this section, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section:

All-terrain vehicle means a self-propelled vehicle designed to travel over unimproved terrain

and which has been determined by the commissioner of motor vehicles to be unsuitable for operation on the public highways and also defined as any three (3) or more wheeled motorized vehicle, generally characterized by large, low-pressure tires, a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and handlebars for steering, which is intended for off-road uses by an individual rider on various types of non-paved terrain. Such vehicles do not include trail bikes, golf carts, agricultural tractors, farm implements and construction machines.

All-terrain vehicle dealer means any person engaged in the business of manufacturing, selling, leasing or renting all-terrain vehicles, mini bikes, as defined by this section, mini-motorcycles, as defined by this section, or dirt bikes, as defined by this section, at retail having a regular and established place of business within the Town.

Dirt bike shall mean a two-wheeled motorized recreational vehicle designed to travel over unimproved terrain and not designed for travel on a highway.

Mini-motorcycle shall mean a vehicle that has not more than three (3) wheels in contact with the ground, has a manufactured seat height of less than twenty-six (26) inches measured at the lowest point on top of the seat cushion without the rider, and is propelled by an engine having a piston displacement of less than fifty (50) c.c.

Pocket bikes, mini bikes, mini sport bikes, mini dirt bikes, chopper scooters, motor scooters, bicycles with helper motors, and any other similar vehicle (hereinafter collectively "mini bikes") shall mean any wheeled vehicle designed to transport one (1) or more persons that is powered by any type of motor.

As used in this section, "all-terrain vehicle", "mini bike", "mini motorcycle" and "dirt bike" shall not include the following:

- (1) Any registered "motorcycle" as defined in General Statute § 14-1(61);
- (2) Any registered "motor vehicle" as defined in General Statute § 14-1(60);
- (3) Any moped that meets Federal Department of Transportation guidelines for use on streets and is approved by the State of Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles for use on streets, provided, however, the moped is operated pursuant to all applicable state laws, rules, and regulations and all Town ordinances;
- (4) Any wheelchair or similar mobility assisting device utilized by a person with a physical disability or whose ambulatory mobility has been impaired due to age or physical ailment;
- (5) Any self-propelled snow plow, snow blower or lawn mower when used for the purpose for which it was designed and operated at a speed not to exceed four (4) miles per hour;
- (6) Any vehicle owned or leased by the Town; and
- (7) Any electronic assistive mobility device such as a wheelchair.
- (8) Electric ("E") Bikes as defined in General Statutes § 14-1.

§ 370-20 Prohibitions

- (1) It shall be unlawful for any person to operate an all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike and/or for any owner of an all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, motorcycle, or dirt bike to knowingly permit the operation of his/her all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike on any street or sidewalk in the Town or on

- any public property, including but not limited to school property, playgrounds and parks, within the Town.
- (2) It shall be unlawful for any person to ride as a passenger on an all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike and/or for any owner of an all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike to knowingly permit any person to ride as a passenger on his/her all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike operated in violation of subsection (1) above.
 - (3) It shall be unlawful for any person to operate an all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike, ride as a passenger on an all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike, on any private property within the Town, without first obtaining the permission of the property owner if the property is not owned by the operator, passenger, and/or owner of the all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike. Notwithstanding, it shall not be unlawful to operate the same on private property unless the owner of the private property makes a complaint to the Town.
 - (4) This section shall not be applicable to any dirt bike being operated upon any road or highway provided that, (i) said dirt bike is properly and validly registered with the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles and (ii) is being operated in compliance with all applicable motor vehicle laws of the state.

§ 370-21 Penalties.

- (1) Any person who operates an all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike in violation of subsection 370-20(1) and/or 370-20 (2) above, or is the owner of an all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike who knowingly permits its operation in violation of subsection 370-20 (1) and/or 370-20 (2) above, shall be fined one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) for a first violation, shall be fined one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00) for a second violation, and shall be fined two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) for a third or subsequent violation.
- (2) Any person aged sixteen (16) or older who rides as a passenger on an all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike in violation of subsection 370-20(2) above, or is the owner of an all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike who knowingly permits a passenger to ride on his/her all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike in violation of subsection 370-20(2), shall be fined two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00).
- (3) Any police officer that observes any person in violation of this section may detain such person for purposes of enforcing the provisions of this section. Any all-terrain vehicle used in violation of this section may be seized by any police officer and may be forfeited to the Town, subject to any bona fide lien, lease or security interest in the all-terrain vehicle, including, but not limited to, a lien under General Statutes § 14-66c.
- (4) Any all-terrain vehicle ordered forfeited pursuant to this section shall be either (i) sold at public auction conducted by the Town pursuant to Connecticut General Statute § 14-390, with the proceeds of such sale being paid to the finance director of the Town who shall deposit such proceeds into the general fund of the municipality, or (ii) be destroyed by the Town.

§ 370-22 Sign Posting Required for All-Terrain Dealers.

Each all-terrain vehicle dealer in Montville offering for sale, lease or rental any all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike shall post this section in a prominent

location at said all-terrain vehicle dealer's place of business. Any all-terrain vehicle dealer who violates any provision of this section shall be fined one hundred and fifty dollars (\$150.00).

§ 370-23 Sale of Gasoline for Illegal Purposes.

No retail dealer of gasoline shall sell, offer for sale, or attempt to sell, any article or product represented as gasoline for use in an all-terrain vehicle, mini bike, mini motorcycle, or dirt bike as defined in this Ordinance, unless that vehicle is conveyed to and from the retailer's premises by a registered motor vehicle, as defined in General Statute § 14-1, as may be amended, and no individual shall purchase or attempt to purchase gasoline for this purpose.

- (1) Signs with the words "FUELING OF UNAUTHORIZED VEHICLES PROHIBITED" in English and "PROHIBIDO DESPACHAR GASOLINA A VEHICULOS NO AUTORIZADOS" in Spanish at least one (1) inch in height with a contrasting margin shall be posted at all dispensing locations. The location of warning signs shall be based on local conditions but shall be visible and legible from all gas pumps, subject to zoning sign permits.
- (2) An individual or retail dealer of gasoline who violates any provision of subsections (1) and/or (2) of this section shall be fined two hundred dollars (\$200.00) per each day the violation occurs.

§ 370-24 Appeal.

An appeals hearing process shall be made available to the owner or lien holder prior to forfeiture of a motorized recreational vehicle, as provided in Connecticut General Statute § 7-152c, as amended.

This ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days from the date of its adoption.

Dated at Montville, Connecticut this 12th day of May 2026.
Katie Haring, Montville Town Clerk

Chairman May welcomed everyone to the meeting and was pleased to see many members of the public in attendance, stating that their participation is an important element in the country's democracy. He invited those in opposition to the Ordinance to speak.

Kyle Champagne, 631 Fire Street, Oakdale, a lifelong resident and owner of three (3) motorcycle dealerships, stated that, because those who take over the streets are not chaseable by the police, the Proposed Ordinance would negatively affect those who are lawfully riding their vehicles and are either assisting their elderly neighbors or riding to a nearby trail. He felt that the seizure of their vehicle, which they worked hard to purchase, was excessive and offered to donate \$50,000.00 over a period of five (5) years to the Police Department to institute a program instead of confiscating their vehicles.

Nicholas Manavas, Old Colchester Road, Oakdale, thanked the members of the Town Council and the Police Chief for taking the time to speak with him over the past several weeks. While acknowledging their concerns and opposing unlawful behavior, he reiterated his previous comments regarding the existing state laws that provide the Police Department with multiple avenues to address unlawful behavior. Other towns, including New London, Hartford, and New Haven, have instituted similar ordinances, which have been found unenforceable due to the Police Accountability Act. He compared the penalties to more serious crimes, such as DUI (Driving under the Influence), sexual assault, and negligent

homicide. He felt that the Ordinance, as presented, does not meet the needs of the community and proposed lowering the fines and removing the confiscation of vehicles for the first offense. Motorsports is an expensive investment for working-class families, and confiscating their vehicles for their first offense is unreasonable. Our country was built on forgiveness, and he believed everyone deserves a second chance.

Lawrence, 128 Ridge Hill Road, Oakdale, who is eight (8) years of age, spoke of his enjoyment of the experience of riding his quad with his friend.

Lawrence Darling, 128 Ridge Hill Road, Oakdale, recently purchased, built their home, and forged trails on their property, also spoke of the enjoyment of riding their vehicles and keeping their children away from video games. While he was not opposed to instituting laws against dangerous behaviors, he was opposed to the seizure of their vehicles that they worked hard to invest in for their children to enjoy and have fun.

Katlyn Martinez, 55 Hale Haven Court, Uncasville, stated the benefits of ATV riding, including building balance, coordination, strength, endurance, focus, concentration, confidence, self-esteem, resilience, perseverance, responsibility, and risk assessment. She stated her support for the Police Department with illegal and reckless use of the vehicle, but opposes the penalties and fines, which are consistent with such crimes as prostitution, third-degree assault, criminal trespass, inciting a riot, larceny, and theft. She also expressed her concern about the seizure of their machines based on a police officer's observation.

Britany Hatfield, 18 Lathrop Court, Uncasville, introduced her 6-year-old child, who spoke of his love of riding his brother's quad on his Uncle's trails, and Maverick, who saved his money to purchase a quad, and expressed his disappointment if his vehicle were seized for forgetting the permission slip.

Dillon Troxell, 531 Route 163, Montville, stated his opposition to the Ordinance, adding that the real issue is the recently passed budget, which the Ordinance would further increase as a result of the administrative costs stemming from the impounding, fees, and damages caused to the seized vehicles. While he supports and respects the Police, the Ordinance is an example of government overreach, clearly grants them the power to detain an individual, resulting in an additional layer of law, bureaucracy, and rule that is unnecessary.

Kimberly Manavas, 21 Oak Road, thanked everyone for their service and support to the Town of Montville. Many residents oppose the Ordinance, which will dissuade their children, not the criminals, from engaging in an outdoor activity. She questioned the reasoning behind passing an Ordinance that allows the Police to pull over innocent residents to no avail. She is in favor of amending the Ordinance to prohibit street takeovers while supporting those who engage in the sport lawfully.

Daniel Sostre, Laurel Point Drive, Oakdale, expressed his opposition to an Ordinance for laws that are already in existence and unenforceable. He believed their efforts would be more beneficial if directed toward improving the community.

Nathan Martinez, 55 Hale Haven Court, Uncasville, also spoke in opposition to the Ordinance, citing its vagueness and lack of specificity. While supporting the pursuit of those who knowingly and intentionally break the law, he questioned the circumstances under which a Police Officer may seize a vehicle, and when, why, and how actions are taken. The Ordinance, he felt, should include more specific guidelines.

Kelim Caron, 5 Linda Avenue, Uncasville, a lifetime resident who grew up riding a dirtbike, spoke of the Town's motorsports heritage. He felt that the Ordinance punishes the families who are fans of the sport for one-time errors.

Chris Manavas, 21 Oak Road, Oakdale, who worked with thousands of pre-trial clients in the Judicial Branch, stated that the Ordinance was "extremely excessive", especially in comparison to first-time DUIs and drug offenders. The Ordinance would, in most cases,

affect their children by taking away a vehicle that they worked hard to achieve. The penalty, he felt, is excessive, and there are better ways to teach them a lesson.

David Miller, 190 Gay Hill Road, Uncasville, stated that there are sizeable gaps within the document. He taught his child to be respectful to officers if officers pull him over. He should not be penalized by having his vehicle seized for merely traveling on the road to visit a friend. Similar to other laws, the Ordinance would punish the good people. He suggested a more careful review of the language to ensure law-abiding individuals are not punished.

John Seldin, 450 Chapel Hill Road, who grew up riding in Pappy's Run, expressed his opposition to the Ordinance. He agreed that children should not be riding their vehicles in the street and engaging in street takeovers, which, he added, do not occur in Montville. He understands the issuing of tickets, but was opposed to the seizure of their machines, which are costly. The activity encourages children to enjoy the outdoors and life, away from their electronic devices. The riders, he felt, are merely enjoying life without bothering others

Chairman May invited the members of the public in favor of the Ordinance to speak.

Vince Young, 375 Chapel Hill Road, Oakdale, acknowledged the parents and children who have spoken. He stated his experiences with individuals trespassing onto private property and wreaking havoc, disrupting his quality of life. Rules and laws are necessary to control those who are unlicensed, uninsured, abuse the system, and endanger the lives of others.

Gary Murphy, Laurel Point Drive, Oakdale, reminisced about his youth as a rider of dirtbikes. The primary issue lies with those children in their mid- to late-teenage years, many of whom reside out of town. As a longtime firefighter and former Chief, he has witnessed countless individuals killed due to motorcycle, dirt bike, and bicycle riding, traumatizing the First Responders who are called to the scene. He proposed revisiting the seizure of the vehicle on their first offense, which many view as excessive.

Montville Police Department Chief Wilfred Blanchette provided a brief historical background of the Ordinance. In 2013, the state passed legislation permitting towns to enact an Ordinance to regulate the use of ATVs, mini-bikes, etc., on public roads, providing more local control. State statutes regulate state roads. The Ordinance would provide the Officers with "more teeth". Charged with reviewing the Ordinance, he met with the State's Attorney of New London County, along with the towns of Waterford, East Lyme, and New London, who recommended that each town's Ordinance mirror the others and provided guidelines. The draft Ordinance was reviewed by the Public Safety Commission and Town Council. He has also engaged in several spirited conversations with Mr. Manavas, resulting in amendments, including the elimination of the requirement to carry a permission slip. He confirmed that the officers will not be chasing the offenders. An individual riding on a public road is not a law-abiding citizen. While the fines may seem excessive, they are the state's guidelines. Additionally, per the State Statute, an individual may appear before the Judge or Magistrate to appeal their case. Their goal is to work with the citizens as much as possible while still maintaining local control.

William Herrmann, 32 Andersen Lane, Oakdale, stated his neutrality on the Ordinance, which has both merits and drawbacks. While applauding the parents who have trained their youngsters to drive safely and responsibly, he cited several occasions requiring quick action to avoid colliding with children who were riding their pedal and motorized vehicles without a helmet or shoes. He felt that there should be some training/education before an individual purchases a vehicle and stated the importance of the parents' involvement.

John Seldin, 450 Chapel Hill Road, who rode Pappy's Run, expressed his opposition to the Ordinance. He agreed that children should not be riding their vehicles in the street and engaging in street takeovers, which, he added, do not occur in Montville. They do, however, occur in such towns as New London, Hartford, or New Haven. He understands issuing

tickets, but was opposed to the seizure of their machines, which are costly. The activity helps get children to enjoy the outdoors and life and away from electronic devices. He enjoys the quiet, rural life in Montville. The riders are merely enjoying life and are not bothering others.

The following correspondence in favor of the Ordinance was acknowledged and submitted for the record:

Kathy Pollard, 126 Maple Avenue, Uncasville, who understands both sides, stated that the Ordinance would provide the necessary tools to help control those who engage in unlawful activities at the expense of others.

Mary Grace Donovan, 122 Maple Avenue, Uncasville, stated her concern for the public's safety.

Roger Baker, Dubois Road, Montville, who has personally experienced the activities, urged the Councilors to provide the officers with the necessary tools to handle the issues and expressed his trust in their discretion.

5. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Novak thanked everyone for attending this evening's Public Hearing and stated her support for the Ordinance. While many parents, such as those in attendance, raise their children respectfully, others do not. She regularly experiences the fear of colliding with one of the vehicles as she travels on the road. While the fines might appear steep, they are in line with those of other towns. Additionally, those who ride in parks are trespassing and/or those who ride *through* various properties to arrive at their destination may also be trespassing.

Councilor Baker also thanked everyone for attending this evening's meeting and providing their comments. The intention of the Ordinance, he stated, is not to take away an individual's recreation or enjoyment. Based on the comments received during the initial Public Hearing, the Ordinance was amended. Those who are lawfully operating their vehicles should have no worries, while those who do not may be penalized. Additionally, police officers *have the discretion* to seize a vehicle, depending on the situation. Actions have consequences, and individuals should consider the impact of their actions. Should the Ordinance be passed, he is comfortable knowing that the correct action was taken to potentially save lives. He noted that, in 2025 alone, 581 reported deaths due to ATV-related accidents and 100,000 emergency room injuries occurred in the U.S., one-third of which were children under 16 years of age. He stated his support for the Ordinance and for a safety certification course, as suggested.

Councilor Sabilia expressed his appreciation to everyone for attending and speaking at this evening's meeting and stated his interest in hearing the public's thoughts and opinions on such matters. While the Ordinance might be imperfect, it is necessary.

Chairman May provided a brief history of the Ordinance, which was first introduced two years prior. The Ordinance's primary focus is to address the activities that are posing a public safety issue on public roads. Street takeovers and similar activities occur in the Town, and the Ordinance would provide the police officers with the necessary support to minimize such activities. Similar to traffic violations, individuals may appeal their case. As stated, the Ordinance was revised, based on the public's comments during the first Public Hearing, and the document was reviewed by the Public Safety Commission, the Town Administration/ Rules & Procedures Standing Committee, the Town Attorney, and the Police Chief.

Councilor Caron also thanked everyone for their comments, most especially the children. While he supports the Ordinance, he proposed lowering the penalty to a written warning and/or \$125,000 fine and eliminating the seizure of the vehicle for the first offense, providing individuals with a second chance.

Councilor Jaskiewicz also thanked everyone for attending the meeting and providing their comments respectfully. The Ordinance, as stated, was reviewed by the Town Administration/Rules & Procedures Standing Committee with the Police Chief. The purpose of the Ordinance is to protect our children.

Councilor Southard, a firm believer in second chances, concurred with Councilor Caron's proposed amendments. Doing her due diligence, she spoke with several residents regarding the matter. She thanked everyone for attending this evening's meeting, most especially the children.

Mayor Bunnell stated that the Ordinance has undergone much due diligence and was reviewed several times, considering the public's input. The Town of Montville is not immune to the same issues and activities that are witnessed in larger towns and cities throughout the state. The Ordinance is a result of the state's actions, eliminating much of their ability to enforce the activities and preventing them from controlling the activities; it is not their intention to cease recreational ATV activities.

6. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Baker, to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville

AN AUDIO RECORD OF THE MEETING CAN BE FOUND ON THE TOWN'S WEBSITE LOCATED UNDER RESOURCES – MEETING RECORDINGS