

Town of Montville
Town Council
Public Hearing Minutes
July 20, 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. Presentation by Town Land Use Director Dennis Goderre regarding the discontinuance of PTA Lane, Land Use Attorney Sara Sharp, and Kevin Solli of Montville 1, LLC

Land Use & Development Director Goderre provided a brief presentation of the proposed discontinuance of PTA Lane and the process. This evening's Public Hearing is being held to allow the public to voice their opinions regarding the proposal. The Town Council will then vote to approve the scheduling of a Special Town Meeting to vote on the matter. If approved, the road will be discontinued. Once discontinued, another Public Hearing would be scheduled for the conveyance of property, followed by a vote by the Town Council. The process, which began with a §8-24 Review by the Planning & Zoning Commission, comprised a review of the proposal with the Town's comprehensive plan of development, including its Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and Zoning Regulations. The proposal was also reviewed by the staff and various departments, including the Police Department, Fire Marshal, Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), Public Works, Building Department, the Town Engineer, and members of the Montville School System, including the Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools, and Mohegan School Principal. A Traffic Engineer was also hired to conduct a traffic study and determine its impact on the school. All of the Commission's meetings were public and recorded, and the meeting minutes and supporting documents are available on the Town's website (<https://www.townofmontville.org>). Upon reviewing the proposal, the Planning & Zoning Commission sent a favorable §8-24 report for the discontinuance of PTA Lane to the Town Council, which accepted the Referral. He reviewed the Commission's recommendations, which included a comprehensive traffic study, including an evaluation of the neighboring area, development of sidewalks along both sides of Route 32 and Golden Lane from Route 32 to Mohegan School, establishment of utility easements for future development, and other traffic mitigation and intersection improvements, reduction of curb cuts along Route 32, and addressing the displacement of the residents residing in the small mobile home park. The Developer has agreed to the recommendations, as well as other improvements, including reconfiguring the school parking lot to improve bus and traffic circulation and an ADA-accessible playscape. The process will also include zoning amendments, zoning, wetlands, and CT DEEP (Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection) permits, and OSTA (Office of the State Traffic Administration) approvals. The proposed development is a unique opportunity that would provide new development opportunities and promote economic development while maintaining the character of the community. Its location, with access to regional highways, not only lends itself to the proposed development, but is also compatible with the existing land use and utilities. It will also provide an opportunity to enhance the pedestrian circulation and safety along Route 32 as a gateway, rather than an auto-dominated strip of commercial development. It is a long-term plan that would address the traffic inefficiencies, separate the school and commercial uses, and increase the Town's tax base, provide residual development and employment, invite visitors and residents with additional amenities, and improve the local economy.

Montville Superintendent of Schools Diane Vumback stated that several meetings were held with the applicant, their representatives, the Board of Education, Mohegan School Principal, Mohegan School parents and teachers, Director of Operations, Director of Facilities, Director of Transportation, and herself. The meetings included an emphasis on ensuring the safety of the school, including appropriate fencing, widening roads, fixing traffic light controls, and site circulation. Based on their discussions, it was felt that their concerns would be addressed and the proposed improvements would ensure the safety and security of the students and staff, enhance the facility, and create a smoother and more efficient arrival and dismissal process through its traffic improvements. She expressed her commitment to continue to work with all parties to ensure that they are honored.

Montville Police Department Chief Bill Blanchette, who also attended the meetings, stated that his primary concerns of maintaining two access roads to the school for the safety of the students, traffic control, and the overall flow of the area were addressed. The proposed access road, off PTA Lane and the widening of Golden Road at the Route 32 intersection and by the School would fulfill the road requirements. While a Police Officer will be maintained at the School while in session, the Developer has agreed to install a fence and hedgerow, satisfying his safety concerns.

Land Use Attorney Sara Sharp, representing Montville 1, LLC, stated the tax benefits of the proposed development, which would provide the first steps in realizing the Town's goals of building commercial investment in the area, as stated in its POCD. Conservatively speaking, once completed, it is expected that a commercial development in the location would add a minimum of \$500,000.00 of tax revenue annually. She also spoke briefly regarding the approval process, which was outlined by the Land Use & Development Director. The process will be a long, phased-in process during which PTA Lane will continue to be usable throughout the initial phase. Upon the completion of the improvements on Golden Lane and the School, PTA Lane would remain as an emergency access.

Kevin Solli, P.E., Solli Engineering, LLC, stated that several meetings were held with all key stakeholders and provided a brief overview of the proposed improvements. The proposal includes several elements that conform with the Town's POCD, including a pedestrian sidewalk and striping improvements, public utilities, the identification of the area as a job investment area, and the use of the area as a commercial, mixed-use, light industrial area. The proposal, if approved, would unlock approximately 24 acres of commercial land. He reviewed the proposed improvements at the PTA Lane, Golden Road, and Route 32 intersection, at and around the school, and the school parking lot.

Councilors' Questions/Comments:

Number of property owners affected due to the widening of the Golden Road (Councilor Novak) – One property would be affected by the proposed widening of Golden Road; conversations with the property owner have begun.

Maintenance of Access Road (Councilor Baker) – The developer will be responsible for maintaining the access road during adverse weather conditions and ensuring that it is passable at all times.

Councilor May expressed his appreciation to the Land Use & Development Director Goderre and the Atty. Sharp and Engineer Solli for their presentation.

5. Public Hearing

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The following is a resolution adopted at a regular meeting of the Town Council duly held and convened on the 8th day of June 2026.

Resolution No. 2026-45: THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES to consider and act on a motion to introduce and set the date for a Public Hearing for the discontinuance of PTA Lane, pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 13a-49, on July 20, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. The Public Hearing will be held at Montville Town Hall in the Town Council Chambers, 310 Norwich-New London Tpke, Uncasville.

Dated at Montville, CT this 9th day of June, 2026.
Katie Haring, Town Clerk

Chairman May invited the public to speak on the proposed discontinuance of PTA Lane.

Bill Pieniadz, 157 Simpson Lane, a resident and business owner in the Town of Montville and member of the Planning & Zoning Commission, spoke in favor of the project. The proposal is consistent with the Town's POCD and its search for additional economic development. The comprehensive summary as presented this evening included the Commission's conditions, which are being addressed by the Developer. He urged the Councilors to move the item forward.

Rick Mattson, 41 Golden Road, who also provided a written letter, spoke in opposition to the proposal, citing the lack of any discussion with the homeowners and the existing, potential traffic and bus parking issues, and possible loss of privacy. He has not been contacted regarding the proposed plan, except by those seeking to purchase his property. He has resided in the Town for approximately 65 years, conducted vast improvements to his property, and has no intentions of moving. His letter cites the ongoing flooding issues on his property, which the development, he fears, will exacerbate; the lack of adequate frontage on his property to accommodate the proposed sidewalk, and; the existing traffic issues.

Michele LeMieux, Podurgiel Lane, who was affected by the Montville Commons mudslides, expressed her strong opposition to the proposal, which, she felt, was not in the Town's best interest. She expressed her concerns with the proposed establishment of a Bestway Gas Station at the end of Podurgiel Lane, which, in addition to the discontinuance of PTA Lane, would increase the traffic, heavily impacting the area. She also questioned why Podurgiel Lane was excluded from the traffic study.

Allison Hoffman, Fort Shantok Road, who recalled raising funds to construct PTA Lane to accommodate the bus traffic, also spoke in opposition to the proposal. The proposal, which includes a new playground in exchange for PTA Lane, is similar to the "tossing away" of Shantok Heights for a new Community Center bathroom. She felt that the Route 85/82 area improvements should be a priority, rather than redirecting the traffic onto Route 32. She was tired of "getting boxed out of the town" when another area needed attention.

Walt Subotkowksi, 209 Norwich-New London Turnpike, also spoke in opposition to the proposed discontinuance of PTA Lane. He felt that the proposal would be approved and questioned why the road, whose establishment was controversial, was being "given away".

Joanne Walmsley, Golden Road, stated her neutrality. She questioned where the sidewalks would be located on Golden Road and who would be maintaining them. She also expressed her fears about the possible increase in noise and loss of everything after residing in the area for nearly 25 years.

Mayor Bunnell stated that, per the Town Ordinance, sidewalks are maintained by either the commercial property owner, if located in front of a business, or the Town.

Judy Gaetano, 98 Park Avenue, stated her strong opposition to the proposed discontinuation of the road, stating that, when they first moved to Town, it was a very quiet neighborhood in which they could hear the Speedbowl. She now feels as though she is living in the Speedbowl. She stated the lack of consideration for the residents in the

neighborhood, stating that the proposed development would add to the drivers' confusion and require the expansion of Mohegan School to accommodate the additional children who will be residing in the proposed housing development. She felt that the Town should consider the future, rather than merely the present, and the proximity of the proposed development to the residential neighborhoods.

Daniel Malchman, North Stonington, owner of the property located on the corner of PTA Lane and Route 32, spoke in favor of the proposal, stating that he has been contacted by and spoken with the developer, who is reputable and very experienced. The proposal would not only improve the road, significantly reducing the number of vehicle accidents, but also invite additional businesses to the Town. The proposal, he felt, is in the best interest of the Town.

Tiffany Walls, 154 Fitch Hill Road, expressed her extreme opposition to the proposal and did not feel that the Councilors were listening to the residents. As a 23-year resident, who moved to the Town for its small-town feel, she has witnessed the Town develop over the years, much to her dismay. She felt that Golden Road was too narrow to accommodate the development and recalled her parents raising funds for the special playground, which one of her children benefited from. She questioned why the signal light at Montville Commons was not installed when the development was constructed. With respect to economic development, she felt that those properties in need of attention should be addressed before establishing new areas for businesses. She also agreed with Ms. Gaetano's comment that the new housing developments would place a strain on Mohegan School.

Jessica Burke, 4 Little John Drive, spoke in favor of the proposal, stating that the Town's continued growth would help keep their children in Town. She currently has three (3) children, one of whom is in special needs, attending Mohegan School. She stated the importance of the safety and security of her children and agreed with the road and parking lot issues. She questioned whether the access road would remain after construction is completed, and whether the proposed housing development considered the size of the School.

Carmelo Rodriguez, 103 Park Avenue Ext., stated that 99% of the residents are opposed to the project. The Councilors were elected to listen to the residents and protect their best interests. He felt that the proposal would negatively affect the residents' quality of life, including the need for some to relocate, increased traffic, and the need for additional security due to the resulting population increase. He also cited the impossibility of emergency vehicles having the necessary egress to keep their children safe. While he agrees that the Town should increase its tax base, he feels that it should not be at the expense of our children and community, citing the resulting stress it has, is, and will cause.

Chairman May clarified that this evening's meeting is a Public Hearing to listen to the public's concerns. The Town Council will not be voting on the matter. Rather, they will be voting to schedule a Special Town Meeting during which the citizens of Montville will be voting on the matter.

John Valliere, 294 Millstone Road East, Waterford, who relocated to Waterford from Montville due to the continuing shift of the financial burdens of the Town to the residents, spoke in favor of the proposal. The need to increase the tax base has always been part of the conversation. The proposed discontinuation of the road will help accommodate a development that would increase the tax base and improve the traffic flow on Golden Road and Mohegan School. In full disclosure, he stated that he is familiar with the developer and, based on his experience, finds him to be a very reputable, responsible. Many of the public's concerns regarding access, traffic, and safety will be alleviated and improved. He urged everyone not to make an emotional decision and encouraged them to view the matter from a financial aspect. The area, while filled with commercial properties, will continue to maintain the Town's small-town feel.

Carol Burgess, 28 New Hampshire Lane, spoke in favor of the proposal for the reasons Mr. Valleire stated – taxes. Not too long ago, the Town Council voted to approve a tax increase to accommodate the schools, roads, and emergency services. The proposed development has been reviewed responsibly, in a public forum, and follows through on the Town's ongoing commitment to support commercial developments and help lessen the residents' burden.

Mohegan Fire Company Chief Matt Suarez, 18 Cranberry Drive, stated that the Fire Company, which services the area, was never contacted regarding the proposal and the needs and resources the improvements and new development would require, including the need for additional firefighter/EMTs to support an already strained department.

Vince Young, 375 Chapel Hill Road, who was neutral on the matter, questioned whether the traffic safety light on Route 32, in front of the Firehouse, has been re-synced.

Joseph Brian Bonner, 774 Old Colchester Road, a resident and owner of a business located off PTA Lane, expressed his support, stating that the project would be a positive addition to the Town. The developer, who has successfully developed other properties in the Town, reached out to him regarding the proposal to discuss any concerns and has been very open and honest.

Jeff Rogers, 146 Forsyth Road, stated his opposition to the proposal, pending receipt of the final agreement that clearly identifies all improvements, their relevant costs, and the financial protections should the project not come to fruition. This evening's meeting is not about economic development or retail businesses; it is about abandoning a public roadway before receiving responses to all of their questions. While everyone would like to see the Town grow, they would also like to have leaders who are transparent, intelligent, and respectful to those they serve. He hopes that the Councilors will slow down the process to ensure that each resident is allowed to review the financial aspect of the proposal, and that every obligation is clearly defined, so that each taxpayer is aware of what they would be losing and receiving in return.

Kimberly Dole, 19 Sharp Hill Road, agreed with increasing the tax base while making significant improvements, which would have ultimately fallen on the town. She cited the developer's positive actions, the willingness to accommodate the Town's requests, and the significant cost savings to the Town for the improvements. She also stated the importance of reviewing the whole picture, raising the possibility of developing areas on the other side of the town.

In response to the public's comments, Land Use & Development Director Goderre stated the following:

Fire Protection Review – The proposal was referred to the Fire Marshal's office for review and comment.

Apartments – No apartments are being proposed as part of the project.

He added that the proposal included an opportunity for the Town to require certain items that the development team has agreed to and other elements that may be discussed with the developer. Other developers would not be required or willing to accommodate the Town's requests, per the Zoning Regulations, making this a unique opportunity for the Town.

Atty. Sharp thanked the public for their comments, which are an important part of the process. She clarified the following items:

PTA Lane Access Road – The access road will remain for emergency access as a secondary means of access.

Safety Improvements – A gate will be installed, ceasing the use of the Mohegan School parking lot as a cut-through.

Giving away of Leverage, before the Completion of the Final Plan – The Public Hearing is one of the initial required steps the developer and Town must take before introducing a plan. She added that the Town owns part of the land in question, and a conveyance of the land must be finalized before the project can move forward. Additionally, the process, which requires numerous Town approvals, ensures that the Town maintains its leverage; it would not be in the developer's best interest not to follow through with the proposed plan.

Longterm Commitment – They have demonstrated and will continue to build and grow their relationship with the Town and all of its entities.

School Traffic – Based on the current school population, three to four buses are on the property at any given time. Part of the improvements will include the ability for the buses, which currently idle on PTA Lane or Golden Road, to idle on school property. Similarly, the pick-up/drop-off lines should no longer back up on Golden Road.

Procedural Point of Order – She also clarified that prior to the Town Meeting, the Town Council is required to take action; the action would not be active until the Town Meeting takes place.

Offsite Improvements – The improvements to the School and roadway would be funded in full by the developer.

Kevin Solli, P.E., reiterated that this evening's presentation revolved around the effects of the proposed discontinuance of PTA Lane to the existing school and is the first step of many. Additional discussions will ensue with the Planning & Zoning Commission, and public hearings will take place during which the public may continue to voice their concerns. The related proposed improvements on Golden Road and Route 32 will require additional analysis, review, and oversight. He expressed their belief in and the importance of hearing and understanding the public's concerns and receiving their feedback when proposing and finalizing the proposed improvements. He also appreciated the acknowledgement of their sincerity.

In response to Councilor Baker, who questioned the possibility of reversing the conveyance of property, should the project be abandoned, Atty. Sharp stated that the Town Council may pass a resolution to revert PTA Lane to a public road. Chairman May added that all construction projects of this magnitude also require a bond, funding the project to completion.

6. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Baker, to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 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