

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes – September 17, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.
This meeting was informational as a quorum was not present.

1. Call to Order
Chairman Hewitt began the meeting at 7:07 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
All stood and pledged the flag.
3. Roll Call
Commissioners present were Mickey Gillette, Jim Toner, and Chairman Walter Hewitt. Absent were Commissioners Karl Butzgy, Christopher DiNoto, Christopher Napierski and Brian Quinn. Also present was Town Council Liaison Jeff Rogers.
4. Alterations to the Agenda – *No action*
5. Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (3-minute limit)
Chairman Hewitt asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.
6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to approve: *No action*
 - a. Meeting Minutes of July 16, 2018
 - b. Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2018
7. Meeting with Mayor postponed due to scheduling conflicts.
Chairman Hewitt reported on a scheduling issue that prevented Mayor McDaniel from attending the meeting this evening. The Mayor will be invited to attend next month's meeting.
8. Unfinished Business
 - a. 125 Depot Road
Commissioner Toner again reported that the port at said location is 19 feet, not 35 feet as originally reported. He raised the question as to whether the harbormaster was still interested in the location that precipitated discussion on development of the same.
 - 1) DECD
Chairman Hewitt spoke about the proposed windmill project in New London that would require 50 usable acres and access to water and railways. He said he spoke with Mayor McDaniel about the potential for the same in Montville. Per discussion of the proposal, consideration was given to the following: a staging area; use of the port as a port, barge access, regulations for use of the waterway; and activity of the railway system.
 - 2) Any other ideas?
Chairman Hewitt prompted discussion on how to affect change with project ideas for the Town. Commissioner Toner stated that the Commission needs the Mayor to negotiate change for the Town as the EDC has no authority. Chairman Hewitt commented the Town must have a plan in mind for use of the Depot Road property.
 - b. Montville Commons

1) How can we help?

Commissioner Toner reported that the owner of Montville Commons is headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. He again reported that the rent per square foot (\$30) at the Commons is too high, more than the going rate of \$12 - \$13 per square foot. Town Councilor asked whether a letter could be sent to the rental agent. Commissioner Toner agreed to get the address and phone number for Chairman Hewitt. He also noted that when he spoke with the owner of the mall he told him he needed a closer presence with the mall to which the owner responded that is why he pays a rental agent. Commissioner Toner also stated that companies that have moved out of the Commons have stayed in the Town in other locations. Chairman Hewitt asked what would be the purpose of sending a letter to the owner followed by Town Councilor Rogers who asked what could the EDC do to help boost rentals at the mall. Chairman Hewitt suggested speaking with a realtor about the going rate for rental at a strip mall. Town Councilor Rogers agreed to contact a realtor involved with a recent property sale for the Town to get the costs per square foot for local strip malls in the area.

2) Impact to Town if developer goes under?

Town Councilor Rogers stated that the Town does not lose as it benefits from the taxes paid by the Montville Commons. But, he said as businesses relocate from the mall they would impact the convenience of Town residents.

c. EDC Website

- 1) Town of Montville *Tabled*
- 2) Facebook *Tabled*
- 3) seCTer *Tabled*
- 4) Blog for EDC (Currently at <http://montville-edc.org>) *Tabled*

9. New Business

- a. seCTer is working on a webinar with EDA (Federal Economic Development Administration) on their grants programs. The webinar will be open to our municipal members. See <http://www.eda.gov/funding-oportunities>.

Chairman Hewitt asked Commissioners to look at the link regarding the proposed webinar, a collaborative effort between seCTer and the EDA. He stated that before seeking a grant, a decision must be made as to what the EDC should do and then find out the cost associated with that decision. He said, "We need a real EDC," one with paid staff with the ability to negotiate. As he proposed at prior meetings, Chairman Hewitt expounded on the need for a Town economic development corporation to explore these questions: 1) What does the Commission want to achieve? 2) Is it worth funding? 3) How do we achieve finances? Town Councilor Rogers inquired about the operating expenses of area economic development corporations. Commissioner Toner commented that he reviewed the information on economic development corporations emailed previously by the Chair. He said from that information a development corporation would require working a 30-35 week, something the Commission cannot do as volunteers. Chairman Hewitt stated the EDC was not a steering committee nor had the qualifications to take on the task of jump

starting an economic development corporation. He said a private 501c-3 was needed whereby staff would be hired to work on it with oversight by the Commission and some authority from the Town. Town Councilor Rogers stated the Commission did not need approval by the Town Council or the Mayor but both Chairman Hewitt and Commissioner Toner said it needs to be endorsed. Town Councilor Rogers asked if members of the nonprofit could not be on Town boards or commissions to which Commissioner Toner replied he did not know. Chairman Hewitt said there are ways to develop a 501c-3 but no real formula for creating one that would necessitate 5-10 people working 40-50 hours per week. At Commissioner Toner's request, Chairman Hewitt would email again the information on a 501c-3 economic development corporation. Chairman Hewitt stated a board for the 501c-3 would include a president, treasurer, and secretary. He also added that the Mayor and Town Planner could not be expected to do it all.

10. Townspeople and Business Feedback

a. Proposed Recipients for Business Recognition Award

Town Councilor Rogers stated that he would obtain the plaque for the October recipient of the award for discussion at the next meeting.

11. Remarks from Town Council Liaison- *-None*

Town Councilor Rogers reported that the August recipient of the Business Recognition Award, Friendly Pizza, did not get notice of it but said they were appreciative when he and Commissioner Toner visited their place of business for presentation of it. He also reported that Treat's Pools is "still in its glory" for its recognition. Town Councilor Rogers also notified the Commission that Sanford Auto from Norwich was moving into the former DOT building.

12. Remarks from the Public (3-minute limit)

Chairman Hewitt asked three times for remarks. There were none.

13. Remarks from the Commissioners

Commissioner Gillette asked if the Commission had considered welcome packages for new homeowners. Commissioner Toner reported that he and Lt. Bunnell used to give out information and literature for the Town and State to new homeowners but said there no feedback on contact from it. Town Councilor Rogers agreed to go along with Commissioner Toner with this project. He said the EDC had funds in its budget for a welcome booklet utilizing creative packaging and advertising ideas.

14. Adjournment

Chairman Hewitt called the meeting to a close at 8:34 p.m.