

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Agenda – September 21, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

The Town of Montville will be utilizing a virtual FreeConferenceCall service for this meeting.

Please call number below to attend the meeting at:

[1-\(605\) 313-5935](tel:1-605-313-5935)

[PIN # 401237](#)

On March 14, 2020, Governor Ned Lamont issued an Executive Order 7B suspending in-person open meeting requirements, and to hold such meetings or proceedings remotely by conference call, videoconference, or other technology.

Link: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/Executive-Orders/Lamont-Executive-Orders/Executive-Order-No-7B.pdf>

For all publicly broadcasted meetings, public comment on agenda items or topics in accordance with the Town charter may be submitted in writing in advance or by live audio via FreeConferenceCall.

Written comments must be emailed to the Town Clerks Office at townclerk@montville-ct.org at least **1 working day in advance** (if the meeting is on a Monday the questions must be submitted by close of business the previous Friday).

Written comments may not be read in their entirety, but rather similar messages may be aggregated or paraphrased for submission to the Economic Development Commission.

Live audio comments may be made via FreeConferenceCall by calling from your telephone.

Comments will only be accepted at times designated for public comment by the Chair of the meeting. The Economic Development Rules of Procedure, decorum, timeliness and suitability shall be followed and enforced in the same manner as if the meeting were held in person.

1) Call to Order

Chairman Hewitt called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

All stood and pledged the flag.

3) Roll Call

Present were Commissioners Heather Harris, Sheelagh Lapinski, and Chairman Walter Hewitt. Absent were Commissioners Mickey Gillette, Christopher Napierski, and Town Council Liaison Colleen Rix. A quorum was present.

4) Alterations to the Agenda – *None*

5) Remarks from Marcia Vlaun

Town Planner Vlaun gave an update on employment and business in Montville. She reported a Route 32 daycare, First Step Learning Center II, will reopen and said there are now two (2) Town businesses that are permanently closed. The unemployment rate reduced to 12.1% in July from 13.0% in June with 1,118 persons currently collecting unemployment benefits. Prior to the pandemic, the rate was 3.7%. Town Planner Vlaun reported there were 19,000 retail jobs in July 2019 but in June 2020 there were 14,400. Wholesale and retail jobs fell by 16.0% with 18,000 jobs that did not come back; food service and restaurant/bars jobs decreased by 42.6% with 5,800 jobs that did not return. Town Planner Vlaun spoke to finding ways to measure the data and said in March and April social services served 800 meals a week but is currently serving 600-700 meals. Prior to Covid-19, 500 meals per week were served. Town Planner Vlaun said she would provide this data to the Commission in written form. Chairman Hewitt asked if there was anything the Commission could do. Town Planner Vlaun said there was no magic solution but emphasized support to those who need help. She gave an update on business applications—1) Nature’s Art plan for workforce housing for summer help; 2) small subdivisions with homes selling at \$280,000-\$325,00 as they are built; 3) a renewal of permits for eight (8) lots for an old subdivision on Chapel Hill Road; 4) a convenience store on Route 85; 5) a storage facility in the Johnson gravel pit area; 6) and a foreclosed area behind St. Bernard’s where derelict houses were removed. Commissioner Harris asked about news regarding Electric Boat and West Rock. Town Planner Vlaun said jobs at EB remain the same with many working from home and hiring ongoing. She reported demolition continues at West Rock and the potential adjunct to the wind tower project on the New London State Pier and said she and Mayor McDaniel had talked about the site that will have more marketing potential once it is cleared. Per a question by Chairman Hewitt, Town Planner Vlaun said the site had no environmental impact as it had been cleaned up. *Town Planner Vlaun left the meeting at 7:21 p.m.*

6) Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (3-minute limit)

Chairman Hewitt asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

7) Desire to recruit Commissioners

Chairman Hewitt asked the Commission to keep in the back of their minds anyone who would be an asset.

8) To Consider and Act on a Motion to approve:

i) The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 17, 2020

Motion by Commissioner Lapinski; seconded by Commissioner Harris to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of August 17, 2020. Discussion: none. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

9) Unfinished Business

a) Montville real-estate properties for development

Chairman Hewitt said there was nothing new to report other than Town Planner Vlaun was unable to find a suitable location for a school mentioned by former Commissioner Toner.

b) Mohegan Tribe and our request for contact information regarding retention of businesses vacating the casino – wrote Billy Caron (Colleen?) – *No report*

c) New Business Report

Chairman Hewitt commented on the new businesses reported—e-commerce, asset, liability, and technical services—that he said was good news.

d) Business Survey – Heather – *No report*

e) Chamber Business After Hours – Heather

Commissioner Harris said there was nothing on the calendar, so she presumed it was suspended. She said the focus was to highlight a business and also mentioned an upcoming webinar and an annual golf tournament. Chairman Hewitt reported the Eastern CT Chamber of Commerce would honor the 2020 Small Business Person of the Year, Matthew Beaudoin of Mystic Knotwork, and Laura Stetler of Southeast CT WBDC, Women's Business Development Center of the Year. He also reported on a save-the-date for November 20 from seCTer on Celebrating the Spirit of Resilience, a virtual celebration.

f) New Business Report (*This item is duplicative.*)

10) New Business

a) Deliver plaque to Healing with Horses at Wildrose Horse Farm (Colleen - Plaques?)

Chairman Hewitt referenced the minutes from the last meeting and the recommendation by Town Councilor Rix to set aside the award until the pandemic is over. Commissioner Harris commented the businesses would not be able to appear before the Town Council until then. Chairman Hewitt also referenced from the minutes that the award for Heller & Heller had not been announced to the Town Council. He said the awards could be announced on Facebook so not to put the recipients at risks and then asked about suspension of the awards.

Motion by Commissioner Lapinski; seconded by Commissioner Harris to suspend the EDC Business Recognition Award until further notice. Discussion: Chairman Hewitt said the

awards for Healing with Horses and Heller and Heller would be physically awarded and no others until a future date. Voice vote; 3-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

b) Deliver plaque to Heller, Heller, and McCoy
See the discussion under Item, 10.a.

11) Report from Town Council Liaison – *No report*

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

Chairman Hewitt. asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

13) Remarks from the Commissioners and Town Council Liaison -- *None*

14) Townspeople and Business Feedback

a) Proposed Recipients for Business Recognition Award – *No action*

15) Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Lapinski; seconded by Commissioner Harris to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 p.m. Voice vote; 3-0, all in favor. Motion carried.