

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Agenda – April 19, 2021 – 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 at the meeting were Commissioners Sierra Davis, Mickey Gillette, Heather Harris (7:15 p.m.), Walter Hewitt, Sheelagh Lapinski, and Tom McCarthy. Also present were Mayor Ronald McDaniel and Town Planner Marcia Vlaun. Absent was Commissioner Christopher Napierski.

4) Alterations to the Agenda -- *None*

5) Remarks from Ron McDaniel and Marcia Vlaun

Mayor McDaniel spoke of his annual invitation from the Commission where he comments on Town economic development, changes in administration, and topics of interest for the Commission as follows:

- Electric Boat employment and how to capitalize on its increased hiring s by housing development that has seen a boom. Housing attracts families, increases students into the educational system, and if sustained will help retail development.
- Route 32 sidewalk improvements are being done incrementally with grant funds. Maple Avenue needs sidewalks and widening; The Manor also requires sidewalks and to decrease the size of the road.
- The national American Relief Plan, the latest federal stimulus package of \$1.9 trillion, will improve Town services and Covid measures and is expected by May 11. Town departments are working on plans, a wish list, for use of the funds and per correspondence to the U.S. Treasury by the National League of Cities awaiting a response as to how the funds are to be used. Funds are not to be used to offset tax relief. New London County is to receive \$51.4 million, and it may be dispersed on a census basis with some of the funds going to schools. Other funds, \$50 billion, will go toward road modifications and transportation authorities, for states. The American Job Plan has not passed legislation yet. Also, funds have been earmarked for bridges, emissions, police/fire protection for safe streets, charging stations, and in other funds.

Chairman Hewitt asked if there are plans for Town charging stations with comments from Commissioner Davis about the ones at Waterford Commons. Per Mayor McDaniel there are no current plans for the Town but funds are available for private people to do it and the Town would support it. Since the government is moving toward use of electric cars, charging stations should be on the radar. Retrofitting will take money and electric capacity is another consideration. Charging stations are market driven and are part of the federal infrastructure plan. Per Town Planner Vlaun, we have a free market world and the structure for charging stations is not in place. At present, businesses are not required to build gas stations as an accommodation and cannot be imposed upon. The first and only Town business to install fuel cells is Home Depot. Grants and tax credits to the business community should be pushed according to Mayor McDaniel.

Commissioner McCarthy spoke of the Town looking to the Commission for advice and investing in the Town referring to plans for a community center which New London recently approved. Mayor McDaniel and Town Planner Vlaun commented on plans brought forward for a Town community center with plans for using grants and other funds for it. Two (2) plans were brought forward over time for a community center but were voted down at referendum. The existing center has had extensive renovations through use of grants for air conditioning upgrades, a gym floor replacement, a new firewall and air exchange, and funds to replace the heating system. The Town does well at attaining grants i.e. a \$5 million grant received by the WPCA in 2012. Recently, a grant was awarded to the Town in December 2020 and a request at that time to the state Historical Society has still gone unanswered.

Commissioner McCarthy commented on the \$10 million bond for roads stating roads are not being paved and infrastructure work needs help, i.e., Raymond Hill Road. Town Planner Vlaun spoke on a pavement management system undertaken three (3) years ago in which every Town road was x-rayed, and the information brought forward on the CIP as a need. The Town has an existing plan for infrastructure, “a plan behind a plan”, based upon traffic and cost analysis. Per Chairman Hewitt’s question regarding current traffic studies, Town Planner Vlaun said they exist for Routes 2, 2A, 32, 85, and 395. Mayor McDaniel spoke on shovel-ready projects that are easy things to get and commented on the Town dock area that is ADA compliant and eligible for development and development of the Mostowy Property at Camp Oakdale. Additionally, there is the Rock-Ten project, a potential location for the wind project.

Commissioner McCarthy also asked about the water situation at The Manor owned by SCWA and not well run. Mayor McDaniel said SCWA is under the authority of the state Water Utility Coordinating Commission on which there a commissioner vacancy. He said he would support him for the opening if interested. Chairman Hewitt asked how to support an area that lacks public water for expansion purposes. Mayor McDaniel explained the casino gets its water from Norwich and the Town; the Town acquires is water from Groton as it sold their water to New London. The cost to pave one mile of road is \$1 million and including a water line to is an additional \$1 million. The state will not allow expansion of water or sewer lines in certain area per its sewer avoidance map said Town Planer Vlaun. Chairman

Town Planner Vlaun summarized Town developments projects as follows:

- She also reported on foreclosures tracked during the recession in the 2000's which mostly took place in the older areas such as Kitemaug. With Covid, there has been a big increase in housing but the impact to date on new housing is unknown. Physical buildings were added to the grand list, but the other issue is employment. Town Planner Vlaun provided unemployment and labor force stats as follows:

- Mayor McDaniel spoke of residents who do not have internet service and \$50 toward it hopefully on May 19. Tax collection is steady and food access is available—social services has provided a high number of meals, per Town Planner

Vlaun. Equipment was purchased for temperature checks and hopefully masks can be removed so everyone can be heard better and for having more in-person meetings. Commission needs are welcomed, data will continue to be pushed to Chairman Hewitt, and suggestions are welcome and can be sent to him by email. He also noted N. Cowser had retired from seCTer.

Commissioner McCarthy inquired about the timeline for the conservation development plan. Per Town Planner Vlaun, Covid has cramped all plans including public hearings. The plan is written but the economy section is not current and will cause a month or more delay. Census data, as questioned by Chairman Hewitt, will not be seen for awhile and will be challenged. The population in Town has dropped due to reduced prisoners over the last decade and data is late coming. The Town has good self-reporting data, per Mayor McDaniel, and computer data updates have been done according to Town Planner Vlaun.

Chairman Hewitt thanked Mayor McDaniel and Town Planner Vlaun for the information provided.

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) To Consider and Act on a Motion to approve:

i) The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 16, 2021.

Motion by Commissioner Gillette; seconded by Commissioner McCarthy to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 16, 2021. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

8) Unfinished Business

a) New Business Report

Chairman Hewitt noted the three (3) new businesses reported as of March 2020, all home-based. The businesses are a sewing/women's clothing, a daycare, and an internet business.

b) EDC Rules and Procedures

Chairman Hewitt as discussed at the last meeting and reviewed the rules and procedures noting nominations for chair should have taken place in November.

c) Nominations/election of Chair and Co-Chair

Commissioner Gillette nominated Chairman Hewitt for chair, but he declined stating he would be willing to act as co-chair. Chairman Hewitt said he would act as co-chair if Commissioner Gillette became chair. There were no other nominations.

Motion by Commissioner Davis; seconded by Commissioner Lapinski to elect Commissioner Gillette as Chair of the Commission. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Gillette; seconded by Commission Lapinski to elect Commissioner Hewitt as Co-Chair of the Commission. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 5-0-1, Chairman Hewitt abstained. Motion carried.

9) New Business

- a) CCM Webinar: FOIA for Municipal Personnel, Board, Commission & Committee Members Thursday, April 22, 2021 – 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Chairman Hewitt reported he signed up for the webinar. Recording Secretary Gathers said she called and left a message to find out whether the webinar could be viewed at a later date/time to accommodate those working.

- b) AdvanceCT presented on the topic of “Striking the Right Balance between Land Use and Economic Development” (Email re: recording and slide back from the presentation) Chairman Hewitt reported he attended the presentation and had posted a blog entry with a link to the recording.

10) Report from Town Council Liaison

Chairman Hewitt reported Town Council Liaison Rix had resigned as liaison anticipating her business would be busy soon with the reopening of the state from Covid restrictions.

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

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

12) Remarks from the Commissioners and Town Council Liaison

Commissioner McCarthy revisited the discussion from last month regarding the massage parlor and the assumption of the activities going on there and preparing a letter about the same. He noted the signage says the business is open until 11 p.m. Commission discussed a possible ordinance, how to advocate for it, which entity (the EDC or Town Council) should propose it, and the illegal activities that resulted in the business being shut down. Commissioner McCarthy agreed to develop a proposal for presentation at the next meeting for review and consideration.

13) Townspeople and Business Feedback

- a) Proposed Recipients for Business Recognition Award

Chairman Hewitt reported at the last meeting the Commission agreed to delay the awards until fall of this year. Commissioner Harris suggested the information on the businesses be first sent out to the Commission which agreed last month to present awards quarterly going forward. Chairman Hewitt commented the awards are well received by the public with many likes to posts on Facebook and posts on Town blogs.

14) Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Gillette; seconded by Commissioner McCarthy to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.