

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Agenda – May 17, 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 Gillette called the meeting to order at 7:01 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*, Walter Hewitt, Sheelagh Lapinski*, Tom McCarthy, and Christopher Napierski (7:22 p.m.).* Also present was Town Council Liaison Tim May. A quorum was present. *Attended remotely.

4) Alterations to the Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Hewitt; seconded by Commissioner McCarthy add Item 8.c, to consider and act on the possibility for earlier closure for massage parlors. Discussion: None. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

5) Remarks from Marcia Vlaun, if available.

Commissioner Hewitt reported Town Councilor Vlaun was on vacation.

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 April 19, 2021.

Motion by Commissioner Hewitt; seconded by Commissioner Davis to approve the corrections to the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 19, 2021. Discussion: Corrections were noted in the report given by Town Planner Vlaun—the gas station on Route 185 should be *Route 85 (Gillette)* and construction projects Chapel Hill Road – 32 lots, 87 units, 2-bedroom, with 37 garages should be *Maple Avenue – 87 units, 2-bedroom duplex (McCarthy)*. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried. No motion made to approve the minutes as amended.

8) Unfinished Business

a) New Business Report

Four (4) new businesses reported as of April 2021, all home-based—a tobacco retail store and lounge; a trucking business/truck maintenance/storage/dumpsters, vehicles; a cleaning business; and a horse hoof trimming service. The Commission discussed the dumpster related business commented on by Commissioner McCarthy.

b) Discuss CCM Webinar: FOIA Municipal Personnel, Board, Commission & Committee Members from April 22.

Commissioner Hewitt attended the webinar and spoke of sending less emails and care with their content should they be retained and forwarded. Town Councilor May added care concerning text messages as well. He said he would forward to the Commission the information discussed by the Town Attorney at a Parks & Recreation meeting regarding FOIA. Chairman Gillette asked if the attorney could attend the next meeting. Town Councilor May

said he would speak with Attorney Cody and forward to the Commission information entitled “What a Commissioner Needs to Know.”

c) To consider and act on the possibility for earlier closure for massage parlors.

Chairman Gillette reported he spoke with Town Councilor Bunnell who said a proposal for a legal opinion was needed to refer to Mayor, Town Attorney, and Town Council. He also spoke of a Facebook post regarding activity at the Grist Mill Plaza business. The Commission discussed the same and options such as zoning. Town Councilor May he would discuss the concern with Mayor McDaniel.

9) New Business

a) seCTer Events. (Connecticut’s Economic Development Week, Webinar: Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board (EWB) Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative, etc.)

Commissioner Hewitt commented on the seCTer events he forwarded to the Commission. Commissioner McCarthy spoke on the manufacturing timeline, a means to get students ready for the workforce and having Grasso Tech consider Montville; Town Councilor May spoke of five (5) area schools involved with the industrial pipeline but did not know if one was Grasso. Commissioner Hewitt referenced the website for the pipeline concerning schools and education opportunities open to workforce.

The Commission discussed workforce activity identifying Town housing for that purpose (Chapel Hill and Maple Avenue) in addition other construction activities, the impact on schools, professionals versus families, and CAD courses at the high school and a potential discussion from Superintendent Pallin on the same.

Does the Commission send welcome letters to new businesses was asked by Commissioner Davis? Chairman Gillette and Commissioner Hewitt spoke of former Commissioner Toner and his involvement with SCORE as well as his phone calls/visits with Town businesses. Commissioner Toner would answer and advise on business questions. It was noted the Town EDC web page has links for resources such as SCORE for information but may not answer all questions. Commissioner Davis spoke of her experience when opening her Town business and the need for an EDC contact person for new businesses or a visually appealing email. She also suggested having Town businesses who would act as a welcoming committee, an eclectic group representing different ethnicities i.e., Indian and Black, to promote and get people and businesses to survive. She proposed a committee of three (3) women and three (3) men as a start to check in with new Town business owners.

Town Councilor May spoke of his 8-year tenure on the Planning & Zoning Commission and paraphrased a comment by Town Planner Vlaun, “Someone has to have a reason to stop in Montville.” He said Montville has a lot of good businesses and great stores but no variety. The new business list sent monthly by T. Williams has a lot of startup businesses and Town Councilor May asked if trends were being noted. Commissioner Hewitt explained businesses can be tracked when started but said there is no mechanism in place for an exit survey to determine reasons for businesses leaving or closing. Commissioner Davis added with more connections businesses may not leave and spoke of her business and businesses that supply Electric Boat. As a civil engineer at EB, Town Councilor May said the Navy has given funds to EB to reach out to local contractors, vendors etc. Commissioner Hewitt mentioned equipment and reasons for production in China, specifically comparable businesses located

together. He asked if there was a plan for EB to work with area towns to focus on its specific need.

Ultimately, the Commission noted several companies that do manufacturing but questioned how to attract specific businesses. Town Councilor May asked about the networking for Town businesses and whether there was a list of the type of businesses and what they do; Commissioner Hewitt said demographics are not known. Commissioner Davis proposed preparing a directory list of business to include addresses and email addresses to share among businesses in addition to business Zoom meetings or a Facebook page to share discussion. Commissioner McCarthy suggested a Town event similar to East Lyme Day where each business has a booth. Commissioner Davis said the Town has other things such as beautiful homes and is not just a pass thru Town shortcut to the casino or to avoid the highway. Commissioners Hewitt and Napierski commented on pre-Covid activities of the Commission that included the EDC Seminar where information was provided to get businesses to stay. Commissioner Davis remarked her business has been in the Grist Mill Plaza for five (5) years and had not gotten any communication from the EDC. She also spoke of businesses coming back from survival mode and said paying taxes does not mean people cannot struggle. Commissioner Hewitt spoke of the criteria needed to prepare a directory of businesses—size of business, paying taxes—and of email blasts sent in conjunction with the Chamber. He said he could send past business information to Commissioner Davis and agreed to the need for more networking.

b) EDC Blog (<https://montville-edc.org/>)

Commissioner Hewitt continues to post to the EDC Blog and to Facebook and includes Chamber events that he monitors. Commissioner Napierski commented the lists had numbers of people, but a conscious decision was made to not send them to everyone. Chairman Gillette spoke of touching base to provide help.

Commissioner Davis left the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

10) Report from Town Council Liaison

Town Councilor May said he was glad to be there and said of the Commission it was a nice organization that was doing a lot of things that worked. He discussed the Town stating taxes were low, a drop in the mill rate for citizens and businesses; and the Covid funds which helped the Town stay in good shape. Town Councilor May responded to Commissioner McCarthy regarding the grand list stating it rose by 2% and said 99% of taxes are being paid. He also reported on the review of the School budget which got a small increase and said the Town Council would vote on the upcoming fiscal year budget on Thursday, May 20.

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

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

12) Remarks from the Commissioners and Town Council Liaison

Commissioner Hewitt suggested an action to recirculate the list of proposed business for the Business Recognition Award stating he did some analysis regarding the size of businesses and will get an updated list from the tax office. Town Councilor May commented the census should have a lot of information including the dates when businesses started. He said Commissioner

Hewitt could use the census business information to compare with his existing list and offered his help with the analysis. Commissioner Napierski attended the Economic Development webinar and it included information on how businesses are surviving, wasteful spending to force businesses to look at their operations, and the hardship of finding employees willing to work and invest in a business. Commissioner McCarthy spoke of the stimulus, \$300, offered and finding job seekers for minimum wage positions. Commissioner Hewitt remarked on the Governor's incentive, \$1,000, for people to return to work. Town Councilor May added childcare was not an option for some making it cheaper to stay home than go to work. Commissioner Lapinski asked for an update on the Rock Ten site with details about the dam repair and other improvements from Commissioner McCarthy and Town Councilor May, who said he would obtain information on the status of the property and report back to the

13) Townspeople and Business Feedback

a) Proposed Recipients for Business Recognition Award

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting under Agenda, Item 12.

14) Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Hewitt; seconded by Commissioner McCarthy to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Gloria J. Gathers

Recording Clerk, Town of Montville

**AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE ON THE TOWN OF
MONTVILLE WEBSITE.**