

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes – August 16, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

All persons in attendance must wear a face mask if not fully vaccinated and remain within six feet from others.

Comments will only be accepted at times designated for public comment by the Chair of the meeting. The Montville Town Council Rules of Procedure, decorum, timeliness, and suitability shall be followed and enforced.

1) Call to Order

Chairman Gillette called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

All stood and pledged the flag.

3) Roll Call

Present were Commissioners Sierra Davis, Sheelagh Lapinski, Christopher Napierski, Tom McCarthy, and Mickey Gillette. Absent was Commissioner Walt Hewitt. A quorum was present. Chairman Gillette reported on an email from former Commissioner Heather Harris who had moved out of town and questioned her continued presence on the Commission. Per feedback from Town Clerk Sandberg, the Town Charter directs Town residence to hold seats on boards and commissions. H. Harris submitted her resignation; Chairman Gillette wished her well and thanked her for her work on the Commission. Also present was Maracus Hernandez, a potential candidate for an alternate position on the Commission but has not yet been interviewed.

4) Alterations to the Agenda -- *None*

5) Remarks from Marcia Vlaun, if available. – *Not present*

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

Chairman Gillette 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 June 19, 2021.

Motion by Commissioner Davis; seconded by Commissioner Lapinski to approve Regular Meeting Minutes of June 19, 2021. Discussion: None. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

8) Unfinished Business

a) New Business Report

Chairman Gillette asked for feedback on the New Business Report which listed three (3) new home businesses in June for day care, stained glass, and newspaper publishing/marketing/web design. The one (1) new home business in July is for a photography studio with makeup.

9) New Business

Commissioner McCarthy reported on an email received concerning an electronic sign for the Town which he reviewed and questioned the financing for it. Commissioner Napierski commented the signs placed in certain areas would generate money for the Town and could save money elsewhere. Town Council Liaison May proposed a special meeting where the official could make a presentation to the Commission and the public. Commissioner Napierski spoke of updated traffic data which Chairman Gillette asked if he would set up and whether the Commission should schedule a virtual meeting presentation with the digital sign company. Chairman Gillette distributed a handout, Passport to Norwich, involving hiking through park trails as well as restaurants per Commissioner Lapinski who suggested each Town business setup a display at the Farmer's Market. Chairman Gillette wondered if Parks & Recreation wanted to be involved and vowed to speak with them.

Commissioner McCarthy also mentioned an email he sent to Chairman Gillette and Vice Chair Hewitt concerning a bike night where 3,000 bikes showed up in Plainfield to benefit Parks & Recreation with a fee charged for each bike. He said the funds raised are to be used to facilitate playgrounds in the Plainfield area. Commissioner Lapinski spoke of an upcoming bike night in Groton. Chairman Gillette spoke of logistics for a bike night—a beginning and ending location—where funds raised would be used for Parks & Recreation playgrounds and sports. Commissioner Davis spoke of a restaurant crawl she attended in Boston and having such an event within walking distance of restaurants but, said there was no Town area for a safe distance to walk. She spoke of setting up such a restaurant event at Camp Oakdale with activities for adults such as basketball, an additionally talked about sectioning off Grist Mill Plaza for a restaurant crawl. Commissioner Lapinski commented on a Taste of Montville event put on by the Senior Center a few years ago; Commissioner McCarthy spoke of the Food Truck Festival sponsored by Parks and Recreation recently at the Farmer's Market.

10) Report from Town Council Liaison

Town Councilor May reported on a visual display sign at Town Hall discussed by Mayor McDaniel with thought of having a kiosk sign with ads included. He said the sign would benefit the Town and its businesses. He also reported on the Town Cares Act Funds Subcommittee as an avenue if the Commission could develop ideas to benefit businesses. Town Councilor May said the Subcommittee Chair is Town Councilor Jaskiewicz and reported Parks & Recreation is seeking funds. He also mentioned brochures discussed a few months ago by the Commission and the cost for the same. Town Councilor May stated the Commission had come up with good ideas and suggested it reach out to Parks & Recreation.

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

The Commission continued with remarks to benefit Town businesses and residents as follows:

- Commissioner Lapinski remarked on scooters to rent in New York and people who need funds to get from one location to another having missed a bus. She spoke of the kids on the road who ride scooters and admitted she did not know how the proposal would work. Chairman Gillette proposed sidewalks for scooter use; Commissioner

McCarthy remarked a lot of big cities have scooters and strategically place cars to rent but said he did not know how well it would work. Commissioner Davis spoke of their use by a teen who just got a permit but cannot drive yet; Commissioner McCarthy informed anything device under 49 ccs does not require having a license.

- Commissioner Davis remarked on the lack of electric car charging stations in Town and paraphrased Mayor McDaniel from a prior meeting with the Commission who said it was the responsibility of businesses to supply them. She asked if Tesla was looking for locations for them. Town Councilor May spoke of the locations in Town that have the charging stations, Home Depot and Stop & Shop, and commented they bring businesses. Additionally, he spoke of traveling and staying at a hotel that had the stations, the use of an adapter for the three (3) voltage/amps levels, and responded to Chairman Gillette that the cost of electricity is paid by the owner of the business.
- Commissioner McCarthy asked about the status of the former drive-in in Town. M. Hernandez remarked many want to see the drive-in return. Town Councilor May spoke of the location as being a site for a distribution center but the deal did not happen. Commissioner Lapinski spoke of U.S. Foods having looked for land in Bozrah. Town Councilor May spoke of the EDC hiring a real estate company to market Town commercial property. Commissioner McCarthy mentioned a support center for a windmill project. Chairman Gillette spoke of James M. Gillanders, Londregan Commercial Real Estate Group who meet with the Commission to discuss available Route 32 properties; Town Councilor May mentioned a contact in Preston concerning the marketing of the former state hospital. The Commission discussed the commercial potential for businesses in Town.
 1. Route 85 has no water for fire suppression, and it was denied by the Army Corp of Engineers (*Gillette*).
 2. Offering tax relief to buyers of blighted properties that are not in use (*Davis*). Town Councilor May remarked tax abatement for one must be given to another and giving tax dollars away causes issues.
 3. Town Councilor May paraphrased Town Planner Vlaun by saying people must have a reason to come to Montville. He spoke of issues with properties on Route 32 that do not look good and said installing sidewalks would be tough as the Town must clear them unless a business is attached to it.

Commissioner Davis spoke of working backwards and asked if the Commission was a think tank with big ideas. Commissioner McCarthy commented on economic development and 10.2 million jobs with not enough people to fill them. Commissioner Davis spoke of her attempts to revamp the EDC Facebook page stating her network of people are different. She asked about assigning all commissioners as administrators stating the goal is to spotlight businesses to reach more people. She also suggested taking pictures, logging in to Facebook, and tagging them with comments.

13) Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Lapinski; seconded by Commissioner McCarthy to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote: 5-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

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

