

**MONTAGUE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AND INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION  
TOWN HALL  
1 AVENUE A  
TURNERS FALLS, MA 01376**

---

## **MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday July 18, 2024 at 4:00PM

### **IN PERSON MEETING**

Town Hall Annex Meeting Room (ground floor)  
One Avenue A Turners Falls, MA

**Present:** John Furbish (departed at 4:15PM), Linda Ackerman, Ella Ingraham, Richard Ruth, Rob Steinberg, James Mussoni

**Absent:** Kimbely Williams

**Staff:** Walter Ramsey, Chris Nolan-Zeller

Meeting opened 4:00 PM Richard Ruth presiding.

Approval of minutes: **MOTION BY LA to approve the minutes of 3/14/24. Seconded by RR. All Approved. Motion Passed Unanimously.**

Comprehensive Plan/ Economic Development Chapter Updates. CNZ gave brief updates on the status of plans for the upcoming Avenue A Streetscape Improvements and the estimated \$10 million Strathmore Mill demolition.

EDIC discussed the former Farren Site, now in the Town's possession. WR updated that the Planning Office first needed to work toward re-zoning the property, and after that the Town could issue an RFP for development. The site is currently zoned for 'Central Business,' and as such is not permitted to contain any purely residential structures. Meanwhile, 356 Montague City Rd sits on a separate parcel and its future is currently unclear. Zoning changes would not be ready for at least another year.

JF leaves meeting (4:15PM)

RR: Site should be residential only, to protect downtown businesses. Town Meeting would not approve change to high-density.

RS: High-density with some small commercial (i.e. Urgent Care) would be more attractive to developers. Town needs more market rate housing to build tax base and help subsidize infrastructure.

EI: This site is not walkable to downtown. Mixed-use would be preferred, with housing partially market-rate, partially affordable.

**The Town of Montague is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer**

LA: Some housing needs to be included; lots of older adults want to remain in community and also have amenities as close as possible.

JM: Town is in need of affordable housing, and growth is needed to pay for planned infrastructure upgrades over the next decade. Involved committees (EDIC, Planning Board, Parks & Recreation, Board of Health, Conservation Commission) need to find consensus in order to present a plan to the Town. The Montague City neighborhood has shown support for redevelopment.

EDIC agreed to invite other committees to its next meeting.

Discussion: Review Charge and Strategic Direction of the Montague EDIC.

RS: EDIC has more power under statute than currently using. What role does committee want to take?

JM: The Farren should be EDIC's top priority as it is Town's foremost economic development opportunity in near future.

Set next meeting date and time: August 29, 2024 at 4PM, to last 90 minutes with other committees present.

Meeting adjourned 4:58PM

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Nolan-Zeller, EDIC Coordinator