AGENDA
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2011 – 5:30 P.M.
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
295 MERIDIAN STREET

I. ROLL CALL

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF February 7, 2011*

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Responses to Solicitations of Interest in the Property

2. Review of Survey Responses

   a. Additional Responses Received by Mail
   b. On-line Responses
   c. Other

3. Information from Project LEARN

4. Discussion of Preliminary Recommendations for the Property

5. Continuation/Adoption of Meeting Schedule

6. Other

V. ADJOURNMENT

*Attached

DRAFT MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Peter Ganacoplos, Mary Kelly, Catherine Kolnaski and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Marian Galbraith, Bill Hart, Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti and Archie Swindell.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
Chairman Catherine Kolnaski called the members' attention to a letter from Audrey Heard, 94 Smith Street, which was included in the agenda packet for this meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF January 3, 2011
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Whitney and so voted unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Responses to Solicitations of Interest in the Property
a. Letter from University of Connecticut Dated January 14, 2011
Mr. Oefinger noted that the above letter indicates that UConn has no interest in the property at this time.
2. Review of Survey Responses
a. Summary of Responses Received by Mail
The Town Manager reported that approximately 130 surveys were mailed to neighboring property owners and nineteen responses were received by mail with five returned as undeliverable. He summarized the results of these nineteen responses; most of the nineteen live in the immediate neighborhood; they would like the building to stay and would prefer public ownership of the property. Education and recreation are the preferred uses, followed by professional offices or condos.
Ms. Downs added that one survey was received over the phone from a resident of the neighborhood who would like the building to stay and be transferred to private ownership for use as residential condos.
Ms. Kelly voiced her concern that if further responses are not received, the survey results will be skewed due to the fact that all responders are immediate neighbors.
Mr. Oefinger noted that the survey was posted on both the Town and City web sites, a notice appeared on Channel 2, and it was announced at Town Council meetings. No ad was placed in the newspaper.
The Town Manager reported that the architect and the project manager for Project LEARN are collecting information on costs, etc. associated with using Groton Heights, but added that it may be some time before a decision is made.
b. On-line Responses
Mr. Swindell has the results from the on-line survey, but is not present tonight.
c. Other
Members discussed the letter from Audrey Heard which made many of the same suggestions already considered by the committee, including use by various local organizations. Mr. Oefinger recommended that the committee consult with some of these groups to see if a group or coalition of groups may have the interest and the means to take over the property. He added that Project LEARN has a good chance for funding, and that if they do take over the property, they may make space available to local organizations.
Mr. Oefinger reminded the members that the survey runs until the end of the week. He added that public reaction may be different after a proposal is actually made.
3. Other
Ms. Downs reported that the possibility of a land swap with the Bill Memorial Library was raised at the library's Board meeting in late January, although no formal response was given by the Board.
The members discussed the possible disposition of the various parcels that make up the property, including "Library Street."
In light of the public's preference for public ownership of the property, Mr. Whitney expressed concern that the State is not taking good care of the properties it already owns, and this fact should be considered before the property is turned over to the State.

Mr. Oefinger suggested that the committee should analyze the rest of the survey results and put together some preliminary recommendations. He noted that the worst situation would be for the property to sit vacant; the Town's maintenance costs amount to $50,000 to $60,000 per year. He added that the Project LEARN magnet school seems to be the preferred use and would have a minimal impact on the neighborhood. He described the arrangements between LEARN and the Town regarding the Eastern Point School property.

It was decided that the next meeting will be held on February 28, 20011. Agenda items will include on-line survey results; the Town Manager will try to get more information from Project LEARN, and preliminary recommendations can be compiled.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Whitney, seconded by Ms. Downs and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member