



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Agenda

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager 860-441-6630

Town Council

Mayor Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Karen F. Morton, Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson

Monday, November 04, 2013

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2013-0238 Proclamation Declaring November Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month Proclamation - TC

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

This is the portion of the Council Agenda where the Council welcomes comments from citizens. Each presentation should be limited to five (5) minutes or less, and citizens should, if possible, submit written comments. Presentations should be related to matters pertinent to Groton. Town Councilors will only ask questions in order to clarify the speaker's presentation and can respond during the Responses to Citizens' Petitions portion of the Town Council meeting. Citizens should make their presentations from the lectern and state their names and addresses for the record.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

All matters listed under Item VI (Consent Calendar) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. No separate discussion of these items will take place, unless cause is shown prior to the time Council votes on the motion to adopt.

a. Approval of Minutes

2013-0253 Approval of Minutes (Town Council) Resolution - Consent

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of October 15, 2013 are hereby accepted and approved.

b. Administrative Items

2013-0246 Special Trust Fund Contributions Resolution - Consent

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Charles Rogers - \$25.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Barbara Weeman - \$10.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Various Donations - \$165.86 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

City of Groton - \$9.40 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2012-0069 Police Station Renovations Referral

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|-----------|--|----------|
| 2012-0246 | Pending Claim | Referral |
| 2013-0014 | Pfizer Update | Referral |
| 2013-0018 | Flanders Road Utility Installation - Future Bond Referendum Potential | Referral |
| 2013-0023 | Town Police Presence/Jurisdiction in Schools | Referral |
| 2013-0068 | Blight Ordinance | Referral |
| 2013-0089 | Plan to Reduce the Number of Voting Districts | Referral |
| 2013-0178 | Strategy and/or Negotiations with Respect to a Pending Claim Concerning the Appointment of Special Counsel | Referral |
| 2013-0224 | Preliminary Results of Operations - FYE 2013 | Referral |
| 2013-0229 | Appointments to Trails Coordinating Task Force | Referral |
| 2013-0250 | Noank School - Community Garden Proposal | Referral |
| 2013-0252 | Appointment of Douglas Smith to Zoning Commission | Referral |

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

- a. Town Councilors
- b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting
- c. Clerk of the Council
- d. Town Manager
- e. Town Attorney

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Schmidt
- b. Economic Development - Chairman Johnson
- c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Watson
- d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Peruzzotti
- e. Finance - Chairman Morton
- f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman Flax
- g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter
- h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Antipas
- i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Somers

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

X. NEW BUSINESS

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|-----------|--|----------|
| 2013-0250 | Noank School - Community Garden Proposal | Referral |
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RESOLUTION ALLOWING NOANK RESIDENTS SIX MONTHS TO DEVELOP A PLAN FOR REUSE OF THE FORMER NOANK SCHOOL PROPERTY

WHEREAS, on October 22, 2013 a group of Noank residents led by Robert Palm presented a proposal to the Town Council for "Noank School Farms" with elements including a community

garden, orchard, farmers' market, and reuse of a portion of the Noank School building for classrooms, public events, and storage, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council was supportive of the ideas presented, but desirous of more detailed information including the level of community support, financial considerations, and timelines, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council gives Mr. Palm and his associates six months from the date of this resolution to develop a more formal and detailed plan for reuse of the Noank School building and property including comprehensive cost estimates and financing plans/alternatives.

Legislative History

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|-------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 10/15/2013 | Mayor | Referred | Town Council Committee of th |
| 10/22/2013 | Town Council Committee of the Whole | Recommended for a Resolution | |

Timothy McDowell, Robert Palm, Clint Wright, Eric Larson, and John Knaff were present to address the Council. Mr. Palm reviewed a presentation that he prepared for the Council about a potential reuse of the Noank School site. During the Noank School Reuse Task Force proceedings, there was strong public sentiment that the 6.3 acres of the Noank School be preserved as a public resource. Although there was a presumption that the building would be demolished and the land left as open space, there was no specific vision for the property. The Groton area is rich with protected open space and this site is dominated by the building and paving. As gardeners, Mr. Palm and his associates see an opportunity for a community garden.

The group envisions starting with a community vegetable garden, and expanding to an orchard, beehives, and a memorial garden. They would like authorization from the Council to bring the ideas to fruition. Mr. Larson will offer his expertise in strategic planning and many residents have responded to the idea positively.

Mr. Palm asked for a period of time to put the plans into action. He has talked to food banks and the senior center about donating food. The group's timeline is based on the season. They would like to harrow and disc the east field in November with assistance from Public Works. The group's efforts would be documented on video. In the spring, the orchard area would be marked out and the yew hedge would be trimmed. The group would provide a detailed plan to the Town Council at the end of winter.

Mr. McDowell noted that the plan includes an educational component with respect to sustainability, food production, health, etc. Mr. McDowell reviewed a slide show that addressed potential uses for the building, the portion of the building that would be demolished, and reuse of the brick in other elements such as walkways, landscaping, and a farm market stand. Mr. McDowell reviewed specific area of the property noting various uses including a barn, public event space, beekeeping, a sledding slope, plant processing, lease community garden plots, education classes, and a wetland pond and bridge. Mr. McDowell reviewed an overall layout rendering of the site.

Mr. Palm discussed a potential partnership with Fitch High School to teach kids about healthy eating and organic processes.

Mr. Wright suggested there is an evolving problem with food in this country. He feels that residents have a moral obligation to feed the Town of Groton and they can have fun doing it.

Mr. McDowell distributed copies of the presentation.

Councilor Flax noted that an issue with the Noank Fire District plan for the property was cost. He asked how the group would pay for demolition of the building or portions of it. Mr. Wright stated the gymnasium area would be mothballed the group is established. Other ideas include using the space as a storm shelter, conference center, and community space and heating it with leased solar panels. The group would like to keep the building in place for five years.

Mr. Palm reiterated that he is asking for the winter to answer some of these questions. The group would like to start with the community garden and orchard. The plan has not been formally reviewed with Noank, only mentioned in informal conversations. Mr. Larson stated he will be developing a time line and identifying required resources and funding considerations.

Councilors were supportive of the concept. Mayor Somers reminded the group that it is Town property and the Town Council has no intention to sell the property. She expressed support for the proposal and cited the benefits of community gardens.

**10/22/2013 Town Council Committee of Motion
the Whole**

to give Mr. Palm six months to come back to the Town Council with a more formal plan for reuse of the Noank School property as community/public gardens.

Mr. Palm clarified what needs to be done with respect to plowing and planting rye and winter wheat. The Town Manager recommended that the group not be allowed to start work on the project before developing the details so as not to subject the Council or the group to criticism. There may also be unknown Noank zoning implications. Councilor Peruzzotti clarified that her motion supports developing a plan only, and not beginning any work

2013-0252 Appointment of Douglas Smith to Zoning Commission Referral

RESOLUTION APPOINTING DOUGLAS SMITH AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER TO THE ZONING COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that Douglas A. Smith, 58 Mohegan Road, is hereby appointed as an alternate member to the Zoning Commission, for a term expiring 9/30/16.

Legislative History

**10/15/2013 Town Council Recommended for a
Personnel/Appointments/Rules Resolution
/Legislation Committee (2011)**

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT