



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Agenda

Town Council

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

Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Natalie Burfoot Billing, Heather Sherman Bond, Catherine Kolnaski, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Paulann H. Sheets, Thomas J. Skrmetti, and Elissa T. Wright.

Tuesday, August 03, 2004

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

IV. 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 ten 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

2004-0240 Approval of Minutes (Town Council) Resolution - Consent

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council of July 6, 2004 and July 20, 2004 are hereby accepted and approved.

b. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2004-0241	Expanding Permanent School Building Committee Membership	Referral
2004-0186	Postponement of Revaluation to 2006	Referral
2004-0245	Televising Committee of the Whole Meetings - Review	Referral
2004-0246	Agreement for Right-of-Way Activities Associated with Mystic Streetscape Improvements	Referral
2004-0247	Design and Construction Costs Associated with Mystic Streetscape Improvements	Referral
2004-0251	Appointment of Christine Grady to Zoning Board of Appeals	Referral
2004-0255	Appointment of Joseph Kane to Shellfish Commission	Referral

2004-0256 Appointment of Raymond Block to Shellfish Commission Referral

c. Special Trust Fund Contributions

2004-0248 Contributions to Special Trust Funds Resolution - Consent

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS
RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Marcella Croteau - \$50.00 - D.A.R.E.

d. Tax Refund

2004-0250 Tax Refund Resolution - Consent

RESOLUTION APPROVING TAX REFUND
WHEREAS, the following, for the reason indicated, has overpaid taxes in the amount specified, and

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has recommended the amount be refunded, be it

RESOLVED, that the tax refund indicated below is hereby approved.

Tilman Friedrich-Carlotta Volhardt - \$4,777.50 - Excess payment

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

b. Representative Town Meeting

c. Clerk of the Council

d. Town Manager

e. Town Attorney

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Billing

b. Economic Development - Chairman Bond

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

d. Environment & Recreation - Chairman Sheets

e. Finance - Chairman Wright

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman O'Beirne

g. Public Safety - Chairman Skrmetti

h. Public Works - Chairman Bartinik

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

X. NEW BUSINESS

2004-0186 Postponement of Revaluation to 2006 Referral

RESOLUTION APPROVING REVALUATION SCHEDULE

WHEREAS, under state law prevailing at the time of the last full revaluation in 2001 the Town of Groton would be required to conduct a statistical revaluation in 2005, and

WHEREAS, a revised law that has been passed in 2004 would allow Groton to delay its next statistical revaluation until the year 2006, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has considered the undesirable consequences to homeowners who would be struck by steeper adjustments following such a delayed revaluation, while at the same time other taxpayers could be paying more than their share, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council intends to take the fairness and accuracy of the revaluation process under further consideration, while also evaluating the prospects for meaningful tax reform by the State of Connecticut legislature, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town of Groton shall conduct its statistical revaluation in 2005 according to the plan already in effect at the time of the full revaluation in 2001.

Legislative History

5/18/04 Mayor Referred Town Council Committee of
7/27/04 Town Council Committee of Discussed
the Whole

Director of Finance Sal Pandolfo explained there are three categories in the grand list. Personal property and motor vehicles are revalued every year; real estate is not. Previously, real estate was revalued every 10 years. After 1995, that was changed to every four years with a physical inspection every 12 years, and in the last legislative session, it was changed once again to every 5 years with a physical inspection every 10 years. Towns were also given the option of deferring the revaluation to 2006, which is a policy issue for the Council to decide. If the Council chooses to go ahead with the revaluation in 2005, a Request for Proposal will be issued this fall.

Councilor Sheets thanked Mr. Pandolfo for an exceptionally clear narrative. She reviewed the information found in Mr. Pandolfo's referral memo and the supporting analysis by Mr. Philip.

7/27/04 Town Council Committee of Motion
the Whole
to recommend that the revaluation be postponed from 2005 to 2006.

Councilor Skrmetti expressed concern with delaying because it only postpones the "sticker shock." In the long run, Councilor Skrmetti would like to see annual revaluations and tax reform. Councilor Billing suggested that revaluation needs to be explained to the public better. She does not feel strongly about 2005 or 2006.

Mr. Philip explained how a statistical revaluation is conducted. It includes everything but measuring buildings and going through the houses.

Councilor Bond encouraged citizens to lobby for property tax reform if the Council chooses to delay the revaluation. Councilor O'Beirne prefers 2005 because of the fairness issue. After talking to the legislators last week, he does not feel there is any hope for tax reform in the near future

7/27/04 Town Council Committee of Recommended for a
the Whole Resolution

Councilor Bartinik indicated he does not see this as an important issue, stating it is unrelated to the larger issue of tax reform. Discussion followed on the failed motion, and the fact that by state law, the Council has to proceed with revaluation in 2005. The Town Manager stated that since this is a policy issue, he would prefer to have a motion approved by the Town Council.

7/27/04 Town Council Committee of Motion
the Whole
to conduct the revaluation in 2005.

Councilor Bond asked if the problems from the last revaluation have been worked out and Mr. Philip stated the

issues are always the same. Councilor Bond suggested that postponing a year would allow the public to understand the process. Councilor Sheets explained her reasons for wanting to delay the revaluation. Councilor O'Beirne asked what the Assessor would do during that year if the revaluation were delayed. Mr. Philip stated that there would be nothing to do because there is an established process already in place. He then explained to the Committee how the process works. Councilor Skrmetti noted that staff previously conducted a thorough presentation on the revaluation process for the Council, and he does not feel that postponing will make the process any clearer. He noted that the Council could perhaps establish some ground rules for the process. Councilor Billing feels it will cost more to postpone, but she is more concerned with the process

2004-0245 Televising Committee of the Whole Meetings - Review Referral

RESOLUTION CONCERNING TELEVISED MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE

WHEREAS, the Town Council by resolution provided for the recording and broadcast of Committee of the Whole meetings for a test period of four months, and

WHEREAS, such telecasts began with the meeting of March 9, 2004, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has evaluated the cost, the staffing needs, and the impact on programming, as well as the public approval of, and continued desire for, the televised committee meetings, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the policy for televising regular meetings of the Committee of the Whole on municipal television channel GMTV-2 is to be continued permanently.

Legislative History

7/19/04	Mayor	Referred	Town Council Committee of tl
7/27/04	Town Council Committee of the Whole	Recommended for a Resolution	
7/27/04	Town Council Committee of the Whole	Motion	

to recommend a resolution continuing the broadcasting of Committee of the Whole meetings.

Shawn Greeley was asked about the impact of going to one camera, and the impact on scheduling. Mr. Greeley noted that scheduling has not been a problem because the broadcasts fall in line with the regular Council meeting broadcast schedule. There is an issue with special meetings because more programming is eliminated to accommodate the longer meetings. There is a definite difference in quality using only one camera, but it is acceptable. Additionally, only one camera has created some technical issues that have had to be dealt with. Mr. Greeley noted that he has received positive feedback regarding the broadcasts. Councilor Billing asked about the costs involved, and Mr. Greeley noted the costs on average are comparable to televising Town Council meetings using two staff members. The new arrangement has had some impact on the availability of staff to offer services to other agencies (i.e. studio time).

Councilor Billing has noticed that non-televised meetings are more informal and discussion is freer, which is a down side to televising the meetings. However, the up side is allowing the public to see the discussions.

Councilor Sheets has had numerous calls in support of the practice.

Town Manager Oefinger encouraged the Committee to continue the practice of televising regularly scheduled meetings only. Councilor O'Beirne noted that the policy does not preclude televising important special meetings. He agreed that the practice has changed to tenor of Committee of the Whole meetings

2004-0246 Agreement for Right-of-Way Activities Associated with Mystic Streetscape Improvements Referral

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT AND THE TOWN OF GROTON FOR RIGHT OF WAY ACTIVITIES IN CONJUNCTION WITH ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY FOR THE MYSTIC STREETSCAPE IN THE TOWN OF GROTON UTILIZING FEDERAL FUNDS FROM THE HIGH PRIORITY

PROJECTS PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton has requested that right of way activities be undertaken in conjunction with the Mystic Streetscape Improvements and will utilize federal funds from the High Priority Projects Program for right of way activities for said Mystic Streetscape (Groton) improvements under the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century of 1998, and

WHEREAS, said rights of way activities which include, but are not limited to appraisal, title search, and negotiation for the acquisition of all permanent and temporary rights and land acquisition for the project and

WHEREAS, these rights of way activities are identified by State Project 58-283 and Federal Aid Project No. HPP-HO18 (7), therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Mark R. Oefinger, Town Manager, be, and hereby is, authorized to sign the agreement entitled "Agreement Between the State of Connecticut and the Town of Groton for Rights of Way Activities in Conjunction with Acquisition of Property for The Mystic Streetscape in the Town of Groton Utilizing Federal Funds from the High Priority Projects Program."

Legislative History

7/20/04	Mayor	Referred	Town Council Committee of tl
7/27/04	Town Council Committee of the Whole	Discussed	

Director of Planning and Development Mike Murphy explained that the Town expects to get rights-of-way for this project at no cost, but DOT is requiring that funds be set aside based on a formula they have developed for calculating potential costs. DOT is requiring the Town to retain up to \$260,000, of which 80% is reimbursable by the state if it is used. If the funds are not expended, staff will work to get the money put back into the project.

7/27/04	Town Council Committee of the Whole	Recommended for a Resolution
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2004-0247	Design and Construction Costs Associated with Mystic Streetscape Improvements	Referral
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RESOLUTION COMMITTING TO THE FUNDING OF 20% OF THE DESIGN, RIGHT OF WAY AND CONSTRUCTION COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DOWNTOWN MYSTIC STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS AS PROVIDED FOR IN F.H.W.A. HIGH PRIORITY PROJECT NO. 776

WHEREAS, the Groton Town Council has accepted the report of the Mystic Cooperative Task Group and expressed the Downtown Mystic Streetscape Improvements be designed and constructed in conjunction with the Town of Stonington and Mystic Seaport, and

WHEREAS, funding for 80% of project costs for design, rights of way activities, and construction will come through the State of Connecticut from the Federal Highway Administration as appropriated for High Priority Project No. 776 in Section 1602 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st century (TEA-21), and the 20% local match will be paid from State Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP) funds designated for the Town, and

WHEREAS, the funding will be used for design, rights of way activities, and construction of streetscape and public access improvements such as the addition and/or replacement of sidewalks, curbing, landscaping, utility relocation, historic street lighting, related traffic signage/control, pedestrian safety and access improvements, and streetscape furniture, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves committing to the funding of the 20% local match for the project, or up to \$625,000.00 based on available funding and detailed estimates of the design, rights of way and construction costs associated with the Downtown Mystic Streetscape Improvements.

Legislative History

7/20/04 Mayor Referred Town Council Committee of tl

7/27/04 Town Council Committee of Discussed
the Whole

Director of Planning and Development Mike Murphy explained the request to update the resolution committing the Town to provide 20% of the design, right-of-way, and construction costs associated with the Mystic Streetscape Improvement Project.

7/27/04 Town Council Committee of Recommended for a
the Whole Resolution

2004-0251 Appointment of Christine Grady to Zoning Board of Appeals Referral

RESOLUTION APPOINTING CHRISTINE GRADY AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

RESOLVED, that Christine Grady, 17 Palmers Cove Drive, is hereby appointed as an alternate member of the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term expiring December 31, 2007.

Legislative History

7/27/04 Town Council Recommended for a
Personnel/Appointments/Rules Resolution
/Legislation Committee

2004-0255 Appointment of Joseph Kane to Shellfish Commission Referral

RESOLUTION APPOINTING JOSEPH D. KANE AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE SHELLFISH COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that Joseph D. Kane, 131 Prospect Hill Road, is appointed as an alternate member to the Shellfish Commission for a term ending 12/31/06.

Legislative History

7/28/04 Town Council Recommended for a
Personnel/Appointments/Rules Resolution
/Legislation Committee

2004-0256 Appointment of Raymond Block to Shellfish Commission Referral

RESOLUTION APPOINTING RAYMOND F. BLOCK AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE SHELLFISH COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that Raymond F. Block, 312 Hazelnut Hill Road, is appointed as an alternate member of the Shellfish Commission for a term ending 12/31/04.

Legislative History

7/27/04 Town Council Recommended for a
Personnel/Appointments/Rules Resolution
/Legislation Committee

XI. OTHER BUSINESS**XII. ADJOURNMENT**