



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council Committee of the Whole

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

**Mayor James L. Streeter, Councilors Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Paulann H. Sheets, and Harry A. Watson**

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

#### SPECIAL MEETING

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

*Mayor Streeter called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.*

#### 2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Streeter, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson  
Members Absent: Councilor Kolnaski and Councilor Sheets

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnyan.*

#### 3. Calendar and Communications

*None.*

#### 4. NEW BUSINESS

##### 2010-0173 Appointment of Town Historian

##### Discussed

*Mayor Streeter recused himself from the discussion and voting on this item.*

*Town Manager Oefinger explained that a packet of information on the Town Historian appointment was provided to the Council. Councilor O'Beirne noted that the process was opened up to the public and only one letter of interest was received from Mayor Streeter and given Mr. Streeter's qualifications, he supports his appointment.*

**A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Monteiro, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Votes:** In Favor: 6 - Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson  
Abstain: 1 - Mayor Streeter

##### 2010-0124 Review of Town Council Goals

##### Discussed

*Thames Street - Mayor Streeter reported that the Thames Street Review Committee has been meeting weekly. The project scope has been reduced. The Committee hopes to finalize its recommendations within the next two weeks. A public survey is available to help determine why the last referendum failed. The next step for the Committee is to create a subcommittee to "sell" the project. A presentation to the Council is expected in late September in anticipation of a May referendum.*

*Town-Wide Property Maintenance Code - Councilor O'Beirne noted that this item has been referred to Councilor Watson's committee to look at the existing Property Maintenance Code for the Fort Hill neighborhood, with the idea of identifying any desired amendments so that it can be applied to the whole town. Councilor Watson noted that there has not been a Group II meeting in some time. The Mayor asked that copies of the code be distributed to the entire Council once*

again.

*Phase II School Project - Councilor Peruzzotti noted that the Superintendent of Schools is so hard pressed to include Claude Chester as a possible site for a middle school that everything is on hold until a traffic study is done. The Town Manager noted that the Town has just signed a contract with Fuss & O'Neill to conduct the traffic studies. It is anticipated that the results will be available in 30 to 45 days.*

*Councilor Sheets arrived at 6:16 p.m.*

**Roll Call:** Members Present: Mayor Streeter, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Watson  
Members Absent: Councilor Kolnaski

**Discussed**

*Environment - Councilor Sheets indicated that the Task Force on Climate Change and Sustainable Community has been working steadily gathering information and preparing recommendations for the Council. A report is expected in December. Four listening sessions have been held. Councilor Sheets reviewed other activities of the Climate Change Task Force.*

*Parks and Recreation Master Plan - Councilor Watson noted that he has not attended any meetings, but he will attend tomorrow night and report at the next meeting.*

*Economic Development Strategy Plan - Councilor Johnson noted that he has been attending Economic Development Commission meetings. He updated the Council on the Commission's activities including an upcoming review of the incentives policy.*

*Plan of Conservation and Development - Councilor Sheets noted that she is not up to speed on this item. The Town Manager noted that the plan is approaching its tenth year. The desire is to update the plan in pieces. This will likely be a budget issue in FYE 2012.*

*Future Use of School Facilities - Councilor Monteiro spoke with Gary Schneider regarding some of the vacant buildings. Noank School and Groton Heights School Reuse Task Forces have been appointed, but have not yet met. Colonel Ledyard School will be leased to the City. The disposition of Claude Chester and Fitch Middle are up in the air pending identification of the Phase II School Project. The front building at William Seeley is being used by Parks and Recreation for programs and the rear building is being used as storage by the Board of Education. There is potential to use that building if the Board of Education vacates it. The Town Manager noted that he anticipates the lease for Colonel Ledyard School to be finalized by next week.*

**2010-0172**

**FYE 2012 Budget**

**Discussed**

*The Town Manager noted it is time for the Council to start discussing next year's budget, if desired. Nothing has improved in terms of economics. Once again, the Council must be prepared to look at services the Town will stop providing. The new reference point seems to be "no increase in local taxes" so decisions must have long term impacts. The Town Manager reiterated that the Council providing a percentage increase/decrease to shoot for is not very helpful to him.*

*The next two referrals on the Town-wide Police Assessment and City Auction Proceeds are related to the budget discussion. For the Police study, the Town Manager would recommend inviting the City and Groton Long Point to a meeting to develop a scope of services. With respect to auction proceeds, it is simply a matter of asking the question about what happens to the proceeds.*

*The Town Manager reviewed the "Looking Ahead" section from the FYE 2011 Proposed Budget which outlines some of the issues the Town will be facing.*

Councilor Peruzzotti suggested a joint meeting with the RTM. She noted the duplication of services between the Town and City, which is even bigger than the police issue. The Town Manager noted that the only way to get people to the table is by making cuts to funding. Councilor Sheets feels there is significant sentiment in the City that they do not want to pay extra district taxes. Councilor Monteiro does not feel that public works consolidation is likely since the Town is mandated to pay for the City and Groton Long Point. The police issue can be addressed. She also suggested that the Town Council sit down with the City to discuss the budget beforehand as required by the Charter. Councilor Flax suggested conducting a public hearing. Councilor O'Beirne requested a list of encumbrances.

Mayor Streeter reiterated that the Town Manager is looking for specific ideas to address the budget issue rather than a percentage guideline. The Town Manager agreed that it would be good to have a series of discussions with the RTM so that both bodies are on the same page with respect to budget expectations.

Councilor Sheets would like a "Chinese menu" of approaches for the Council to consider. Councilor Flax stated it would be helpful if the City used a similar budget format.

It was decided to invite Groton Long Point and the City of Groton to a meeting to discuss the Police Assessment and to pose the question about auction proceeds to Mayor Popp.

2009-0166

**Townwide Police Assessment****Discussed**

See discussion under 2010-0172 FYE 2012 Budget in 8/17/10 Committee of the Whole minutes.

2010-0104

**City of Groton Highway and Police Vehicle Auction Proceeds****Discussed**

See discussion under 2010-0172 FYE 2012 Budget in 8/17/10 Committee of the Whole minutes.

2007-0238

**Groton Heights School Reuse Task Force - Update****Discussed**

Mayor Streeter reported on the appointments that he has made to the Groton Heights School Reuse Task Force, as follows:

*Catherine Kolnaski (Town Council)*

*Marian Galbraith (City Council)*

*Nancy Barnhart (RTM)*

*Robert Peruzzotti (Board of Education)*

*Mary Kelly (City Planning and Zoning Commission)*

*Janet Downs (Bill Memorial Library)*

*Ralph Whitney (Friends of Fort Griswold)*

*Bill Hart (Neighborhood)*

*Peter Ganacoplos (Neighborhood)*

*Dana Parfitt (Community-at-Large)*

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to adjourn at 7:29 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.