



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

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, November 9, 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 Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson
Members Absent: Councilor Sheets

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

3. Calendar and Communications

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

2010-0230 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole meeting of October 26, 2010 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Watson, to adopt.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 7 - Mayor Streeter, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson
Abstain: 1 - Councilor Kolnaski

5. NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Sheets arrived at 6:05 p.m.

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

2006-0100 Thames Street Rehabilitation Study

Discussed

Mayor Streeter recognized members of the Thames Street Review Committee and Town and City staff, and thanked them along with members of the consulting firm of Milone and MacBroom. Mayor Streeter praised the Committee for its efforts and expressed support for the project.

City Deputy Mayor Marian Galbraith, City Councilor Keith Hedrick, and Tony Ciriello from Milone and MacBroom were present to address the Council. Ms. Galbraith extended her thanks to the Committee as well. She reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that described the project area and provided an overview and history of Thames Street. Thames Street is a major gateway to Groton and an historically important transportation corridor. The street has been the subject of numerous studies by the Town and City of Groton. Only limited improvements to the road have been made over the years. The Thames Street Review Committee conducted a survey to explore

reasons why the 2009 referendum failed. Subsequent to the failed referendum, there were retaining wall failures as a result of the March 2010 storm. The purpose of the Thames Street Review Committee was to identify cost saving measures while still ensuring a safe, sound roadway. The approach of the Committee included a walking tour, subsurface testing program, public survey, scope of work review, and review of alternative strategies and design options.

The results of the public survey indicated that project cost was excessive, voters were confused about the Town's responsibility, there was a lack of information, and there was a misconception that the project was a streetscape enhancement rather than roadway rehabilitation.

From the test pits, the Committee learned about the underlying structure of the road. Ms. Galbraith presented findings regarding the base of the road and resulting Committee recommendations. She showed photo simulations depicting recommended improvements in various areas of Thames Street including painted crosswalks. All pedestrian scale lighting has been taken out of the project.

The project cost has been reduced from \$10,725,000 to \$6,375,504. Ms. Galbraith reviewed the costs reductions. The Committee also looked at phasing the project, but found that it would not be feasible because most design elements are located under the pavement.

The Committee recommends moving forward with the project and scheduling a May referendum to coincide with elections in the City of Groton. Other recommendations in the Committee's report include how to educate the public about the project.

Councilor Monteiro asked if utility costs were ever obtained. Mr. Ciriello indicated that numbers were only obtained from Groton Utilities, but he is confident in the other estimates.

Ms. Galbraith discussed ideas for making presentations to the public and creating a "Friends of Thames Street" group.

Councilor Sheets expressed disappointment with the decreased number of trees. Ms. Galbraith noted that the Committee discussed a number of ways that trees could be added to the street through community-based efforts.

The Town Manager noted that the Town Clerk has provided a draft schedule for a May 2011 referendum. The next step is to authorize the bond attorney to prepare a bond ordinance.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, to authorize preparation of a bond ordinance for Thames Street rehabilitation.

The motion carried unanimously

2010-0006 Joint Meeting with City of Groton (2010 Standing Referral)

Not Discussed

2010-0172 FYE 2012 Budget

Discussed

John Silsby and Jerry Lokken from Parks and Recreation and Phil Butta from the Parks and Recreation Commission were present to discuss new funding sources for Groton Parks and Recreation. Mr. Butta reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that outlined past attempts by Parks and Recreation to keep costs down including the role of grants, volunteerism, partnerships and sponsorships. New ideas include expanded use of credit cards; Senior Center special events, building rental, service providers, and fees; and gift certificates and seasonal promotions.

The Parks and Recreation Commission is asking the Council to endorse these ideas and to approve \$35,000 from the Special Revenue Fund Balance for upgraded registration/credit card

software.

Councilor Flax asked if the bank could provide a TI terminal at Parks and Recreation in lieu of purchasing software.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Council Watson, that this matter be Recommended for Resolution.

The Town Manager noted that the use of credit cards in Town has been discussed for a number of years. However, there is a bigger issue such as paying taxes with a credit card. In the public sector, the percentage lost to fees becomes an issue of contention. Parks and Recreation is proposing to use a proprietary system that could not be used in other areas of the Town. The Town Manager noted that the special revenue fund is fairly new and has been expanded slowly. Discussion followed on the price of the system. Mr. Butta stated that he anticipates generating an additional \$24,000 in revenue by introducing credit cards. Discussion followed on looking at an overall, integrated credit card system for the Town.

Councilor Watson asked for a referral on credit card usage by other Town departments and Mayor Streeter made the referral to the Committee of the Whole.

Discussion followed on Parks and Recreation software vendors and security issues.

The original motion and second were withdrawn.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, to endorse the new funding ideas (items 2 through 9 in the Parks and Recreation Director's staff referral memo).

Mr. Butta explained that the Department still needs to update the registration software regardless of whether or not credit cards are used.

A motion was made by Mayor Streeter to amend the motion to endorse "the concept" of the new funding ideas. There was no second to the motion.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to amend the motion to endorse the new funding ideas (items 1 through 9 in the Parks and Recreation Director's staff referral memo).

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Watson, to amend the motion to endorse the new funding ideas (items 1 through 9 in the Parks and Recreation Director's staff referral memo) excepting the use of credit cards.

The amendment to the motion carried by the following vote:

In Favor: 5 - Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Watson

Opposed: 4 - Mayor Streeter, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro and Councilor O'Beirne.

The motion carried unanimously

2010-0223

Use of Fitch High School Baseball Field by New England Collegiate Baseball League

Recommended for a Resolution

Superintendent of Schools Paul Kadri noted that the Board of Education has met to discuss a minor league college team's proposal to use the Fitch High School baseball field. The program would introduce high quality baseball in a family-friendly atmosphere. Players would stay with local host families and travel among six New England states for games. The season runs early June to early August. There would be some conflict with high school programs that would need to be resolved. An anonymous donor has offered to significantly upgrade the existing field and there would be no capital investment by the Town. A contract for field operations will be developed and

the school district will not be required to fund any operational activities. There is no history of rowdiness, alcohol, or tobacco advertising associated with this league. The proposal involves a tight construction window and the improvements must be in place by mid-May 2011.

The need for traffic control and/or police presence was questions. Mr. Kadri noted that it is not warranted for the crowds that are expected. However, the agreement would have to include provisions for those items at the Town's expense, if necessary. The league will also run camps and clinics over the summer. The Board of Education is in favor of the proposal and a formal vote is expected on November 22nd. The Town Attorney is working on a draft agreement, but an operational agreement would come later. Mr. Kadri stated again that the operational costs borne by the Town would be zero. He is looking for both the Town Council and Board of Education to support the concept. An engineer is currently looking at the field's physical needs. By approving the concept, the public has an opportunity to make comments that can be incorporated into the agreement if necessary.

A motion was made by Mayor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, to support the concept of the use of the Fitch High School baseball field by the New England Collegiate Baseball League.

**The Town Manager stated that the document will come back to the Council for review/approval.
The motion carried unanimously**

2010-0228 Local Prevention Council Grant for Ledge Light Health District

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2010-0231 Participation in Sister Cities International

Recommended for a Resolution

The Town Council was approached by a Groton resident, Nick Sahin, who would like to establish a Sister Cities relationship between the Town of Groton and Dinar in the Town of Afyon in Turkey. No referral was made at that time. The Town Manager is trying to determine the Town Council's interest in the proposal and suggested that the Council familiarize itself with the Sister Cities program prior to considering a specific community. Councilor Johnson suggested that Mr. Sahin approach the Economic Development Commission because they have also received a request to participate in Sister Cities.

The Town Manager suggested setting up a committee to explore the Sister Cities program that can include representatives from the Town Council, Representative Town Meeting, Economic Development Commission, Board of Education, Chambers of Commerce, Sub Base, etc. A majority of Councilors was interested in forming a committee and exploring the idea, and asked the Town Manager to draft a resolution.

2010-0232 Acquisition of Spicer Property, Thomas Road

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger noted that the Town was awarded a grant of \$650,000 for acquisition of the Spicer Property on Thomas Road. Additional dollars are available in the open space fund (approximately \$225,000). Spicer family representatives were asked to outline their terms in writing. The property has been appraised at \$1.4 million. Since further discussion would constitute negotiations, the Town Manager recommended that the Council go into executive session.

A motion was made by Mayor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, to enter executive session at 8:38 p.m. to discuss acquisition of the Spicer property on Thomas Road, and to invite the Town Manager to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session concluded at 9:00 p.m.

6. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Flax, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.