



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 Rita M. Schmidt, Councilors Dean Antipas, Genevieve Cerf, Joe de la Cruz, Bruce S. Flax, Bob Frink, Rich Moravsik, Deborah L. Peruzzotti and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, January 13, 2015

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

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

2. **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Cerf, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Frink, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson

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

3. **Calendar and Communications**

None.

4. **Approval of Minutes**

2014-0338 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 December 9, 2014 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Frink, seconded by Councilor Antipas, to adopt.

The motion carried unanimously

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

2015-0011 Meeting with State Legislators (2015 Standing Referral)

Discussed

Mayor Schmidt invited members of the RTM and Board of Education to join in the discussion. New State Representatives John Scott and Aundre Bumgardner were present to speak with the Council.

Topics of discussion included public education funding, the minimum budget requirement, unfunded mandates, racial imbalance in the schools, transportation and infrastructure, funding from the Department of Developmental Services, states mandates that affect shellfishermen, institution of a local hotel tax, future reuse of the Mystic Education Center, the Airport Development Zone, concerns with the Poquonnock Bridge Fire District, and school facilities construction funding.

The representatives reviewed various pieces of legislation that they are working on.

Town Manager Oefinger noted that the Town will need legislative help to shift the two-mile boundary for the Airport Development Zone. Binders of background information were provided to Representatives Bumgardner and Scott.

Mayor Schmidt thanked the representatives for attending.

2014-0339

Road Reconstruction Bond - Year 3 Projects

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger explained that the road rehabilitation and maintenance bond ordinance requires the City, Groton Long Point and Town to report to the Town Council by the end of December about the previous calendar year's projects and upcoming calendar year projects.

City Mayor Marian Galbraith reviewed the City's report and noted that she is also requesting that \$29,713.59 from the last CIP be used for other streets. Tim Umrysz noted the difficulty in lining up certain subcontractors because of the amount of work being done by the state. Mayor Galbraith feels the program has been very successful.

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, outlined some benefits of the program including the ability to coordinate projects with Groton Utilities and Noank Water Company. The Town Manager reviewed the philosophy behind the bond issue and the benefits. Mr. Schneider reviewed projects completed in 2014 and those planned for 2015.

By consensus, the Council accepted the reports.

Recommended for a Resolution

2014-0286

Implementation of Police Study Recommendations

Discussed

Representatives from the City and Groton Long Point were present. Mayor Schmidt asked for comments or concerns about the report.

Mayor Marian Galbraith noted inaccuracies in the report and data, and stated she would like to meet with Tom Wilson.

Discussion followed on the need to provide comments in writing (by page number) so they can be forwarded to Mr. Wilson before he returns for another presentation.

Councilor Moravsik provided his concerns in writing in mid-December. He noted a difference in numbers between the draft and final reports.

Mayor Galbraith and City Councilor William Jervis reviewed their comments on the report.

Councilor Flax explained his position that three police departments results in a duplication of chiefs and efforts. The Council is trying to find a way to save the taxpayers money and he would like to see the three entities work together identify efficiencies or say up front that they do not want to participate.

Discussion followed on the lack of political will to make a change and the services that are currently being shared.

Discussion followed on the mistrust and tenor of discussions between the Town and City.

City Councilor Jay Dempsey suggested a committee be formed to discuss the report. Discussion followed on forming a committee comprised of three Town Councilors and three City Councilors.

Mayor Schmidt summarized and expressed her support for a 6 member group to meet. Mayor Galbraith stated he desire to discuss the proposal with the City Council before asking for volunteers.

The Committee of the Whole recessed at 9:19 p.m. and reconvened at 9:25 p.m.

2014-0337 Contingency Transfer for the Maintenance and Operation of Fitch Middle School

Discussed

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, explained the request for a transfer from Contingency of \$56,370 for the maintenance of Fitch Middle School, which the Town took over starting October 1, 2014. Mr. Schneider will be asking for caretaker funds in the upcoming budget while the Town works with the consultant on long-term reuse of the facility. The gymnasium and portable classroom are currently being used by Parks and Recreation.

Town Manager Oefinger noted the architect's study, LEARN's plans, and the status of William Seely as factors that will affect future funding for Fitch Middle School.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2014-0343 Sisisky Property, Flanders Road

Discussed

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, described two properties off Flanders Road that have been offered to the Town. Mr. Schneider recommends acceptance of the donation because it will place land adjacent to the closed landfill in Town ownership in case of impact from leachate. The first step in the process is to make a referral to the Planning Commission under CGS Section 8-24.

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Cerf, to refer acquisition of the Sisisky parcels on Flanders Road to the Planning Commission under CGS Section 8-24.

The motion carried unanimously

2014-0340 Building 114 - Request for Financial Incentive

Discussed

Tom Green was present to convey his interest in acquiring Building 114 at Pfizer. Mr. Green is seeking a tax abatement. When the property transfers to Mr. Green, Pfizer will cut off utilities to the building, which has been vacant for four years. The building needs significant renovation including steam, electrical, water, and sprinkler systems. The estimated cost to hook up utilities is \$1 million. Mr. Green explained his success at 70 Bridge Street where his business services laboratory instruments for large pharmaceuticals. The purchase of Building 114 is a major undertaking, and Mr. Green is asking for temporary relief to get the building up and running again.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Cerf, to schedule a public hearing on the request for financial incentive for former Pfizer Building 114.

Discussion followed on the benefits associated with the Enterprise Zone versus this request. Councilor Frink noted that the financial incentive policy requires the Town Council to determine that the incentive is in the best interest of the community and Mr. Green should help enumerate those reasons.

The motion carried unanimously

2014-0263 Mystic Indoor Sports - Request for Financial Incentive

Discussed

A public hearing was held on the request for financial incentive by Mystic Indoor Sports. A number of questions were raised by Councilor Frink and addressed by staff regarding eligible uses and time frames for incentives based on level of investment. Councilor Frink stated this proposal complies with state statute.

Town Manager Oefinger clarified for Councilor Cerf that Mr. McCormack revised his proposal

prior to the public hearing. The Town Manager reviewed the details of the proposal.

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

Cerf expressed concern with approving a seven year program and stated she would prefer to see six years. The Town Manager identified other properties that have been granted financial incentives (Mystic Marriott, Lighthouse Square, and Hilton Garden Inn). Discussion followed on the incentive program, its application, and benefits.

The motion carried unanimously

2014-0341 Miscellaneous and Ad Hoc Committee Appointments

Discussed

This appointment is for Katrina Fitzgerald of the Board of Education to the School Facilities Initiative Task Force.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2014-0167 Airport Development Zone

Discussed

A staff memo was provided to the Council on the status of the Airport Development Zone effort, which was discussed earlier with the legislators.

2014-0346 Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program Funding

Discussed

A special meeting to discuss this item was scheduled for January 20th at 6:00 p.m.

7. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List

None.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.