



# 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 Bruce Flax, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Diane Barber, Greg Grim, Rich Moravsik, Karen F. Morton, Bonnie Nault, Deb Peruzzotti, and Harry A. Watson*

Tuesday, March 28, 2017

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

#### REGULAR MEETING

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

*Mayor Flax called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.*

#### 2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Barber, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik

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

#### 3. Calendar and Communications

*None.*

#### 4. Approval of Minutes - None

#### 5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

*None.*

#### 6. NEW BUSINESS

##### 2017-0075 Disposition of William Seely School Property

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Watson, that the Town Council Committee of the Whole, along with Director of Finance Cindy Landry, Director of Planning and Development Jon Reiner, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Deb Jones, and Mark Mancuso of Kincora Development go into executive session at 6:06 p.m. pursuant to General Statutes Section 1-200(6)(d) to discuss the negotiation and potential sale of the former William Seely School site. The motion carried unanimously

**Discussed**

*The executive session ended at 6:30 p.m.*

##### 2017-0065 Adoption of Connecticut City and Town Development Act for the Purposes of the Branford Manor Rehabilitation Project

**Discussed**

*Councilors received a copy of the most recent draft of the proposed agreement with Branford Manor Preservation, L.P. A public hearing was held on the proposal on March 21st. Jon Reiner, Director of Planning and Development, provided a brief overview of the proposal to allow a 20-year tax stabilization agreement for a Branford Manor redevelopment project.*

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

The motion carried unanimously

##### 2017-0066 Declaration of Branford Manor Property a "Development Property" Under the Connecticut City and Town Development Act

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2017-0067 Authorization of Tax Incentive Agreement Under the Connecticut City and Town Development Act**

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2017-0083 Groton Housing Authority Multifamily Housing Revenue Note**

Discussed

*Marie Phalen, bond counsel to the Groton Housing Authority, explained that part of the financing for the Branford Manor redevelopment project will come from a note to be issued by the Groton Housing Authority. The Town Council must approve the issuance of the note.*

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2017-0076 Housing Authority Request to Participate in Town Retirement Plan**

Discussed

*Robert Cappelletti, Executive Director of the Housing Authority and Jaimie Lee, property manager, were present to request the Town Council's approval for the Housing Authority to participate in the Town's retirement plan. The Authority currently participates in the Town's health plan. The request is being made because of cost of MERF has risen drastically causing a hardship for the Authority. Mr. Cappelletti stated that the Housing Authority would bear any costs associated with joining the plan. The Housing Authority has four employees.*

*Councilor Nault suggested it is not a good idea to add people to the retirement plan when the Council is looking to move away from the plan. In response to Mayor Flax, Director of Finance Cindy Landry stated her concern about who would be responsible for the liability if the Housing Authority becomes insolvent.*

*In response to Councilor Watson, Mr. Cappelletti noted that all employees are supposed to be participating in MERF, but only two are. The difference in the contribution rate between MERF and the Town's plan is about 4%. The funds that are currently in MERF must stay there, so employees who switch to the Town plan would ultimately draw two pensions.*

*In response to Councilor Grim, Mr. Cappelletti noted that he looked into 401k and 403b plans, but they are not equivalent to MERF so they were not acceptable to the Housing Authority's employees.*

*Ms. Landry cautioned that while the Housing Authority is looking for a cost savings, the estimated contribution is subject to change. Liability and the administrative cost to the Town are concerns.*

*The consensus of the Council was that staff should seek additional information from the Town's actuary, and that the Council needs to understand the pros and cons of the proposal before a decision can be made.*

**2017-0084 Library LED Light Conversion Project for GMTV Studio**

Discussed

*Mayor Flax explained that the Library is seeking authorization to expend Neighborhood Assistance Act Program funds for a project to convert GMTV studio lighting to LED. The project will be a 2017 CIP project and will be forwarded to the RTM for approval.*

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

- The motion carried unanimously
- 2017-0072 Connecticut PGA Foundation Grant**
- A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Nault, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.
- The motion carried unanimously
- 2017-0074 Distracted Driving Grant**
- A motion was made by Councilor Morton, seconded by Councilor Nault, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.
- The motion carried unanimously
- 2017-0073 Appointments to Noank School Public Gardens Task Force**
- Discussed
- The Noank School Public Gardens Task Force has recommended two appointments to replace two members who have resigned.*
- A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.
- The motion carried unanimously
- 2017-0077 October 2016 Revaluation - Update**
- Discussed and Recommended no action taken
- Mary Gardner, Assessor, and Melissa Baer of Tyler Technologies were present. Connecticut municipalities are required to conduct a revaluation every five years. The revaluation in 2011 was a full measure and list; the 2016 evaluation was an interim revaluation. The Grand List dropped 2% overall. The revaluation result for the real estate grand list was a 3% reduction; residential property values dropped 7%. Commercial and industrial values increased 9.7%. The final documentation prepared by Tyler Technologies was provided to the Council. Other handouts provided were the Grand List report; a spreadsheet of variances from 2011; a comparison of residential to commercial; and top 10 properties.*
- Discussion followed on the impact of the revaluation on taxes.*
- Ms. Baer noted that the commercial and industrial market is very consistent and the high-end residential market is weak throughout Connecticut. Apartments and the commercial market are strong.*
- 2017-0006 Labor Negotiations (2017 Standing Referral)**
- A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Watson, that the Town Council Committee of the Whole, along with Finance Director Cindy Landry, Human Resources Director Robert Zagami, Chief of Police Louis Fusaro, Deputy Chief Paul Gately, and Town Attorney Eileen Duggan go into executive session at 7:03 p.m. for the purpose of discussing strategy and/or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining. This action is taken without prejudice to the Council's right to discuss these matters in a private meeting pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-200(2).
- The motion carried unanimously
- Discussed
- The executive session ended at 8:02 p.m.*
- 2016-0149 Review of Town Council Appointment Policy**
- Referred
- Mayor Flax noted that this item is being referred back to the Personnel and Appointments Committee for further review.*
- 2014-0256 Procurement of USS Groton Sail and Planes**

**Discussed**

Mayor Flax stated that he and the Town Manager serve on the USS Groton Sail Foundation, which meets monthly. The group voted unanimously to place the USS Groton sail at the Flasher Memorial site on Thames Street. Land acquisition has not yet been completed.

Councilor Moravsik noted that in 2014 there was a site selection committee that looked at 28 sites and considered parking, accessibility, restrooms, utilities, etc. Councilor Moravsik estimated it would cost \$1.3 million including the cost to bring the sail and rudder back, but the parts have already been transported to the Submarine Base. Councilor Moravsik provided a history of his involvement in the effort. He suggested that before the Thames Street property is purchased, the group should look at the benefit to Groton. Councilor Moravsik feels that the Groton Public Library site on Route 117 would be a better site.

Councilor Watson provided his version of the history of the effort, noting that he was removed from the mailing list for the committee at some point.

Councilor Morton feels the chosen site is a bad site. She feels strongly that the base is in the Town of Groton and it was the Town Council that initiated the plan to bring the USS Groton Sail back to Groton. Councilor Morton feels the Library is the perfect spot.

Mayor Flax noted that he voted for the Flasher site, but it was the only site in the running when he was elected Mayor and joined the effort. One of the reasons the Thames Street site was chosen was to tie into the water taxi effort and anchor economic development in the area. Mayor Flax noted that if the Council feels strongly about the planned location they should discuss it.

Councilor Peruzzotti noted that the site with the most traffic should be chosen. The water taxi season is limited and people driving by the Thames Street site will not see the sail. The Route 117 site is a high traffic and visibility area.

Mayor Flax stated he would bring the site concerns to the Foundation and have Councilors Moravsik and Watson speak to the board. Watson asked to be added back on the mailing list for the commission.

Councilors Barber and Nault expressed support for the Route 117 site noting it will be cheaper, easier, and more accessible, and it is located in the hub of the Town.

2017-0071

**Town Council/Board of Education Joint Task Force on Shared Services - Update****Discussed**

Mayor Flax noted that he serves on the Task Force on Shared Services with Councilors Grim and Morton and five Board of Education representatives. The group has met seven times to look at duplicate departments and creating efficiencies. Mayor Flax reviewed the discussion points at each meeting. At the March 15th meeting, the Task Force met with the Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools. There was an agreement to utilize Rock Martel to conduct a LEAN evaluation at no charge and to look at the Town and Board of Education building maintenance functions. The Council was supportive of the effort.

2016-0255

**Purchase of Tablets for the Town Council****Discussed**

Councilors received an update on the agenda management software initiative. Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnyan noted that Councilors will be able to review and annotate agenda packets on any device. The consensus was to move forward with paperless agenda packets when the software is implemented. Three Councilors indicated they will need devices.

2017-0042

**Zoning Regulations Rewrite - Update**

**Discussed and Recommended no action taken**

*Councilors had no further comments on their previous discussion with the Zoning Commission. The public hearing on the Water Resources Protection District regulations is May 3rd at 6:30 p.m.*

**2017-0085****Town-Wide Dispatch Discussion - Update****Discussed and Recommended no action taken**

*Mayor Flax noted that he has been meeting with the Town Manager, the Chiefs of the Groton Town and City Police Departments, and the City Mayor since October having a general discussion about police and dispatch. There are a number of issues and challenges according to the City. On the Town side, there is an issue with the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Records Management System (RMS) requiring further discussions about what the Town Police want and how to get the City on board. Councilor Nault mentioned a vendor demonstration of April 4th that the police and fire departments will be participating in.*

**2016-0260****FYE 2018 Budget Discussion****Discussed and Recommended no action taken**

*The public hearing on the FYE 2018 Proposed Budget will be held on March 29th at 7:00 p.m. at the Senior Center.*

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

*None.*

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

*Councilor Grim requested a referral to look at combining the Planning and Zoning Commissions. Mayor Flax made the referral and asked that it be placed on the next Committee of the Whole meeting agenda.*

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Nault, to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*