



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, April 11, 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 Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik
Members Absent: Councilor Antipas

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

3. **Calendar and Communications**

Councilor Nault and other Councilors received communications from teachers.

4. **Approval of Minutes**

2017-0098 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 meetings of March 21, 2017, March 23, 2017, and March 28, 2017 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Morton, seconded by Councilor Nault, to adopt.

The motion carried unanimously

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

2017-0075 Disposition of William Seely School Property

Discussed

Mayor Flax noted a request from Gretchen Chipperini to discuss this item with the Council, along with her real estate Broker Lisa Whitney. Jon Reiner, Deb Jones, and Paige Bronk from the Office of Planning and Development Services were also present.

Mr. Reiner explained that Planning staff members have met with Ms. Chipperini and Ms. Whitney to talk about an agreement to market the William Seely School property and Ms. Chipperini's property together.

Ms. Whitney provided an overview of her background and qualifications in working with developers, and her interest in working to develop the Chipperini property in conjunction with the Town property. Ms. Chipperini complimented Ms. Whitney.

Mr. Reiner explained that staff is looking for direction from the Council on whether or not there is a way to partner with Ms. Chipperini to market the properties.

Ms. Chipperini expressed her opinions about the value of the parcels and commercial development in the region. Discussion followed on the inclusion or exclusion of the hotel property owned by Ms. Chipperini in the land package.

Mr. Reiner suggested that if the Council is open to the concept, staff will work on an agreement with Ms. Whitney on marketing the properties. The draft agreement would need to be reviewed and approved by the Council. Mr. Bronk noted that this part of the Town has a fractional development pattern and bringing properties together through partnerships would help upgrade the commercial development pattern.

The consensus of the Council was to have staff develop a draft agreement with Ms. Whitney.

2017-0007 Property Acquisition/Sale (2017 Standing Referral)

A motion was made by Mayor Flax, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that the members of the Town Council Committee of the Whole, along with Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger, and Jon Reiner, Deb Jones, and Paige Bronk from the Office of Planning and Development Services, go into executive session at 6:25 p.m. pursuant to General Statutes Section 1-200(6)(D) to discuss the negotiation and potential sale of Town-owned properties.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session ended at 7:05 p.m.

2017-0090 Combined Planning and Zoning Commission

Discussed

Director of Planning and Development Jon Reiner, Manager of Community/Economic Development Paige Bronk, and Town Attorney Mike Carey were. Mr. Reiner indicated he is looking for direction from the Town Council on this referral. He noted that the regulatory and market analysis recommended combining the Planning and Zoning Commissions at some point. Councilor Grim noted that he made the referral because of his desire to streamline the process.

Attorney Carey noted that it is possible legally to combine the commissions without changing the Charter, due to the 2009 revision.

Councilor Nault expressed support for the idea. Councilor Watson questioned what happens to the current members of the commissions. Mr. Carey explained that the Council can pick either the Planning Commission OR the Zoning Commission and turn it into a combined commission. The process would be by a vote of the Council. Another option would be to abolish both commissions and create a new combined Planning and Zoning Commission.

Mayor Flax noted it is the Council's desire to combine the commissions and the Council would like to review the next steps. Town Attorney Carey stated he would draft possible resolutions for consideration at the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

2017-0095 FYE 2017 Fourth Quarter Transfers

Discussed

Cindy Landry, Director of Finance, distributed a revised referral on supplemental appropriations to the budget and transfers from Contingency. The total transfers are \$125,179 and will leave a balance of \$23,626 in Contingency.

Discussion followed on the use of part-time dispatchers rather than backfilling with overtime. Town Manager Oefinger indicated this idea has been discussed recently with Joe Sastre who is looking into it.

A motion was made by Councilor Nault, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, that this matter be

Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

Councilor Nault requested a referral to study vacation and sick day payouts for employees, and the Mayor made the referral.

2017-0097

Replacement of Damaged Police Vehicle

Discussed

Police Chief L.J. Fusaro explained his request for a transfer from Contingency for additional funds to replace a police vehicle that was totaled in a collision with a deer. The Town received insurance money, and there are funds remaining in the fleet fund, but there is a shortfall of \$4,730 to purchase the replacement vehicle.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0076

Housing Authority Request to Participate in Town Retirement Plan

Discussed and Recommended no action taken

When this item was last discussed by the Committee of the Whole, no decision was made. Town Manager Mark Oefinger expressed concern with the additional administrative work and the motivation of the Housing Authority, which seems to be saving money.

Councilor Moravsik stated he is not interested in adding people to the pension plan, since the Council is desirous of moving toward a 457 plan. Councilor Nault agreed.

Cindy Landry, Finance Director noted that the Town has a 457 plan that is open to all employees. The Town makes a contribution for those employees that have elected to participate in the 457 plan in lieu of the defined benefit plan. Several employees currently participate in the 457 plan. She noted that the Housing Authority employees can only get out of the State's MERF plan if the new plan is comparable, and she is not sure if the Town's 457 plan would be considered comparable by the state.

The consensus of the Council was to respectfully decline the Housing Authority's request.

2017-0094

Vergennes Court Project - Update

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger distributed a summary of what took place at the public information meeting. The Town is not ready to make a recommendation and would like to return to the Committee of the Whole on April 25th. (Note: meeting moved to April 26th) A number of alternatives were recommended by the public and they are under consideration and review by DOT.

Councilor Moravsik noted the petition signed by a number of people wanting to keep the road open. Councilor Peruzzotti indicated that she received a complaint from a resident who was told by a person circulating the petition not to attend the public information meeting if she disagreed with the petition's stated position against the closing of the road.

2017-0089

Historic Documents Preservation Grant FY2018

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger explained that this is a similar grant to those received over the years. Funds will be used to rebind older land records, preserving records and saving vault space.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0093 Small Harbor Improvement Projects Program (SHIPP) Grant - Nautilus Dock Extension**Discussed**

Town Manager Oefinger distributed a copy of the application for a Small Harbor Improvement Projects Program grant to build a smaller dock off the end of the Nautilus pier primarily to service the water taxi. The project was originally designed and permitted well over 10 years ago, but ultimately the funding was siphoned off to do other projects. There may be some permitting issues that need to be addressed with the current proposal. There is no monetary commitment required from the Town, and the project will be managed by the Navy.

Paige Bronk, Manager of Community/Economic Development, noted that the cost estimates were refined in the application. He noted the largest challenge to implementation is coordination of resources, but now it is clear that the Navy is willing to be an active participant.

Councilor Nault noted that a bill has also been submitted by Senator Somers to fund this project, but the status of the legislation is unknown.

The application is due in the next week. If the grant application is approved by the Committee of the Whole, staff will submit the application with the formal resolution happening after submission.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0088 ARC Neighborhood Assistance Act Program Application (2017)**Discussed**

Town Manager Oefinger noted the Town has participated in the Neighborhood Assistance Act Program for the last three years. The process is starting earlier because the Town Council in only meeting once a month and the application deadline is July 1st. One application has been received from ARC, but the Town Manager has heard that that possibly the Bill Memorial Library and the City of Groton will be submitting applications.

The Town Manager asked that a public hearing be scheduled for May 2nd and that other applications be included in the public hearing if they are received in time.

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Watson, to schedule a public hearing on May 2, 2017 the 2017 Neighborhood Assistance Act Program applications.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0096 Pequot Village I and II Request for Letter of Support**Discussed and Recommended no action taken**

Mayor Flax received a request from the Groton Housing Authority to provide a letter of support for the redevelopment of Pequot Village I and II. The Council supported the request.

7. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List**Recommended for Deletion:****2016-0113 Tax Incentive Agreement for Branford Manor****Recommended for Deletion****8. OTHER BUSINESS**

Mayor Flax reminded Councilors that they made a commitment to the RTM that at least one Councilor would be present at the RTM budget meetings. The Mayor asked that the RTM budget schedule be included in the next agenda packet.

Councilor Moravsik requested a referral to combine the dispatch centers at the police departments

and Mayor Flax stated that a referral to continue the discussions would be appropriate.

The following meeting dates and times were confirmed with the Council:

April 18th at 5:00 p.m. - Special meeting of the Committee of the Whole to conduct an executive session with staff and the Town Attorney to discuss pending litigation with Odd Fellows.

April 19th at 5:15 p.m. - Special meeting of the Committee of the Whole to meet with Odd Fellows.

April 24th at 5:30 p.m. at the Senior Center - Town Manager candidate interviews

April 25th at 5:00 p.m. at the Senior Center - Town Manager candidate interviews

April 26th at 6:00 p.m./7:30 p.m. - Special meetings of the Committee of the Whole/Town Council

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Barber, to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.