



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Town Council Committee of the Whole

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Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Dean Antipas, Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Bruce S. Flax, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, and Paulann H. Sheets

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Watson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Flax, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro and Councilor Schmidt

Members Absent: Councilor Antipas, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Sheets

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnyan.

3. Calendar and Communications

John Silsby, Director of Parks and Recreation, noted that for the last two days Shennecossett Golf Course has hosted the 12th consecutive Senior Open. Mr. Silsby displayed a plaque presented to the Town by the PGA.

4. Approval of Minutes

2009-0176 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 June 23, 2009 and July 7, 2009 are hereby accepted and approved.

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

The motion carried unanimously

5. NEW BUSINESS

2008-0121 Condition of Chipperini Property on Library Street

Discussed

Town Attorney Mike Carey reviewed a timeline of the events at 23 Library Street since the fire of July 25, 2008. He noted that he was reluctant to discuss anything other than the facts that are a matter of public record. The court granted a motion by the Town to compel the defendant to demolish the building by August 5th. If it is not done, the Town can go in and execute the demolition. The court also granted the Town the right to go onto the property to do whatever investigations are necessary and to place a lien on the property so that all work is at the expense of the property owner.

2009-0125 Eastern Point School Property Lease

Discussed

The Town Manager distributed a revised lease to the Council and explained the option to enter into executive session. The \$1.00 per year lease has a 30-year term with two 20-year extension options. In exchange, LEARN will demolish the existing building (estimated to cost around \$1 million) and construct a new building. The upper plateau will be available for recreational use for the foreseeable future.

Town Attorney Eric Callahan and the Town Manager reviewed the substantive changes to the proposed lease since the last draft and provided an overview of the attachments. Jean-Paul LeBlanc of LEARN addressed a question regarding students driving to the site and discussion followed on parking and the number of attendees from Groton.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2009-0170 Creation of Boating Advisory Board

Discussed

John Silsby, Director of Parks and Recreation, noted that the department solicits comments from the public to strengthen its programs. This request is to establish a more formalized Boating Advisory Board. Jerry Lokken noted that the boating stakeholders, the "Board of Advocates", are long-time program participants. This effort attempts to clarify the scope and responsibilities of the group. Members would be appointed by the Parks and Recreation Commission. Discussion followed on the bylaws. The Board will be governed by the initial bylaws, which can be amended in the future by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2009-0177 Equipment Donation to Friends of Fitch Crew, Inc.

Discussed

Jerry Lokken described the request to donate rowing equipment to the Friends of Fitch Crew, Inc., a non-profit organization. General fund contributions to the Town's boating programs were eliminated in the FYE 10 budget. The Friends of Fitch Crew, Inc. will be acting as a "contractor" for the Town and they will provide the coaches and equipment, while the Town provides the program participants.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2009-0169 Climate Showcase Communities Grant Program

Discussed and Recommended no action taken

Town Manager Oefinger noted receipt of two proposals from Climate Change Task Force members for this grant program. The Task Force was not able to choose a project. Applications are due by July 21st. The Chairman of the Task Force and the Town Manager feel this effort is premature, and the projects do not meet the thresholds for the grant. The consensus of the Committee was to delete the referral.

2009-0178 Adoption of Ordinance on Thames Street Rehabilitation Project

Discussed

A public hearing was held at the last Town Council meeting. The Town Manager distributed a packet of information regarding "Responsible Employer Policy" that was referenced by Mr. Nahornick at the public hearing. Mayor Watson asked Councilors to read the information and request a referral, if desired. Staff is still waiting for the CGS 8-24 referral responses from the Town Planning Commission and the City Planning and Zoning Commission. The groups have 30 days to respond to the referral. By next Tuesday, that time period will have elapsed and the Town Manager recommended a special meeting of the Committee of the Whole on July 21st to address this issue.

Councilor Flax asked what will happen if the referendum fails and if the project costs could be

reduced. Mayor Watson explained that if the referendum fails, the Town may consider splitting the question at another referendum in the future. Town Manager Oefinger stated that if people agree that the project needs to be done, the scope of the project is reasonable. There are not a lot of "niceties" included with the plan. Discussion followed on options and alternatives.

2009-0124 Ethics Ordinance

Discussed

Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent noted that establishing a Code of Ethics and setting up an Ethics Commission will take some time. He asked Councilors to review the packet of information that was distributed.

2009-0168 Bodenwein Public Benevolent Foundation Grant - Arts Cafe Mystic

Discussed

Jerry Lokken noted that this is a request to apply for a grant in the amount of \$5,000 for the Mystic Arts Café.

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

The motion carried unanimously

6. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Flax, to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.