



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

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Town Clerk 860-441-6640
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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, September 12, 2017

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bruce Flax called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

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

Also present were Town Manager John Burt and Administrative Secretary Lisa Hylton.

3. Calendar and Communications

Councilors Nault, Watson, Morton and Barber gave updates to the meetings/events they attended and communication they had received from the public supporting the Noank School Public Gardens Task Force.

4. Approval of Minutes

2017-0206 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 August 22, 2017 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Barber, seconded by Councilor Nault.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 7 - Mayor Flax, Councilor Barber, Councilor Grim, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik
Abstain: 1 - Councilor Antipas

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

2015-0178 Noank School Public Gardens Task Force Semiannual Report

Discussed

Clint Wright was present and read a report that he prepared for the Town Council with an update as of September, 2017. Mr. Wright invited Brian Walter, a volunteer consultant, to provide more information to the Town Council on expanding the Noank School Public Gardens to include recreation, education and donation opportunities in the community. Mr. Walters presented a Groton Community Recreation and Garden Facility Phase II Business Plan Framework to the Council. Discussion began about the ways the task force can expand the current property. It was noted by Mr. Wright that he would like to renew the commitment of the property to proceed with the vision they have for the Noank Public School Gardens. Mr. Wright introduced Charles Lanza, a volunteer draftsman, to provide the illustration of the vision the task force wants to see in the coming years. Mr. Lanza distributed a copy of the layout for the future project.

Questions from the Council included if the task force had been in contact with Ledge Light Health District or the Groton Parks and Recreation Department. Clint Wright explained that he has not been in contact with either of those parties. He is just providing the vision to the Council at this time and will move forward once the Council makes a commitment to the task force.

The Committee of the Whole was supportive of the vision and the impact it could have in the community. It was noted a lot of work would need to be done along with fundraising to make the vision a reality. Councilor Grim mentioned that the initial agreement should be reexamined for insurance purposes. Mr. Wright explained that there was currently a Memorandum of Understanding in place as the prior Town Manager and Town Attorney thought it was the best option.

A motion was made by Councilor Moravsik, seconded by Councilor Barber, to renew the 4 year contract to the NSPGTF.

Mayor Flax mentioned that he was excited about the vision and growth but stated there is a need for a viable plan and research needing to be done on the cost prohibitive pros and cons. He stated that the NSPGTF along with the Town Manager's and Town Council's support should figure how out to move forward together.

A motion was made by Councilor Grim, seconded by Councilor Watson to amend the motion to include the ability to make changes, if need be, to the original MOU after Town Manager John Burt has had a chance to review the document. The amendment to the motion passed unanimously 8-0.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0202 Appointment to Noank School Public Gardens Task Force

Not Discussed

2017-0207 Scheduling of a Public Hearing on Charter Revision Commission Draft Report

Discussed

Mayor Flax stated that this item is the scheduling of a Public Hearing date for the Charter Revision Commission Draft Report. He noted that a Town Council Special Meeting would need to be held to approve the resolution for the public hearing. Mayor Flax stated there will be a Town Council Special meeting on September 26th at 5:30 p.m. to approve the public hearing date of October 3rd.

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

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

Mayor Flax called the Charter Revision Commission up to the table to speak on behalf of some of the changes. Discussion began with the Commission and how they arrived at some of their decisions. Mayor Flax mentioned there were a lot of changes to the drafted report and he was concerned that the public would not accept so much change. It was mentioned by the Charter Revision Commission that the budget process is broken and is in need of change. Discussion began about whether or not the Town Attorney should be involved to review the drafted report. Mayor Flax explained that he did not believe it would be beneficial at this time.

2017-0205 Board of Education/City of Groton Liaisons

Discussed

Discussion began about liaisons at the Board of Education and City Council meetings and whether the Council should wait until after the elections. After the discussion, it was agreed upon that Councilor Moravsik will be the Board of Education Liaison, Councilor Morton will be the City Council Liaison and Councilor Nault will be the Groton Long Point Association Liaison until the elections. The Committee of the Whole will then reevaluate after the elections.

Town Manager John Burt stated that it would be beneficial to both the City and Town to attend each other's meetings as a means of ongoing communication.

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

None.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Grim asked that the ethics policy be revisited to create a new ethics policy. Mayor Flax and others were in support of this. Town Manager John Burt stated that he would supply the Town Council with feedback from other communities on their ethics policies.

Councilor Moravsik asked that department Managers speak at the meetings instead of always having an attorney present when updating the Town Council or the Committee of the Whole. Town Manager John Burt explained that he is aware of the attorney's time at the meeting and in the future would like to have department heads on the agendas for regular updates.

Councilor Barber asked for another update on combining dispatch. Town Manager John Burt explained that it is more involved than just combining the two and mentioned there are other issues that need to be addressed first to make them compatible.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.