



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

Mayor Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, January 31, 2012

5:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Somers called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt and Councilor Streeter
Members Absent: Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Watson

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

3. NEW BUSINESS

2012-0040

Town Council Goal Setting

Discussed

Mayor Somers noted that a list of Town programs were provided to the Council if the Council chooses to rank/prioritize those programs as part of its goal setting process. Town Manager Oefinger explained that the programs were identified as part of the Performance Measures effort. The purpose of reviewing the programs and prioritizing them is because there should be some correlation between what the Town is working on day-to-day and the Town Council's goals. Mayor Somers thought that the categories were helpful to define the services provided by the Town.

Councilor Flax expressed support for the goal setting format used by the last Council. He stated that one of his goals is to maintain the roads in Groton in an affordable manner.

Councilor Watson arrived at 5:18 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson
Members Absent: Councilor O'Beirne, Jr.

Discussed

Councilor Peruzzotti noted that she felt the overall impression of the previous Town Council was a lack of unity. She would expect from Councilors a willingness to cooperate and not campaign against an issue if they are on the losing side. Councilor Peruzzotti also feels that Councilors should be involved with the goals that they are assigned.

Councilor Antipas noted that unlike the RTM members who are elected to represent their respective districts, the Town Council is comprised of nine people elected to represent the Town at large.

Councilor Schmidt agreed that it is an issue of respect for different opinions, but then respecting the ultimate will of the Council.

Mayor Somers outlined some of the goals she had developed, consisting of broader goals supported by specific initiatives. Discussion followed and the Council identified the following

goals and Councilors who would take responsibility for further developing and refining the goals :

1. Develop a robust economic development strategy and marketing plan (Johnson/Peruzzotti)

- Work more closely with the Economic Development Commission.
- Establish a Revenue Generation Task Force.
- Infrastructure to support economic development strategy.
 - o Flanders Road
- Revise all marketing materials

2. Become a more environmentally conscious Town (Schmidt)

- Establish the Energy, Efficiency and Conservation Committee.
- Hire a full time grant writer dedicated to improving energy efficiency for the Town and Board of Education.
- Establish an energy challenge to reduce consumption across the Town by 10%.
- Residential trash pickup/single stream recycling.

3. Better focus on the military and submarine base. (O'Beirne/Antipas)

- Establish a Liaison Committee

4. Provide a diverse, consistent, quality education experience for the Town of Groton.
(Watson/Peruzzotti/Somers)

- Foster an enhanced relationship with the Board of Education.
- Pursue common goals with the Board of Education.
- Continue to work with the Town Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee.
- Phase II.

5. Support Groton's infrastructure. (Peruzzotti/Watson)

- Road maintenance/pavement management plan.

The Town Manager updated the Council on efforts to obtain a grant from the State for the area in the vicinity of the Submarine Base. This issue is related to the purchase of the Fusconi property. The Town Manager will provide an update at a future meeting.

Discussion followed on the Town-wide fire assessment and the attempts to bring the parties to the table. The Town Manager differentiated between the fire chiefs and the fire district boards. He noted that there was a small group of people that were meeting on the issue and he suggested that Councilors reach out to Nancy Beckwith for her perceptions about the process.

6. Improve the relationship with the Fire Districts. (Streeter/Flax)

The Town Manager indicated he would provide a copy of the Pavement Management Plan to Councilor Antipas.

The Council discussed the Old Mystic Fire District's attempts to obtain a portion of the Mystic Education Center property.

Discussion followed on residential trash pickup.

Public Safety

- Conduct a study to establish a baseline for payments to the City and Groton Long Point.
- Conduct a Town-wide Police Study.

Mayor Somers noted that the Town has the power to fund the City and Groton Long Point police budgets in a different way. The Town Manager explained that the Town has no obligation to fund those police budgets. The question is, if the Town chooses not to fund the budgets, what is the Town's obligation. The Town does have an obligation to fund the highway budgets.

After some discussion, it was determined that this goal would make a better referral.

7. Provide civic education about Groton government (Flax/Streeter/Antipas)

General discussion occurred on various topics. Councilor Watson noted that communication with the Board of Education is improving. Councilor Peruzzotti noted that once a month meetings of the Liaison Committee will bring issues before the Council. She also suggested that the Town's Strategic Plan needs to be revisited.

Councilor Watson raised the issue of supporting Pfizer and Electric Boat. Mayor Somers feels there is only so much the Council can do. Whatever happens with the two companies is a strategic business decision. It would be better for the Town to diversify. The Town Manager noted the lack of available space in Groton and the lack of support for economic development in the past. The Town Manager reviewed a number of squandered opportunities over the years.

The Town Manager reviewed the nature and purpose of the police study. The next step is for the three police chiefs to decide who they want to hire. He advised the Council that the study will not be available in time for the FYE 2013 budget. He explained that personnel changes have impacted the process and he cannot push the group anymore if the study is to be done cooperatively. This item will be placed on a future Committee of the Whole agenda.

After Councilors were assigned to refine the goals, the Council decided that the draft goals would be reviewed at the February 28th Committee of the Whole meeting.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.