



# 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 Harry A. Watson, Councilors Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Heather Sherman Bond, Catherine Kolnaski, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, John F. Scott, Paulann H. Sheets, and James L. Streeter.*

Tuesday, August 14, 2007

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

#### SPECIAL MEETING

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

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

#### 2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Scott, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter  
Members Absent: Councilor Schmidt

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

#### 3. Calendar and Communications

*None.*

#### 4. Approval of Minutes

##### 2007-0184 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 of July 24, 2007 are hereby accepted and approved.

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

The motion carried unanimously

#### 5. NEW BUSINESS

##### 2007-0140 Town Property at Buddington/Old Buddington Roads

##### Discussed

*Mayor Watson provided a brief history on this issue and the parcel which was obtained by the Town through tax foreclosure and noted that he made this referral. The City of Groton would like to purchase the property for back taxes. Councilor O'Beirne noted some older history when the property was fenced off by Groton Utilities and there were discussions about making the parcel a park. Councilor O'Beirne asked for more research on the history of the property and discussions with the City of Groton.*

*Town Manager Oefinger noted he spent hours researching this issue and found that there is a single property on Buddington Road, which was last discussed in 2002 in association with a potential walking path along Route 117. There is \$11,526.03 in back taxes owed. Councilor O'Beirne asked for the appraised or assessed value of the land.*

##### 2003-0177 Renovations & Additions to Groton School Facilities - Phase I

##### Discussed

*Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, updated the Council on the school projects. Contractors are completing the new entrance at Fitch High School. Staff will be going over the final preparations for the school opening, with the transfer of furniture and equipment from the*

old building to the new scheduled for February 18th. At Northeast Academy, furniture and technology are being bid. The new entrance to Catherine Kolnaski has been completed. Temporary window structures are in place at Catherine Kolnaski, with the new windows scheduled to be installed in the next three months.

Mr. Schneider noted that FTE (Furniture, Technology and Special Equipment) must be bid to determine the funds needed to build out the Catherine Kolnaski School. The issue is under review by the Permanent School Building Committee. Town Manager Oefinger stated that he hopes to have more budget information by the August 28th Committee of the Whole meeting. The Town is still working to assign responsibility and a dollar value for the windows, but there is every expectation that there will be funds from another source to help recoup most if not all of the costs above and beyond the Town's responsibility. Options include doing without the technology, requesting a supplemental appropriation with funds designated for those items, or including the costs in next year's budget as a CIP project to segregate those funds. The Town Manager noted that the need for additional funds would be handled similar to the Water Pollution Control Facility, which required additional funds above and beyond the referendum. A referendum is required when the Town borrows money; in this case, any additional funds would not be borrowed, but would come from a budget source.

Councilor Schmidt arrived at 6:40 p.m.

**Roll Call:** Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartnik, Jr., Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Scott, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter

**Discussed**

Mr. Schneider continued by noting that the Town is on budget for Northeast Academy and Fitch at this time. Although all three projects combined are well within the original appropriation, funds can not be transferred from one project to another. Councilor Scott expressed support for a future supplemental appropriation to ensure that Catherine Kolnaski School is finished in its entirety.

Councilor Streeter asked if the demolition planned for June 2008 will be the final portion of the original school and Mr. Schneider indicated he would check.

**2005-0209 Water Pollution Control Facility Expansion**

**Discussed**

Gary Schneider, Direct of Public Works, noted the project is proceeding with no problems. The contractor has been recommending value engineering changes that are saving the Town money. Mr. Schneider noted that the state funds the project upfront and then the Town makes bond payments to the state when the project is complete.

**2006-0102 Fort Hill Sewer Project Update**

**Discussed**

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, provided an update on the project. Contractors are installing laterals on York Court. There is a resident engineer on Central Avenue. Next year, the Town will bid the lining for the main pipe. Next month, staff will have information on what has been expended to date.

**2007-0027 Burnett's Corners**

**Discussed**

Town Manager Oefinger stated that James Mitchell was unable to attend the meeting. Councilor Streeter noted that he looked at the property and it is not boarded up. He spoke with Scott Waring who was one of four people originally involved in the Burnett's Corner Preservation Society, and now only Mr. Mitchell remains involved. Councilor Streeter noted a 1994 article by Carol Kimball that called the building, "a liability" that would "soon be gone". Councilor Streeter does not feel the building will ever be restored. He suggested that the building could be razed and signage placed there to show a picture of the building and explain its historical significance.

Town Manager Oefinger noted that the option to take back the property is still open to the Town Council. The Town Manager will send a letter to Mr. Mitchell asking him to address the Council.

The Mayor declared a five minute recess.

**2007-0138 Gravel Street Pump Station Lease**

**Recommended for a Resolution**

Town Manager Oefinger noted that Councilors received the most recent draft of the proposed lease. Rod Desmarais was present to answer any questions. The proposed annual lease amount is \$4,320 with proposed indexing. There is also a provision to take the property back if there are any problems with the pump station. Discussion followed on the parking provisions. These spaces were not required as part of the site plan approved, but they are required by the developer for marketing the property. The parking area which is the subject of the lease does not go to the water's edge. A proposed underground propane tank on the south side of the property is the only encumbrance on that end of the property. The Town is trying to integrate the pump station into the developer's design as seamlessly as possible. The parking area will be gated, but the property will not be fenced.

A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, to authorize the Town Manager to enter into the Gravel Street Pump Station lease agreement pending final review by the Town Attorney.

It was noted that the recapture provision implies a "portion" of the property, not the whole thing. Town Manager Oefinger stated he will raise the issue with the Town Attorney. Kolnaski stated she would like the resolution to indicate that the Council supports the lease.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Votes:** In Favor: 8 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Scott, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter  
Opposed: 1 - Councilor O'Beirne, Jr.

**2007-0192 Thomas Road Project - Right-of-Way Activities Agreement**

**Discussed**

Town Manager Oefinger noted that this project will require the acquisition of land and easements to construct the path.

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2007-0191 Reuse of Groton Heights School**

**Discussed**

The Groton Heights School has been turned over to the Town and the building and grounds were left in good shape. The Town Manager has received inquiries regarding the property. He noted that any reuse of the property may need zoning consideration from the City of Groton. The Council may want to establish a reuse committee. There was an inquiry from Human Services regarding the building, but no other Town use has been identified. It is a sound structure, but it is not handicapped accessible. The Town Manager feels it is a "keeper" building that would be suitable for an adaptive reuse. Councilor Kolnaski suggested that the building be used for the Groton Historical Society. Some interest has also been expressed by DEP (Fort Griswold).

Discussion followed on the possible membership for a reuse committee, and not pre-supposing a use for the site that would then influence committee membership. Town Manager Oefinger indicated he would send out letters of interest and the Council can reconsider this issue in a month.

**2007-0185 Grant for Labor Day Holiday DUI Enforcement**

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2007-0193 Hamburger Helper Foundation Grant - Tercentennial Legacy Playground**

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2007-0187 Setting Form of the Question for Senior Center Ordinance**

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2007-0188 Setting Form of the Question on Senior Center Aqua Therapy Facility Ordinance**

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2007-0189 Setting Form of the Question for Animal Shelter Ordinance**

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2007-0190 Explanatory Texts for Senior Center and Animal Shelter Referenda**

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2007-0186 Town Manager Annual Evaluation**

Discussed

*Town Manager Oefinger stated he will mail his self-evaluation to the Council. A special meeting of the Committee of the Whole was scheduled for August 21st at 6:30 p.m. to discuss this issue.*

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*