



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise, Representatives Karin Adams, Scott W. Aument, Sr., Joseph Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Alicia Bauer, Genevieve Cerf, Susan Chase-Hildebrand, Michael Collins, Christine Conley, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Luanne E. DeMatto, Nancy Driscoll, Dave Ferreira, Neal Gardner, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Karen Hatcher, Keith L. Hedrick, Conrad F. Heede, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Michael Dean Johnson, Rosanne E. Kotowski, Jim Loughlin, Jackie Massett, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe Merritt, Scott Newsome, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Betty A. Prochaska, Pam Ryley, Jack Sebastian, Dana S. Semeraro, Richard Semeraro, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Archie C. Swindell, Lori A. Watrous, Amanda L. Whewell and Ivy R. Williams

Wednesday, July 11, 2012

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

Regular Meeting

A. ROLL CALL

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

33 members were present, and a quorum was declared.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Deane-Shinbrot, Hubbard and Sebastian notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

Members Present: Moderator Ambroise, Rep. Adams, Rep. Aument, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Chase-Hildebrand, Rep. Collins, Rep. Conley, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ferreira, Rep. Gardner, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Ryley, Rep. D. Semeraro, Rep. R. Semeraro, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous, Rep. Whewell and Rep. Williams

Members Absent: Rep. Cerf, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Heede, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Sebastian and Rep. Streeter

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Public Works Director Gary Schneider, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag led by Rep. Whewell.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 13, 2012

A motion that the minutes be approved was made by Rep. Hedrick, seconded by Rep. Ferreira.

In response to Rep. DeMatto, the Town Clerk explained that "non-voting" indicates that a member who was present at roll call was not present when a specific vote was taken.

The minutes were approved 32 in favor, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Hatcher.)

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

Joan Smith, 58 Mohegan Road, president of the Groton Open Space Association, encouraged the RTM to approve the purchase of the Spicer property. She cited numerous financial, environmental, recreational and educational benefits to the Town and the surrounding community.

Eunice Sutphen, 120 Cedar Road, Mystic, agreed with Ms. Smith's comments and urged the RTM to approve the purchase of the Spicer property.

Kevin Trejo, 536 Shennecossett Road, also supports the purchase of Spicer property.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Ambrose announced that Rep. Luck resigned on June 18, 2012, and that Amanda Whewell was elected to fill the vacancy at a Third District caucus held prior to this meeting.

2012-0213 Adoption of Ordinance for Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation

This matter was Referred to the RTM Public Works Committee, due back on August 8, 2012.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

1. Financial report

Mr. Oefinger reported that the Fund Balance as of June 30, 2012 is approximately \$10.1 million. The General Contingency balance for FYE2012 is \$127,000; these funds will be returned to the General Fund. The Capital Reserve balance is \$542,457. It was noted that the increase is due to interest income and recording fees.

2. Monthly briefing

The Town Manager highlighted various items from the Town Manager's News.

In response to members' questions about the Town's policy of encumbering funds, the Town Manager explained both the past practice and the practice that is currently in place. He noted that information is available on the Town's web site in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The Manager stated that at the next meeting, he will provide members with an outline of the procedure for encumbering funds at the end of the fiscal year.

Responding to questions on health insurance funds, the Manager stated that funds remain in the health insurance account from year to year. Since Groton is self-insured, this practice allows the Town to build and maintain a reserve balance based on actuarial estimates.

In response to Rep. Kotowski, the Manager reported that the legal opinion requested at the June 13, 2012 meeting concerning approval of Town Operations as one figure will be available at the August meeting. He noted that the Town Attorney has been on extended sick leave.

Moderator Ambrose requested that the Town Manager provide a breakdown of FYE2012 encumbered funds by department for the next meeting.

G. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

No report.

H. LIAISON REPORTS

None.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE - Chairman Granatosky

No meeting, no report.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES - Chairman Ferreira

Chairman Ferreira read the minutes of the meeting held on July 9, 2012. (Minutes are attached to the permanent record.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini and so voted unanimously.

2012-0048 Purchase of Spicer Properties, Thomas Road

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF THE SPICER PROPERTIES, THOMAS ROAD

WHEREAS, three Spicer properties on Thomas Road were identified as desirable for conservation in the 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development, and

WHEREAS, the acquisition and use of the tracts for conservation and passive recreational purposes has been endorsed by the Town's Conservation Commission and the Town's Planning Commission, and

WHEREAS, the acquisition and use of the Spicer properties would also be consistent with both the State and Regional Plans of Conservation and Development, the 2008 City of Groton Plan of Conservation and Development, the State Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Green Plan, and other related State, regional and local plans and initiatives, including but not necessarily limited to the State DEP's Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative, the State DEP's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the Southeastern Connecticut region's 2005 Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the State DEP Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, and

WHEREAS, the Town has obtained grant funding and accrued funds for the purpose of land conservation through a fee in lieu of open space provision in its subdivision regulations, as well as through its capital improvement program, and

WHEREAS, the Groton Town Council has previously authorized the preparation and signing of a purchase sales agreement to purchase the Spicer properties for \$960,000, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Mark R. Oefinger, Town Manager is hereby authorized to acquire, for the sum of \$960,000 pursuant to the provisions of the previously authorized purchase sales agreement, three tracts known as the Spicer properties and identified as follows:

Tract #1
Location/PIN: 155 Thomas Road/169813033078
Ownership: Doris Pulaski (Trustee)

Tract #2
Location/PIN: 0 Thomas Road/168816937659
Ownership: William C. Spicer Jr. Estate

Tract #3
Location/PIN: 0 Thomas Road/168820918875
Ownership: William C. Spicer III

and be it further

RESOLVED, that \$650,000 of the purchase price will come from the State of Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Lands Acquisition Grant and \$310,000 will come from the Town's Open Space Fund, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the expenditure of up to \$25,000 from the Town's Open Space Fund for administrative costs associated with the land purchase, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager is hereby authorized to accept the deeds for said parcels upon approval of the Town Attorney.

Refer to RTM.

A motion was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini Jr., that this matter be Adopted.

Moderator Ambrose read a letter from Planning Commission Chairman James Sherrard urging the RTM to approve the purchase of this property.

Members discussed the loss of income from taxes; uses for the property; maintenance and

operating expenses; future plans for development; and restrictions that may be imposed by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

The Town Manager foresees little impact on the budget, noting that the property will probably be maintained by volunteers with minimal support provided by the Town. He noted that a multi-purpose trail is expected within the next three years.

The Moderator mentioned that the RTM has already authorized the walkway project in its budget deliberations on capital improvement projects.

In response to Rep. Swindell, the Town Manager summarized an email from Project Learn explaining its reasons for not partnering with the Town on the purchase of this property.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 31 - Moderator Ambrose, Rep. Adams, Rep. Aument, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Chase-Hildebrand, Rep. Collins, Rep. Conley, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ferreira, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Ryley, Rep. D. Semeraro, Rep. R. Semeraro, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous, Rep. Whewell and Rep. Williams
Opposed: 2 - Rep. Gardner and Rep. Kotowski

2012-0158 Services Shared Between Towns

SERVICES SHARED BETWEEN TOWNS

This matter was Discussed.

In response to the committee's recommendation, the Moderator noted that he will consider forming an ad hoc committee for services shared with other towns and report back at the August meeting.

3. EDUCATION - Chairman Hedrick

No meeting, no report.

4. RECREATION - Chairman Streeter

No meeting, no report.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman Pasqualini

No meeting, no report.

6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Collins

Chairman Collins read the minutes of the meeting held on July 9, 2012. (Minutes are attached to the permanent record.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld and so voted unanimously.

2012-0049 Purchase of Fusconi Property, Crystal Lake Road

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF THE FUSCONI PROPERTY AT 5 CRYSTAL LAKE ROAD

WHEREAS, the Fusconi Dry Cleaners site at 5 Crystal Lake Road is located directly across the street from the main gate of the U.S. Submarine Base, and

WHEREAS, the Fusconi Dry Cleaners building and site have remained closed and vacant for over five years and are currently in a state of disrepair, and

WHEREAS, acquisition of the site is necessary to accommodate future traffic improvements in the vicinity of Crystal Lake Road and Military Highway; allow for the removal of a deteriorating building; undertake general clean-up of the site; and mitigate future encroachment near the SUBBASE, and

WHEREAS, the State Bond Commission at its April 27, 2012 meeting approved \$455,000 in funding for the purchase of the property by the Town of Groton including demolition and administrative costs, and

WHEREAS, the Groton Town Council has previously authorized the preparation and signing of a purchase sales agreement to purchase the Fusconi property for \$367,900, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Mark R. Oefinger, Town Manager is hereby authorized to acquire a parcel of land owned by Remo Fusconi Trust located at 5 Crystal Lake Road for the sum of \$367,900 pursuant to the provisions of the previously authorized purchase sales agreement, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager is hereby authorized to accept a deed for said parcel upon approval of the Town Attorney.

Refer to RTM.

A motion was made by Moderator Ambroise, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini Jr., that this matter be Adopted.

Chairman Collins noted that the committee neglected to make a motion to adopt the resolution, but a vote was taken and approval was unanimously recommended. He requested that the Moderator place the motion on the floor.

Members discussed the costs associated with cleanup and demolition and reasons for the Town to secure ownership of this property.

The Manager explained the funding for the purchase and noted that there is no defined estimate of cleanup and demolition costs. He noted that the Town may incur expenses for curbing and staff time.

The motion carried unanimously

7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Massett

No meeting, no report.

9. CONSOLIDATION - Chairman Pasqualini

No meeting, no report.

J. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

K. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 9:09 p.m. was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Adams and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk