



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Meeting Minutes

Town Council

Mayor Bruce Flax, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Diane Barber, Joe de la Cruz, Greg Grim, Karen F. Morton, Bonnie Nault, Deb Peruzzotti, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, March 1, 2016

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. by Mayor Flax.

I. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Barber, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Grim, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault and Councilor Watson

Members Absent: Councilor Peruzzotti

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher, and Town Clerk Office Assistant II Nathan Caron

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Keith Hedrick.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

None.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Elizabeth Duarte, 54 Cottage Street, stated that the Town Council should reexamine their goal, One Groton. She reported comparable statistical information regarding call and arrest volume for the City and Town Police departments. She stated that One Groton should market the entire Town of Groton including the City of Groton, Old Mystic, Mystic, Groton Long Point, and Noank.

Paul Duarte, 54 Cottage Street, stated that he attended the City Freemans' meeting where funding to improve the parking proposed for the Thames River Heritage Park Water Taxi was defeated. He asked Councilor Grim why he voted against the funding. He stated that this funding would have also paid for some needed repairs at the historic Mother Bailey House and the City Municipal Building. He suggested that the Mayor announced misinformation on a local radio program.

Mayor Marian Galbraith, 771 Shennecossett Road, commented on initiatives that the City and Town of Groton have financially supported jointly, including the efforts to procure the USS Groton sail, the Connecticut Submarine Century celebration, and the Thames River Heritage Park Water Taxi. She stated that she supports economic development for the Town and City of Groton.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Councilor Grim stated that he attended the Freeman's Meeting in the City of Groton along with about 66 other City residents. He stated that he should not be singled out at a Town Council meeting for how he cast his vote at a Freeman's Meeting. He stated that he supports economic development and that he enjoys living in the City of Groton. He stated that he has been a resident of the City of Groton since 1988.

Councilor Antipas stated that a vote cast as a Freeman should not be tied to actions of the Groton Town Council and should not be disputed at a Town Council meeting.

Mayor Flax stated that he did not offer an opinion as to how to vote for an issue at the City of

Groton Freeman's Meeting on the radio. He stated that he did discuss aspects of this Freeman's Meeting and that \$800,000 was to be voted upon. He stated that the Town Council meeting was the wrong place to discuss this issue. He stated that one of the Town Council's goals is to promote economic development for all of Groton.

Councilor Grim stated that multiple projects had been included in the \$800,000 appropriation and that it was unfair to single out one or two projects that had been rejected. He stated that it is ludicrous to insinuate that the Town Council is against economic development based on the failure of the appropriation.

Councilor Nault clarified that the intention of the slogan One Groton is to include Groton Long Point, Mystic, Noank, the City of Groton, and the Town of Groton.

Councilor de la Cruz stated that the Facebook postings have taken on a life of their own. He stated that One Groton is meant to be used as a brand for the town to come together as one community.

Councilor Antipas stated that at the Town Council goal setting meeting there was no discussion regarding police, consolidation, or getting rid of things. He stated that the Town Council has no authority to get rid of anything. He stated that the Town and the City of Groton must continue to work together. He stated that he understands that the misconception is due to the word One as in One Groton.

Mayor Flax pointed out that one of the Town Council goals is economic development. He stated that the Town Council identified several projects and that Thames Street is at the top of the list.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2016-0070 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of February 16, 2016 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2016-0067 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Sharon Pictures, LLC - \$72.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Lee Vincent - \$50.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Lee Hinerfeld - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Anne-Marie Quagliaroli - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Fred & Gail Yeo - \$200.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

City of Groton Matching Funds - \$645.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

City of Groton/Groton Utilities - \$1,200 - Veterans' Memorial Park

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2016-0061 Market Analysis and Regulatory Audit Presentation

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2016-0063 Sale of William Seely School Property

- 2016-0023** **Town Council Goal Setting**
 This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.
- 2016-0045** **Vehicle Purchases**
 This matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken.
- 2016-0047** **Noank Town Dock Pier Reconstruction**
 This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2016-0048** **Sidewalk on Johl Property Open Space**
 This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2016-0049** **Relinquishment of Sewer and Drainage Easement at Watrous Subdivision, Pleasant Valley Road North**
 This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2016-0062** **Mystic Education Center Property**
 This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Nault, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar. The motion carried unanimously

VII. COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilor de la Cruz stated that he attended a Community Speaks Out meeting on February 17, 2016, and that the meeting was well attended with over 70 people. He reported that he spoke at a Stonington forum regarding drug abuse prevention on February 18, 2016. He announced that he will attend a Community Speaks Out meeting at Fitch High School on March 2, 2016. He reported that Greg Williams, author of The Anonymous People, spoke with students at Fitch High School on Wednesday, February 24, 2016. He stated that there will be a Community Speaks Out meeting on March 2, 2016 at the Groton Public Library from 6-8:30 p.m.

Councilor Nault reported that she attended the CCM training on February 20, 2016 with two City of Groton Councilors. She stated that she went to Hartford to visit the State Capitol Building on March 1, 2016. She stated that she attended a Fourth of July parade meeting on March 1, 2016 with Mayor Flax. She announced that she will attend a Mystic Merchant meeting on March 2, 2016. She noted that she will be attending a Sub Century meeting on March 4, 2016.

Councilor Watson stated that this is Read Across America Week. He stated that he read at Pleasant Valley School on March 1, 2016. He announced that he will be reading at Butler School on March 2, 2016. He reported that he has received communications regarding rowing at the Spicer House and the Marine Magnet School.

Councilor Antipas stated that he will be reading for Read Across America on March 2, 2016.

Councilor Morton stated that she reached out to State Representative Bumgardner to clarify the budget cap legislation. She reported that the Town of Groton will be held to a budget increase cap of 2.5% less debt service. She stated that any amount over the 2.5% increase will result in losing State funding at the rate of 50 cents per dollar over the 2.5% limit.

Mayor Flax stated that he attended the Southeastern Council of Governments meeting on February 17, 2016. He stated that he attended the Groton Business Association meeting at Electric Boat on February 18, 2016. Mayor Flax reported that he met with Mark Berry of Groton

Parks and Recreation about the Fourth of July parade. He reported that he attended a USS Groton Sail meeting on February 22, 2016. He stated that he attended a ribbon-cutting for Beauty Valley Spa on February 28, 2016. He announced that he read to students at Claude Chester School on March 1, 2016. He noted that he received several e-mails regarding the Charter Revision Commission.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher reported there will be a Representative Town Meeting on March 9, 2016 and there are two items on its agenda. She stated the first item is the extension of the appropriation of the Thames Street Rehabilitation Project. She stated that the second item is a Resolution authorizing payment of the arbitration award for Pettini Corporation.

c. Clerk of the Council

Town Clerk Moukawsher reported that there are several items on the State's legislative agenda that may impact Connecticut Town Clerks' offices. She stated that there is an act concerning the political composition of certain municipal boards and commissions that are advisory in nature, and they do not have to be part of the regulatory powers. She stated there is an act to possibly study the Department of Motor Vehicles and to potentially move drivers license applications and renewal functions into Town Clerks' offices. She reported there may be an act to change the distribution of conveyance tax between the State of Connecticut and the Town of Groton. She reported there is potential legislation to change dog licensing from one-year to three-year terms. She reported there are potential changes to marriage license laws.

d. Town Manager

Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that he is preparing for next week's Committee of the Whole agenda. Items include Fitch Middle School's reuse plan, tax foreclosure properties acquired by the Town of Groton, Contingency transfers, Board of Education request to proceed with asbestos abatement, grant application for additional electric charging station(s), Charter Revision Commission, update on Schools' Facilities Initiative Project, revision of golf course rates, and changes to the part-time employee pay plan.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community Relations -

No meeting, no report.

b. Finance -

No meeting, no report.

c. Personnel & Appointments - Chairman Watson

No meeting, no report.

d. Rules -

No meeting, no report.

e. Public Safety -

No meeting, no report.

f. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Flax

Mayor Bruce Flax stated the Committee of the Whole met on February 23, 2016 and voted on all the items on the agenda for this March 1, 2016 meeting.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

2016-0023 Town Council Goal Setting

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THIRTIETH GROTON TOWN COUNCIL GOALS

RESOLVED, that the 30th Groton Town Council adopts the following goals for 2016-2017:

Charter Revision

- Establish a Charter Revision Commission.

Budget/Fiscal Responsibility

- Evaluate Town and other community services with a focus on prioritizing Town expenditures.

Increase Town Revenue

- Continue to support Town-wide community and economic development with a focus on the Thames Street, Route 117, Airport, Downtown Groton, and Downtown Mystic areas.

Communication

- Brand and market “One Groton.”

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Morton, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0045

Vehicle Purchases

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXPENDITURE OF REMAINING FUNDS IN THE FYE 2016 VEHICLE REPLACEMENT COST CENTER

WHEREAS, there is a balance of \$52,881.80 in the Vehicle Replacement cost center after the planned FYE 2016 vehicle purchases, and

WHEREAS, the Town has the opportunity to use the remaining funds to purchase a replacement patrol vehicle and to provide the match required by the grant for the purchase of an electric vehicle, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Public Works Department is authorized to purchase one additional patrol vehicle and one electric vehicle using funds from the FYE 2016 Vehicle Replacement cost center (#60400).

A motion was made by Councilor Morton, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0047

Noank Town Dock Pier Reconstruction

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF AN FYE 2017 CIP PROJECT TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF THE THE NOANK TOWN DOCK

WHEREAS, construction funds in the amount of \$100,000 were approved in the FYE 2016 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for reconstruction of the Noank Town Dock, repair of the seawall damaged by Superstorm Sandy, and ADA compliance, and

WHEREAS, bids for the project exceeded available funding and additional funding will be required to complete the project, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the submission of an FYE 2017 CIP project requesting an additional \$50,000 for the Noank Town Dock Reconstruction project.

A motion was made by Councilor Barber, seconded by Councilor Nault, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Barber stated that she opposed the item because the project costs 50% more than the original approved bid .

Councilor Antipas asked Town Manger Oefinger questions regarding FEMA and CIP funding for FYE 2016. Town Manager Oefinger responded to Councilor Antipas' questions and confirmed CIP and FEMA funding figures for FYE 2016 for this project.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 7 - Mayor Flax, Councilor Antipas, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Grim, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault and Councilor Watson
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Barber
Non-voting: 1 - Councilor Peruzzotti

2016-0048 Sidewalk on Johl Property Open Space

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN A WETLAND PERMIT APPLICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT LETTER FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SIDEWALK PARTIALLY ON THE TOWN-OWNED JOHL PROPERTY OPEN SPACE

WHEREAS, Stonington Institute has agreed to construct an eight-foot-wide bituminous multi-purpose sidewalk on the south side of High Rock Road in association with an approved site plan for the conversion of the former Pfizer Daycare to a 180-bed hotel/motel, and

WHEREAS, the walk will be located within the High Rock Road right-of-way and on the Town-owned Johl Property open space, and

WHEREAS, wetlands have been identified within 100 feet of the walk requiring a wetland permit for construction of the walk, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger to sign a wetland permit application and a letter acknowledging the submittal of the application for the construction of a sidewalk partially on the Town-owned Johl Property open space.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Nault, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0049 Relinquishment of Sewer and Drainage Easement at Watrous Subdivision, Pleasant Valley Road North

RESOLUTION RELINQUISHING A SEWER AND DRAINAGE EASEMENT IN THE WATROUS SUBDIVISION, PLEASANT VALLEY ROAD NORTH

WHEREAS, the Watrous Subdivision was approved by the Planning Commission on April 22, 2014, and

WHEREAS, the Watrous Subdivision included an easement for both stormwater drainage and a sanitary sewer line to serve all three lots, and

WHEREAS, significant ledge conditions on the site required the installation of three individual sewer lines in a different location and Public Works no longer requires a sewer easement, and

WHEREAS, the developer will record a revised easement for drainage only, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby relinquishes the sewer and drainage easement to the current property owner of the Watrous Subdivision, Pleasant Valley Road North.

A motion was made by Councilor Grim, seconded by Councilor Nault, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0062 Mystic Education Center Property

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION REQUESTING CONVEYANCE OF EIGHT VACANT PARCELS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MYSTIC EDUCATION CENTER AND

ALONG RIVER ROAD TO THE TOWN OF GROTON

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut previously transferred stewardship of eight parcels of land associated with the Mystic Education Center and along River Road totalling approximately 68 acres to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and

WHEREAS, this land could be used by the Town for active or passive recreation and/or portions could be combined with the developed area of the Mystic Education Center property for future development, and

WHEREAS, State Representative John Scott has approached the Town about submitting legislation to convey the eight parcels to the Town of Groton, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council expresses support for Representative Scott's efforts to have eight vacant parcels of land associated with the Mystic Education Center and along River Road conveyed to the Town of Groton.

A motion was made by Councilor Nault, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

X. OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor de la Cruz stated that there will be a School Facilities Task Force meeting on March 3, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Flax led the Town Council in singing Happy Birthday to Councilor de la Cruz.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn by Councilor Watson and seconded by Councilor Nault. Mayor Flax adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher
Clerk of the Town Council*

*Nathan Caron
Office Assistant II*