



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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

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, April 5, 2016

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 8:13 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, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson

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 Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

None.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Alexander Walon, 193 Midway Oval, stated that he did not receive a letter regarding cutting off Vergennes Court from Route One, and he does not support cutting off Vergennes Court from Route One. He commented that the road should not be closed because it is beneficial for emergency vehicles. He stated that people who live on Midway Oval should have received the letter as well, and if the Town wants to proceed with the project, everyone associated with the proposed area should be involved.

Gale Goode, 24 Fort Hill Road, Apt. 1, stated that she is concerned about cutting off Vergennes Court from Route One. She mentioned that she has lived in the area since 1953. She noted that if safety was the issue, the police would be monitoring the speed of traffic, since there are safety concerns regarding the traffic in the area. She stated that citizens who live in the Fort Hill section of Groton should be involved in any decisions related to this project, and there should be a public hearing on what is coming to this area of Groton.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Councilor Nault asked Town Manager Oefinger about the Vergennes Court project.

Town Manager Oefinger responded to Councilor Nault's question by stating that the project has been around for about four or five years. He stated it has been discussed numerous times with the Fort Hill Homes neighborhood association. He noted that the Town Council has provided local funding and that the Town has also secured State funding for the project. He cited safety concerns as the reason this project was considered. He noted that emergency vehicles would still have access. He stated that he would be glad to review the plans with the Town Council.

Mayor Flax asked Town Manager Oefinger to provide the details of the project to the Town Council. He stated that he does not recall the project. He asked the Town Manager if the project would be subject to a public hearing.

Town Manager Oefinger stated that a public hearing was not required. He suggested that the Town Council could have an informational meeting for the public.

Mayor Flax asked Town Manager Oefinger how the decision was made as to who received the letter.

Town Manager Oefinger stated that he had not seen the letter until now. He indicated that he would find out how individuals were chosen to receive the letter.

Councilor de la Cruz stated that citizens have asked him about the letter, and that he had not heard of the project. He stated that the calls he has received from citizens have not been positive, and there may be a need to get information to the public. He noted that it is important to give citizens the opportunity to make their opinions known.

Town Manager Oefinger stated that there will be an informational meeting for the public this summer, as is stated in the letter.

Councilor Watson stated that it would be good to have a presentation of the project for the public and the Town Council.

Councilor Antipas stated that safety is the concern and the reason the project was added to the docket. He noted that the Town Council should hear from people who would be affected by this project.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

2016-0081 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of March 1, 2016 are hereby accepted and approved.

Councilor Nault stated that she thought the Town Clerk's office was going to change the minutes from the March 1, 2016 meeting to reflect comments made during the Citizens' Petitions.

Councilor Antipas stated that he was happy comments made during Citizens' Petitions were not included in the minutes of the March 1, 2016 meeting. He stated that in his opinion, those comments did not belong at a Town Council meeting or in the minutes.

2016-0094 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of March 15, 2016 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2016-0085 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

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

Thomas Norris - \$50.00 - Library Miscellaneous

Pfizer - \$500.00 - Library Miscellaneous

Lee Vincent - \$50.00 - Social Services Discretionary

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

- 2015-0219** **FYE 2017 Budget Discussion**
 FYE 2017 BUDGET DISCUSSION
This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.
- 2016-0036** **Small Cities Community Development Block Grant - 2016 Application**
 SMALL CITIES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT - 2016 APPLICATION
This matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken.
- 2016-0082** **Distracted Driving Grant**
 DISTRACTED DRIVING GRANT
This matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken.
- 2016-0083** **Authorization to Prepare a Bond Ordinance for the School Facilities Initiative**
 AUTHORIZATION TO PREPARE A BOND ORDINANCE FOR THE SCHOOL FACILITIES INITIATIVE
This matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken.
- 2016-0086** **Department of Education Youth and Family Services Funding**
 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES FUNDING
This matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken.
- 2016-0087** **Department of Education Youth Services Enhancement Grant**
 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION YOUTH SERVICES ENHANCEMENT GRANT
This matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken.
- 2016-0091** **Alexey von Schlippe Gallery at Avery Point**
 ALEXEY VON SCHLIPPE GALLERY AT AVERY POINT
This matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken.
- 2016-0095** **Authorization for Town Manager to Execute Settlement Documents**
This matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 8 - Mayor Flax, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Barber, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Grim, Councilor Morton, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson
 Opposed: 1 - Councilor Nault

VII. COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilor Morton stated that she has received e-mails and letters from taxpayers concerning the budget. She announced that she received a copy of a letter that had been sent to City Mayor Galbraith from the Connecticut Chapter of the D.A.R. She stated that the letter requested involvement in the historical preservation and improvements to the condition of the Mother Bailey House.

Councilor Barber stated that she has received e-mails regarding the budget and numerous inquiries regarding the formation of the Charter Revision Commission.

Mayor Flax stated that it has been a challenge to get the Charter Revision Commission set up

during budget sessions.

Councilor Peruzzotti stated that she attended the Heritage Park presentation on March 31, 2016.

Councilor de la Cruz stated that he attended the Heritage Park presentation. He noted that there was a Public Hearing on the budget on Tuesday, March 29, 2016 and that approximately thirty citizens presented various viewpoints. He stated that the Town Council is working on the budget.

Councilor Nault stated that she attended the economic forum presented by the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer) on March 30, 2016. She stated that there will be another presentation focusing on the Groton area on April 11, 2016 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Groton V.F.W. Hall. She stated that she attended the Sub Century planning meeting on April 1, 2016 and the Heritage Park presentation on March 31, 2016.

Councilor Watson stated that he attended the Heritage Park presentation on March 31, 2016. He stated that the Committee of the Whole budget sessions are one continuous meeting. He stated that an item that has been voted on may be introduced for reconsideration by someone on the prevailing side of the vote at any of the upcoming budget sessions.

Mayor Flax stated that on March 16, 2016 he attended a Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments meeting and the Board of Education/Town Council School Initiative presentation. He stated that he attended the Sub Century meeting on March 18, 2016; the Groton Week planning meeting on March 24, 2016; the Groton Sail Foundation Board meeting on March 28, 2016; a meeting with Town Manager Mark Oefinger and then a meeting of the Committee of the Whole, the City Council, and Mayor Galbraith on March 29, 2016; the Public Hearing on the proposed FYE 2017 budget on March 29, 2016; and the Heritage Park presentation on March 31, 2016. He stated that he spoke to the Student Council at Cutler Middle School on April 4, 2016. He stated that on April 5, 2016 he met with Town Manager Mark Oefinger and attended the Child Abuse Prevention Initiative poster contest awards. He concluded his statements by noting that a meeting will be held within the next two weeks to set up the Charter Revision Commission.

At the suggestion of Councilor Nault, Mayor Flax stated that he will e-mail the people that have applied to the Charter Revision Commission and inform them that this item will be scheduled on the April 26, 2016 Town Council Committee of the Whole agenda.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher stated that the next regular RTM meeting will be April 13, 2016 at Groton Senior Center at 7:30 p.m. She stated RTM subcommittees have scheduled their budget review meetings.

In response to Mayor Flax's question, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher stated that the RTM subcommittee meetings are scheduled to coincide with the completion of the Town Council's review of each account. She stated that the RTM subcommittees provide recommendations to the full Representative Town Meeting and that it is the responsibility of the full Representative Town Meeting to decide on entire town budget.

Councilor Morton asked what the Town Council would do if it reconsiders an account that the RTM has acted on.

Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher stated that only the RTM subcommittees are meeting and they will make recommendations to the full RTM on or after April 28th.

c. Clerk of the Council

Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher stated that absentee ballots became available for the April 26, 2016 Presidential Preference Primary on April 5, 2016. She stated that anyone who needs an

absentee ballot may apply for one in person at the Town Clerk's office or have an application sent to them.

d. Town Manager

Town Manager Mark Oefinger announced that he received Robert Palm's letter of resignation from the Noank School Public Gardens Task Force. He stated that there will be a Children First Groton session entitled 'Healthy Development: A Summit on Infant, Children, and Adolescent Mental Health' on Thursday, April 7, 2016 from 4:00 - 7:30 p.m. He stated that the Annual Tourism Forecast meeting that the Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce is hosting will be on April 8th at 7:45 a.m. at Latitude 41 restaurant. He noted that the Town and City of Groton Economic Development Commissions together are sponsoring an event entitled 'Get To Know Your Groton' at the Par 4 restaurant on April 14th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. He announced that the annual conference on the Freedom of Information Act will be held on April 22, 2016 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Riverhouse restaurant at the Goodspeed Station in Haddam. He concluded his statements by noting that the Town Council packet includes a copy of the Town's bond rating from Fitch and an update from Planning and Development.

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 and no report. Councilor Antipas stated that he plans to have one more Temporary Rules Committee meeting before he presents the rules to the Town Council.

e. Public Safety -

No meeting, no report.

f. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Flax

Mayor Flax announced the Committee of the Whole met and voted on all the items on the agenda for this meeting.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

2016-0036 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant - 2016 Application

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF A SMALL CITIES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE GROTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, federal monies are available under the Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, 42 U.S.C. § 5301, et. seq., as amended, also known as Public Law 93-383, and administered by the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic and Community Development as the Connecticut Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 127c and Part VI of Chapter 130 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Commissioner of the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development is authorized to disburse such federal monies to local municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton wishes to provide financial assistance to the eligible public housing authority to upgrade their residential buildings, making them decent, safe and sanitary; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton conducted public hearings to receive citizen comments on housing and community development needs, prioritizing the housing authority as a community need; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable and in the public interest that the Town of Groton make application to the State for \$800,000 in order to undertake a Small Cities Community Development project and to execute an Assistance Agreement therefore, should one be offered; now therefore be it

RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF GROTON:

1. That it is cognizant of the conditions and prerequisites for the State financial assistance imposed by Part VI of Chapter 130 of the Connecticut General Statute; and
2. That the filing of an application for State financial assistance by the Town of Groton in an amount not to exceed \$800,000 is hereby approved and that Town Manager Mark Oefinger is hereby authorized and directed to file such application with the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development; to provide such additional information; to execute such other documents as may be required by the Commissioner; to execute an Assistance Agreement with the State of Connecticut for financial assistance if such an agreement is offered; to execute any amendments, recessions, and revisions thereto; to implement project activities, if approved; and to act as the authorized representative of the Town of Groton and to execute any other agreement or contract relative to said project.
3. That it adopts or has adopted on behalf of the Town of Groton a policy to support the following nondiscrimination agreements and warranties provided in subsection (a)(J) of Connecticut General Statutes sections 4a-60 and 4a-60a, respectively, as amended by Public Act 07 -142, and for which purposes the "contractor" is the Town of Groton and "contract" is said Assistance Agreement:

The contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the contract such contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, mental retardation or physical disability, including but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by such contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or of the State of Connecticut.

The contractor further agrees to take affirmative action to insure that applicants with job-related qualifications are employed and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, mental retardation or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by such contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved.

The contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the contract, such contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of sexual orientation, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or of the State of Connecticut, and that employees are treated without regard to their sexual orientation.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0082

Distracted Driving Grant

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF HIGHWAY SAFETY DISTRACTED DRIVING - HIGH VISIBILITY ENFORCEMENT GRANT

WHEREAS, the Groton Town Police Department plans to utilize the Connecticut Department of

Transportation's Division of Highway Safety Distracted Driving - High Visibility Enforcement grant funding to support enforcement operations that go beyond normal police patrols, and

WHEREAS, the grant provides for a concerted effort to enforce distracted driving laws and consists of checkpoints as well as vehicular detection patrols, and

WHEREAS, the goal of the grant is to increase law enforcement presence above and beyond normal police patrols in order to address the increased incidence of distracted driving during the grant period, which runs April 4 through 30 and August 3 through 16, 2016, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger may apply for the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Division of Highway Safety Distracted Driving - High Visibility Enforcement grant with an anticipated total state grant amount of \$15,000 including the Police Department match in the amount of \$5,000 (25%) as required under the grant provisions.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0083

Authorization to Prepare a Bond Ordinance for the School Facilities Initiative

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PREPARATION OF A BOND ORDINANCE AND OTHER RESOLUTIONS FOR GROTON 2020 SCHOOL FACILITIES INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, the Town Council has reviewed a plan to construct a new middle school on the former Merritt property and two new elementary schools at the West Side Middle School and Cutler Middle School sites, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council considers it appropriate to present the project to the Town's voters in a bond referendum, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Town staff and the Town bond attorney are authorized to prepare a bond ordinance to be introduced by the Town Council, along with other resolutions as necessary.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0086

Department of Education Youth and Family Services Funding

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPLY TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR FYE 2017 YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES FUNDING

WHEREAS, crisis intervention, prevention and support programs and short-term counseling services will benefit at-risk Groton youth and their families, and

WHEREAS, funding is available from the State of Connecticut Department of Education to supplant a portion of the salaries of Groton Human Services Counselors who provide intervention and prevention services for at-risk Groton youth, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager, Mark R. Oefinger, or his designee, is authorized to file an application with the State of Connecticut Department of Education (DOE) for FYE 2017 municipal youth services funding in an amount to be determined by the DOE and to amend contractual agreements for such funding to ensure continuation of short-term counseling, crisis intervention and prevention and support programs for Groton youth and families.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0087

Department of Education Youth Services Enhancement Grant

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO APPLY TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR FYE 2017 YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU ENHANCEMENT GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut Department of Education offers Youth Services Bureau Enhancement Grant program funding to municipally-based Connecticut youth services programs for supplies and related expenses connected with programs and activities which directly and indirectly benefit Groton youth and families in areas such as youth enrichment, outreach programs, general support and positive youth development, and

WHEREAS, Groton Human Services has demonstrated its success in providing youth enrichment, outreach programs, general support and positive youth development, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager, Mark R. Oefinger, or his designee, is authorized to apply for and contract with the State of Connecticut Department of Education (DOE) for FYE 2017 Youth Services Bureau Enhancement Grant program funding in an amount to be determined by the DOE.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0091 Alexey von Schlippe Gallery at Avery Point

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF RETAINING THE ALEXEY VON SCHLIPPE GALLERY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT AVERY POINT CAMPUS

WHEREAS, the Town Council has been advised by David Madacsi, Emeritus Professor of Physics at the University of Connecticut and co-founder of the Alexey von Schlippe Gallery of Art, that the university is planning to close the gallery at the end of July, 2016, and

WHEREAS, the Alexey von Schlippe Gallery and its programs are a cultural resource that is important to the Town, the region, and the state, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the Town Manager to prepare a letter to members of the University of Connecticut administration and state and local legislators in support of retaining the Alexey von Schlippe Gallery at Avery Point under the direction of Julia Pavone.

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

Councilor Nault stated that the Alexey von Schlippe Gallery is a great asset to the Town of Groton.

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0095 Authorization for Town Manager to Execute Settlement Documents

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE SETTLEMENT DOCUMENTS

WHEREAS, an employee in the Department of Public Works has filed Grievance 15-01 and CHRO Complaint Number 1540237 against the Town regarding certain alleged employment conduct, and

WHEREAS, the Town and employee have reached an amicable agreement to resolve the Grievance, the CHRO claim, and any other claims, and for the employee to retire in good standing from the Town, and

WHEREAS, due to a question concerning the Town's notice compliance under FOIA for its special meeting of the Committee of the Whole on March 15, 2016 that required the Committee of the Whole to supersede the action on March 15, 2016 and reapprove this item on March 22, 2016, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager is authorized to execute the documents necessary to finalize the settlement reached between the Town and the aforementioned Department of Public Works employee. This action supersedes the prior action taken by the Town Council on March 15, 2016.

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

The motion carried unanimously

X. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn by Councilor Peruzzotti and seconded by Councilor Nault. Mayor Flax adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher
Clerk of the Town Council*

*Nathan Caron
Office Assistant II*