



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Meeting Minutes - Draft

Town Council

Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Dean Antipas, Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Bruce S. Flax, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, and Paulann H. Sheets

Tuesday, September 15, 2009

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Watson.

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt and Councilor Sheets

Members Absent: Councilor Brown-Tracy

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Joe Sastre.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

National Weather Service Presentation

Joe Sastre, Emergency Communications Manager for the Town of Groton, introduced the individuals present from the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) and the National Weather Service (NWS), as well as Jeff Williams, his co-worker on the Emergency Management Team in Groton.

Gary Conte, NWS Warning Coordination Meteorologist, gave a brief overview of the "StormReady" program, a voluntary program to help communities prepare for any type of impact caused by hazardous weather. Groton is the fifth town in Connecticut to become "StormReady".

Peter Boynton, CT DEMHS Commissioner, spoke about the partnership between the State, NWS, and local communities.

William Hackett, CT DEMHS Director Emergency Management, presented a plaque in recognition of the Town achieving "StormReady" status. Joe Sastre and Jeff Williams were commended for all their hard work.

Monument for John Ledyard, "The Traveler"

A monument was unveiled at the Bill Memorial Library on September 14, 2009 in honor of John Ledyard, "The Traveler". State Representative Elissa Wright presented a proclamation to the Town of Groton in recognition of Mr. Ledyard, a native son who distinguished himself in the world of exploration during the 1700's.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Niel Spillane, 147 High Street, Mystic, realizes that a drainage problem has stalled the Mystic Streetscape Project, and wonders why State and Federal Representatives have not been asked to lend their support so that this project can move forward. Mr. Spillane also has two traffic concerns: (1) at the intersection of Route 1 and Route 215 cars squeeze into the left lane at the last minute, and (2) just before the intersection of Route 117 and Hazelnut Hill Road two lanes merge into one but the traffic continues to be heavy until after Hazelnut Hill Road because of the Pequot Health Center.

Phil Butta, 282 Noank-Ledyard Road, Mystic, (member of Town Parks and Recreation Commission) is responding to remarks made by a citizen at a previous Council meeting. He believes that the Town should provide the facility for rowing but the users of the program should pay for the program and the instructors. He stated that there are many programs in Town with volunteer instructors and coaches who are passionate about their sport or activity. He added that crew is an expensive sport, and fund-raising should be done by the users of the program.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Mayor Watson requested that the Town Manager put Mr. Spillane's traffic concerns on the Traffic Authority agenda.

The Town Manager gave an update on the Mystic Streetscape Project. He acknowledged that a significant amount of time has been lost due to debates between the Town, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the Department of Transportation (DOT). Various sources of money have been assembled for the project but they all have strings attached, so that each "pot of money" can only be used for certain things. Therefore, the project does not need to be redesigned, but it does need to be repackaged so the proper dollars will be used to pay for the proper items.

Mr. Oefinger stated that due to the confusion when driving up Fort Hill, the traffic concern on Route 1 and Route 215 has been on the Traffic Authority agenda numerous times. He will put this item on the agenda again. The Town Manager stated that the traffic concern on Route 117 and Hazelnut Hill Road could be corrected by changing the painted lines and cutting back the island. This has been suggested to the Department of Transportation (DOT), but DOT does not think there is a problem. The Town Manager will try to enlist the aid of Groton's State Legislators on this matter.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilor Sheets, Councilor Antipas, and Councilor Monteiro will abstain, as they were not present at the last Town Council meeting.

a. Approval of Minutes

2009-0227 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of September 1, 2009 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2009-0222 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

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

Various Donations - \$661.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Ilona Oberman - \$100.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous

Elaine Bentley Buaghn - \$36.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous

Joan M. DiMartino - \$20.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous

David F. Falvey - \$150.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous

Claude Pellegrino - \$100.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous

Wayne Batcheler - \$50.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous

Christine Grady - \$250.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous

James R. Marshall III - \$100.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous

Karn Ryken - \$150.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous

Kris Kuhn - \$150.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Susan Sutherland - \$150.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Herta Payson - \$50.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Diana Sheets - \$200.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Anonymous - \$169.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Various Donations - \$250.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Christopher Burdy Donation - \$150.00 - Maritime Academy

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, 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: 5 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Flax, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Schmidt
Abstain: 3 - Councilor Antipas, Councilor Monteiro and Councilor Sheets

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilor Antipas was present at discussions between the Board of Education and the Teachers' Union; a full report to the Council will be made at the next Committee of the Whole meeting. He also attended an Ethics Subcommittee meeting.

Councilor Schmidt was approached about a traffic problem at the intersection of Bank Street and Academy Lane where brush and branches obstruct the view.

Councilor Sheets stated that the Department of Energy (DOE) has granted Groton's appeal for an energy grant in the amount of \$198,100. She attended a Task Force on Climate Change and Sustainable Community meeting.

Mayor Watson was present at "Sharing Ramadan" where a panel discussed fasting traditions. He also attended the unveiling of the memorial to John Ledyard. Mayor Watson stated that there will be a Groton Business Association meeting on September 17, 2009. He received a thank-you from the Executive Director of the Women's Center of Southeastern Connecticut Inc. for \$16,000 in funding to support victims of domestic violence in our community.

Councilor Kolnaski attended a Permanent School Building Committee meeting, the Friends of Fort Griswold Fifteenth Annual Commemoration and Memorial Wreath Laying Ceremony, and a Ledge Light Health District meeting. She stated that the next Town Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee meeting will be October 21, 2009.

Councilor Monteiro was present at a Golf Advisory Board meeting. She, along with Councilor Schmidt, attended a New London Ledge Lighthouse Foundation meeting to discuss repairs to the lighthouse and a Centennial Gala is scheduled for September 25, 2009. She received a follow-up communication in support of Bob Whittle who was deployed to Iraq earlier this summer.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

Barbara Tarbox noted that the RTM meeting scheduled for September 16, 2009, has been cancelled.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk stated that the fee for all vitals certified copies (birth, marriage, and death certificate copies) will be increased to \$20 effective October 1, 2009. She noted that there are rumors that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will be raising sporting license fees and she is unsure if or when this will occur. As soon as there is any concrete information it

will be relayed to the public. The Town Clerk noted that over twenty early ballots were mailed out to military personnel. The Explanatory Text for the bonding question has been sent to the printer and will be mailed out to residents with additional copies in libraries, Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, and City Municipal Building.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager remarked that the Groton Business Association has drafted a resolution asking the State to consider renaming the Groton/New London Airport. A proposed name is not identified in the resolution, and the Town Manager is unaware of the reasons for this proposed change other than marketing. Mr. Oefinger noted that there will be a dinner to benefit the Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Trust Fund on October 15, 2009 and a Centennial Gala to benefit the New London Ledge Lighthouse on September 25, 2009. The Town of Groton Police Department will conduct a Child Seat Safety Clinic on September 19, 2009, and the Groton Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (GASP) Family Day will be held on September 28, 2009. The Town Manager announced that the Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut will distribute \$100,000 to each of the local libraries, with a celebration to be held at the Groton Public Library on October 2, 2009. Mr. Oefinger stated that Group II will meet next week, but not Group I. The Committee of the Whole meeting will start at its usual time, and there will be a Groton Resource Recovery Authority (GRRRA) meeting.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Brown-Tracy

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Flax

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Sheets

No meeting, no report.

e. Finance - Chairman Schmidt

No meeting, no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman O'Beirne

No meeting, no report.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Monteiro

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Antipas

No meeting, no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson

No meeting, no report.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

None.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:44 p.m. was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Flax and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant