



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Meeting Minutes

Town Council

Mayor Rita M. Schmidt, Councilors Dean Antipas, Joe de la Cruz, Bruce S. Flax, Bob Frink, Patrice Granatosky, Rich Moravsik, Deborah L. Peruzzotti, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, September 15, 2015

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Schmidt, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Frink, Councilor Granatosky, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Watson and Councilor Antipas
Members Absent: Councilor Peruzzotti

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher, and Office Assistant Carol Buckingham.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Mr. Thomas Potter.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2015-0229 Spicer Park Dock Dedication

Read

Proclamation was read by Councilor Granatosky.

2015-0230 Proclamation Recognizing Constitution Week 2015

Proclamation was read by Councilor de la Cruz.

Recess for Public Hearing on:

Mayor Schmidt called a recess at 7:40 pm for the public hearing.

2015-0232 Sale of William Seely School Property

Peggy Adams read a letter for her sister Patricia Tefft-Judson, 7 Senkow Avenue, expressing her concern with the sale of the William Seely School property and the impact it might have on the quality of life for the area.

Thomas Potter, 154 Walker Hill Road, spoke of his concern with the sale of the William Seely School property and how it will increase the traffic congestion.

John Suarez, 166 Grove Avenue, stated his concern with the sale of the William Seely School property and the potential impact to the quality of life for the area.

Erlinda Brown-Foley, 15 Senkow Avenue, expressed her concern with the sale of the William Seely School property and the possible impact any future development may have with the existing water tower, the waste water treatment facility and additional traffic congestion.

Faith Richardson, 21 Boulder Court, Mystic, shared her concern with the programs that the Groton Parks and Recreation Department offer at the William Seely School, should the property be sold for commercial development.

Melissa Scarborough, 31 Senkow Avenue, expressed her concern regarding the Parks and Recreation Department programs currently being offered at William Seely School.

Lisa Tess, 1 Darrell Drive, Littleton, Massachusetts, spoke highly of the Karate program offered at the William Seely School and requested that the Council reconsider any option to sell the property.

Mr. Shelton, 35 Riverview Avenue, shared his concern regarding the development of the William Seely School.

Lynn Potter, 154 Walker Hill Road, shared her opinion that any development to the William Seely School property would impact the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Town Manager Mark Oefinger noted CGS 8-24 regarding the sale of municipal property. He stated that Kincora Development has requested a 120-day due diligence period to obtain necessary permits for developing the property before they purchase the property. He noted the memorandum from the Assistant Director of Planning & Development Deb Jones. The memo stated that the Planning Commission supports the sale of the William Seely School property with stipulations that the Parks and Recreation Department be given the appropriate time to relocate their programs and that any future zone change on the property shall address traffic, infrastructure, and compatibility with the surrounding land uses.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

None.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

None.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2015-0223 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meetings of August 18, 2015 and September 1, 2015 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2015-0231 Marketing Services for Sub Base Centennial

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2015-0233 Mediated Solution to Annual Town Funding of the City Highway Budget

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 Watson, seconded by Councilor Antipas, 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 Antipas attended the Board of Education teacher contract negotiation meeting on September 2, 2015.

Councilor Granatosky received an inquiry from a resident regarding the status of the Thomas Road repairs. Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that he will provide an update on the project.

Councilor Flax attended the Town and City Councils/BOE/RTM Liaison Committee meeting on September 2, 2015, the RTM meeting on September 9, 2015, the Golf Advisory Board meeting, and

an FOI hearing on September 14, 2015. He also attended the swearing in ceremony for Police Chief L. J. Fusaro on September 15, 2015.

Councilor de la Cruz traveled to Gloucester, Massachusetts on September 14, 2015, to review their Angel program with Town of Groton Police Chief L. J. Fusaro, Stonington Police Chief Stewart and Groton City Police Chief Davoren. He also attended the Town and City Councils/BOE/RTM Liaison Committee meeting on September 2, 2015. He requested a joint meeting for the Community Relations Committee and the Public Safety Committee to work on a drug prevention program. He reported that there were three more drug related deaths.

Councilor Frink attended the Economic Development Commission meeting on September 3, 2015. They discussed the two existing sports facilities in Old Mystic and a new business, a sand box beach volleyball facility, that is planned to be built at 115 Gold Star Highway. He attended the Town and City Councils/BOE/RTM Liaison Committee meeting on September 2, 2015, and the School Facilities Initiative Task Force meeting on September 10, 2015. He also traveled to Newport, Rhode Island on September 15, 2015 to tour the USS Trenton.

Councilor Moravsik attended the Downtown Mystic Merchant's meeting, and the Mystic Eats Festival on September 11, 2015, the Groton City Block Party on September 13, 2015, and the Town and City Councils/BOE/RTM Liaison Committee meeting on September 2, 2015. He also attended the swearing in ceremony for Police Chief L. J. Fusaro on September 15, 2015.

Councilor Watson attended the Governor's press conference on tourism on September 1, 2015. He attended the Town and City Councils/BOE/RTM Liaison Committee meeting on September 2, 2015, the Sub Base Centennial planning meetings on September 4 and 14, 2015. He attended an FOI hearing on September 14, 2015. He attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new rowing dock at the Spicer House on September 12, 2015. He attended a dredging hearing on September 13, 2015 held by Senator Murphy regarding Long Island Sound. He attended the Energy Committee meeting on September 14, 2015. He also attended the swearing-in ceremony for Police Chief L. J. Fusaro on September 15, 2015.

Mayor Schmidt attended the Governor's press conference on September 1, 2015 at the Mystic Aquarium about tourism and the excellent increase over last year. On September 4 and 14, 2015 she attended committee meetings on the Sub base Centennial planning. On September 14, 2015 she attended a dredging hearing held by Senator Murphy about the proposed dredging plans for Long Island Sound. On September 9, 2015 she attended the RTM. On September 10, 2015 she attended the School Facilities Task Force meeting. On September 12, 2015 she attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Spicer House to celebrate the new rowing dock. On September 15, 2015 she attended the swearing-in ceremony for Police Chief L. J. Fusaro, which she reported that representatives from the State Police, Sub Base Police, Norwich, East Lyme, Stonington, Ledyard, NCIS, CIA, and the Connecticut National Guard were in attendance. On September 14, 2015, Mayor Schmidt attended a presentation given by CL & P to the Energy Committee. She reported receiving numerous e-mails which are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The Town Clerk reported that the RTM met on September 9, 2015 where there was a presentation of the current school building proposal presented by Jon Heller, Chairman of the Schools Initiative Task Force. She announced that the RTM has sent a letter to the Town Council requesting that they act on their referral list and consider establishing a Charter Revision Commission. She stated that the next regular RTM meeting is scheduled to be held on October 14, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. at the Groton Senior Center.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk reported on the current Boards and Commissions vacancies. In response to Councilor Flax's question, she stated that the RTM voted 15-10-1 in favor of sending the letter to

the Town Council in order to establish a Charter Revision Commission. She stated that the vote was not unanimous and that there were only 26 members present.

Councilor Granatosky stated that this vote was not a fair representation of the full RTM.

d. Town Manager

Town Manager Mark Oefinger reported on some changes to the road improvement schedule. He announced that the Annual Law Enforcement Night will be held at the Elk's Club on September 26, 2015. He reviewed items from the Town Manager's Weekly Status Report. He also announced that the consultants for the Groton Long Point bridge project would be returning to give an update.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community Relations - Chairman de la Cruz

No report.

b. Finance - Chairman Frink

Chairman Frink reported that the committee met on September 15, 2015 and that he will give a report at the next Town Council meeting.

c. Personnel & Appointments - Chairman Flax

No report.

d. Rules - Chairman Frink

No report.

e. Public Safety - Chairman Moravsik

No report.

f. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Schmidt

Mayor Schmidt reported that the committee had a joint meeting with the Board of Education and the two Groton representatives from the State Legislature. She stated that the committee supported the items on the agenda for tonight.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

2015-0231 Marketing Services for Sub Base Centennial

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH QUINN & HARY FOR MARKETING SERVICES ASSOCIATED WITH THE U.S. NAVAL SUBMARINE BASE CENTENNIAL

WHEREAS, the U.S. Naval Submarine Base in Groton will be celebrating its 100th anniversary beginning in October 2015, offering the Town of Groton and the region a significant opportunity to celebrate the Navy's presence in the community, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton and City of Groton have received a proposal from Quinn & Hary of New London in the amount of \$20,000 for sub base centennial marketing and communications services to support a year-long plus celebration, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger is authorized to enter into a contract with Quinn & Hary for marketing services associated with the U.S. Naval Submarine Base Centennial, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town of Groton's \$10,000 contribution to the project will be funded from the following accounts:

10100 Executive Management Professional Development (5210) - \$2,000
10465 Economic Development/Marketing Professional/Technical Services (5290)- \$8,000

A motion was made by Councilor Moravsik, seconded by Councilor Flax, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2015-0233

Mediated Solution to Annual Town Funding of the City Highway Budget

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF SEEKING A MEDIATED SOLUTION TO ANNUAL TOWN FUNDING OF THE CITY HIGHWAY BUDGET

WHEREAS, the City of Groton has requested arbitration over the amount of money the Town is providing them for highway purposes for FYE 2016, and

WHEREAS, arbitration was previously requested in FYE 2014, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council is desirous of finding a more permanent solution to this potentially annual debate, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council would be supportive of a mediated solution that would identify a methodology that could be used on an annual basis that would determine the amount of money that the Town would provide the City for highway purposes and could serve as a basis for a multi-year or longer Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and Town, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town Council would be supportive of hiring a third party independent consultant to mediate this process and help identify a mutually acceptable methodology.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Granatosky stated that she will support the measure and that it demonstrates that the Town Council is acting in good faith.

A motion was made by Councilor Frink, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, to amend the resolution to read:

WHEREAS, the Town Council is desirous of finding a more permanent solution to the requirements of the Special Act that will be fair and equitable to all the citizens of Groton, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council would be supportive of a mediated solution that would identify a methodology that could be used on an annual basis that would determine the amount of money that the Town would provide the City to maintain Town roads that are in the City. This methodology could serve as a basis for a multi-years or longer Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and the Town, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town Council is supportive of hiring a consultant to advise the Town on this matter.

Councilor Moravsik stated that he agrees with the amendment, and that the consultant should only advise the Council on the methodology.

Councilor Granatosky stated that she is opposed to the amendment and that it is contrary to the sentiment of the original motion. She stated her understanding of this motion to find a mediated solution that both parties could agree to address the current situation and future years.

Councilor Antipas stated that he will not be supporting the amended motion. He explained the process of mediation and the practical use. He stated the Town is agreeing to enter in to a mediated process in good faith to end the current issues and future potential problems.

Councilor Flax suggested including the City in the drafting of this Resolution. He stated that he will not support the amendment at this time.

Councilor Antipas gave an explanation that the original motion will set a dialogue in motion. He stated that it will be up to the City to respond with their own resolution to address a solution. He used the analogy of a handshake to explain the process.

In response to Councilor Frink's question, Town Manager Oefinger stated that both the Town and the City have to agree to any solution. He made it clear that the intention of the original motion is to find a methodology, not the end result. Both parties will have the option to support the end result. He stated that the Council will decide how they will be involved with the process. He stated that this is an effort to break out of the cycle of an annual debate.

Councilor Antipas detailed the process of mediation and the roles for each party.

The motion was defeated by a vote of 1-7-0, Councilor Frink voted in favor of the amendment.

Councilor Watson stated that he planned to abstain from this vote because he was not present for the executive session where this subject was discussed.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 6 - Mayor Schmidt, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Granatosky, Councilor Moravsik and Councilor Antipas
Abstain: 2 - Councilor Frink and Councilor Watson

X. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Flax made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Watson. Seeing no objections, Mayor Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Office Assistant Carol Buckingham