



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes Town Council

Mayor James L. Streeter, Councilors Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Paulann H. Sheets, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, October 18, 2011

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

Mayor Streeter called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Streeter, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Sheets

Members Absent: Councilor Monteiro, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2011-0185 Proclamation Recognizing Ben Dinovelli

Read

The proclamation was read by Councilor Flax.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Michael Noel, 100 Williams Street, Noank, is concerned about the potential long-term liability for the Town in allowing a private developer to bury a gas tank on Town property near the pump station on Gravel Street. Mr. Noel also stated that the parking lot on Gravel Street should not become private parking.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

The Town Manager noted that the Council has had discussions on this topic and voted to allow the propane tank and parking spaces.

Councilor Sheets stated that the parking area near the pump station was previously employee parking and not for public use. She also noted that the developer will be constructing a walkway near the river that will enhance the area.

Mayor Streeter added that when these items were being discussed by the Council, merchants from downtown Mystic contacted him and stated that they wanted to allow the developer to utilize the parking area near the pump station.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2011-0200 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of October 11, 2011 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2011-0194 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

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

George Marshall - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Lee Vincent - \$50.00 - Social Services Discretionary

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2011-0189 Groton Education Foundation Grant - Senior Center

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

2011-0193 Thames Street - State Financial Assistance

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

2011-0196 Appointment of Susan Sutherland to the Zoning Commission as a Regular Member

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

2011-0197 Appointment of Robert Occhialini to the Shellfish Commission

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

2011-0198 Appointment of William Gaynor to the Harbor Management Commission

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

2011-0199 Board of Education/Groton Schools Custodian and Maintenance Association Collective Bargaining Agreement

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 O'Beirne, Jr., 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 unanimously

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilors received emails regarding the Mystic Streetscape Project, cost over-runs for the baseball field at Fitch Senior High School, and the Public Works Department taking over school maintenance.

Councilor O'Beirne is concerned about the width of the sidewalks and the narrowing of the road at the intersection near the book store in downtown Mystic. He suggested that Councilors drive by to see for themselves.

Councilor Flax noted that the dimensions of the road and sidewalks are correct according to the reports from the Public Works and Planning Departments, but it does look very narrow. He is concerned by the number of parking spaces that will be lost due to this project.

Councilor Kolnaski attended the Ledge Light Health District Board of Directors meeting.

Councilor Sheets noted that there will be a presentation regarding VA Long Term Care benefits on October 21, 2011, at the Groton Senior Center.

Councilor Johnson asked for the placement of a speed advisory sign or additional policing on South Road due to the excessive speed of vehicles. The Town Manager stated that he will talk to the Police Chief.

Mayor Streeter received an email regarding the condition of one of the Towns salt marshes. He attended an Eagle Scout ceremony, a meeting with University of Connecticut representatives regarding students and alcohol, and a ribbon-cutting for the Mystic Indoor Tennis Club. The Mayor extended his gratitude for a recent Eagle Scout project which cleared and removed debris from a lot owned by the Avery-Copp House on the Thames River. Benches have been placed on the lot for public use.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The RTM met on October 12, 2011, and its next meeting will be held on November 9, 2011 at the Groton Senior Center.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk stated that polls will be open for the election on Tuesday, November 8, 2011. Absentee ballots are available at the Town Clerk's Office.

The Town Clerk noted that the Committee of the Whole meeting that week will be held on Wednesday, November 9, 2011.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager stated that there will be a public information session on October 20, 2011, to discuss the town-wide revaluation project. He also noted that a prescription drug take-back event will be on October 29, 2011, at the Senior Center. The Town Manager announced that Michael J. Crowley has been appointed as Groton's Chief of Police and Steve Smith has been appointed Deputy Chief. The swearing in ceremony will be on October 28, 2011.

Mayor Streeter formally congratulated Michael Crowley and Steve Smith on their appointments.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Peruzzotti

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Johnson

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 O'Beirne

No meeting, no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman Flax

Councilor Flax read the minutes of October 11, 2011, which are on file in the Town Clerk's Office.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Monteiro

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Watson

Councilor Sheets read the minutes of October 11, 2011, which are on file in the Town Clerk's

Office.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Streeter

Mayor Streeter noted that the resolutions on tonight's agenda are a result of the Committee of the Whole meeting.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

2011-0189 Groton Education Foundation Grant - Senior Center

GROTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION GRANT - SENIOR CENTER

WHEREAS, the Groton Educational Foundation provides "mini-grants" to fund unique projects based on ideas from teachers or other educators in Groton, and

WHEREAS, the Groton Senior Center and Claude Chester Elementary School provide intergenerational education experiences for students and seniors, and

WHEREAS, grant funds could be used for a program with the Granite State Zoe called "Wildlife Encounters Experiential Learning," now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger or his designee may apply for a grant of \$486.90 from the Groton Educational Foundation.

A motion was made by Councilor Johnson, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0193 Thames Street - State Financial Assistance

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO FILE AN APPLICATION FOR STATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE THAMES STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

WHEREAS, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 4-66c, the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development is authorized to extend financial assistance for economic development projects, and

WHEREAS, it is desirable and in the public interest that the Town of Groton make an application to the State for \$500,000 for final design and construction administration costs for the Thames Street Reconstruction Project and execute an Assistance Agreement, now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Groton Town Council

1. That it is cognizant of the conditions and prerequisites for the state financial assistance imposed by Connecticut General Statutes Section 4-66c;

2. That the filing of an application for State financial assistance by the Town of Groton in an amount not to exceed \$500,000 is hereby approved and that Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger is directed to execute and file such application with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, to provide such additional information, to execute such other documents as may be required, to execute an Assistance Agreement with the State of Connecticut for State financial assistance if such an agreement is offered, to execute any amendments, decisions, and revisions thereto, and to act as the authorized representative of the Town of Groton; and

3. That it has adopted as its policy (in Resolution 2007-0292 on December 18, 2007) to support

the nondiscrimination agreements and warranties provided in subsection (a)(1) of Connecticut General Statutes Sections 4a-60 and 4a-60a, respectively, as amended by Public Acts 07-142 and 07-245, and for which purposes the "contractor" is the Town of Groton and "contract" is said Assistance Agreement.

A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0196 Appointment of Susan Sutherland to the Zoning Commission as a Regular Member

RESOLUTION APPOINTING SUSAN SUTHERLAND AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE ZONING COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that Susan K. Sutherland, 32 Neptune Drive, is hereby appointed as a regular member (from an alternate member) of the Zoning Commission for a term ending 12/31/15.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 5 - Mayor Streeter, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Sheets

Abstain: 1 - Councilor Kolnaski

2011-0197 Appointment of Robert Occhialini to the Shellfish Commission

RESOLUTION APPOINTING ROBERT OCCHIALINI AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE SHELLFISH COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that Robert R. Occhialini, 49 Prospect Hill Road, is appointed as an alternate member of the Shellfish Commission for a term ending 12/31/14.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0198 Appointment of William Gaynor to the Harbor Management Commission

RESOLUTION APPOINTING WILLIAM GAYNOR AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER TO THE HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that William G. Gaynor, 377 Tyler Avenue, is appointed as an alternate member to the Harbor Management Commission, for a term ending 09/01/12.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0199 Board of Education/Groton Schools Custodian and Maintenance Association Collective Bargaining Agreement

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION AND GROTON SCHOOLS CUSTODIAN AND MAINTENANCE ASSOCIATION COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

WHEREAS, the Groton Board of Education and the Groton Schools Custodian and Maintenance Association reached a tentative agreement on a successor collective bargaining agreement for the period July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2014, and

WHEREAS, the Groton Board of Education does not have exclusive authority over the Town's pension plan and does not have authority to bargain over and/or approve modifications to the terms and conditions of the pension plan, and

WHEREAS, the ultimate authority to approve changes to the Town's pension plan rests with the Town, and

WHEREAS, the parties have reached specific tentative agreements on subsections a and b of Article 19 - Pension which are cost neutral, and

WHEREAS, approval of the tentative agreements on subsections a and b of Article 19 - Pension are recommended by the Town's negotiators, therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Groton Town Council hereby approves the parties' tentative agreement on subsections a and b of Article 19 - Pension.

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

The motion carried unanimously

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

Councilors noted that more communication is needed between the Board of Education and the Town Council. Councilors are approached by the public and want to be supportive; therefore they need to be aware of what is going on throughout the Town. Recent examples are middle school schedules and cost over-runs for the baseball field at Fitch Senior High School.

Mayor Streeter stated that a Town Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee meeting will be scheduled after the election in November.

Councilor Johnson requested an update on the progress of the police study. The Town Manager stated that he is attempting to schedule phone interviews with two companies that provide studies of this nature.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor O'Beirne and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant