



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 Harry A. Watson, Councilors Heather Sherman Bond, Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, Paulann H. Sheets, and James L. Streeter

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

Mayor Harry Watson called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

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

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 Mayor Watson.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

Mayor Watson mentioned a proclamation honoring four individuals that played a role in saving the lives of two kayakers in Noank. This proclamation will be read at the next Town Council meeting.

IV. CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

John Sutherland, 32 Neptune Drive, stated that he was pleased that the Town Council received a presentation outlining the proposed Pfizer Power Generating Facility. However, Mr. Sutherland urges the Council to adopt a resolution requesting that the Connecticut Siting Council hold a public hearing on the proposed facility.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

None.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2008-0050 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of February 6, 2008 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative items

2008-0042 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 - \$1,098.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Jean Simpson - \$30.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Levine Gottfried & Somberg, LLC - \$50.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

Marlene Terry Ziegler (in memory of Joyce Tatro) - \$100.00 - Library Discretionary
Various Donations - \$702.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Matching Funds Check - \$1,383.65 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Gloria Fogarty - \$5.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2008-0041 Extension of Auditor's Agreement

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

2008-0045 Millstone Emergency Notification Siren Replacement Project - Additional Site

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

2008-0046 Pfizer Power Generating Facility - Discussion

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

2008-0048 Referral of Par Four Restaurant Lease to Planning Commission

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 Streeter, seconded by Councilor Bond, 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 Monteiro received a call and an email regarding the Pfizer Power Generating Plant.

Councilor Sheets received a communication regarding the proposed Pfizer facility, expressing concern about the lack of a public hearing, the ammonia transportation, and noise.

Councilor Bond received a communication from Councilor O'Beirne concerning the attorney's recommendations on offering sole bids for scope of services.

Councilor Streeter also received calls concerning the Pfizer Power Generating Facility, and one regarding Pfizer's historical "ways" possibly being demolished. Councilor Streeter believes that they were dismantled years ago, but will investigate this further. He was also present at a fundraiser for Ken's Tackle Shop which was well attended.

Councilor Kolnaski attended the Permanent School Building Committee meeting. She met with the Ledge Light Health District where the focus was to promote healthier eating habits and physical activity programs for our youth. She also received a call requesting that the Council rescind the letter to the Siting Council. Councilor Kolnaski attended the Council, Board of Education and RTM Liaison Committee Meeting where it was mentioned that Connecticut is number two in the nation in regard to students most likely to succeed.

Councilor O'Beirne received calls and an email requesting that the letter to the Siting Council regarding Pfizer and its new power plant be rescinded. He also received an email supporting the concept of municipal and state employees joining in common health services.

Mayor Watson went to the Norwich Inn to meet the new CEO of the Mashantucket Pequots. He attended a meeting in Ledyard to further discuss the proposed trail between Bluff Point and Preston. The Mayor read a proclamation honoring four individuals that played a role in saving the lives of two kayakers in Noank. This proclamation will be read at the next Town Council meeting. He also met with Beverly Washington at the Groton Public Library so that the public

would have the opportunity to meet and speak with the Mayor and the Board of Education Chairman. The next opportunity will be March 15, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at the Groton Public Library.

b. Representative Town Meeting

There was an RTM meeting on February 13, 2008.

c. Clerk of the Council

No communications.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager referenced a memo from Assessor John Philip regarding the 2007 grand list . He requested that Councilors look at the memo, bearing in mind that we are currently in the second year of a phase in. Group I will have a special meeting on February 25, 2008 at which fire chiefs from the community are invited to discuss the fire assessment and fact finding regarding volunteers and the desirability of a tax exemption or an abatement for firefighting volunteers.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Brown-Tracy

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Bond

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Sheets

Councilor Sheets read the minutes of the meeting held February 12, 2008, which are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

e. Finance - Chairman Schmidt

Councilor Schmidt read the minutes of the meeting held on February 12, 2008, which are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

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

No meeting, no report.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter

Councilor Streeter read the minutes of the meeting held on February 12, 2008, which are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Monteiro

Councilor Monteiro read the minutes of the meeting held on February 12, 2008, which are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson

The Committee of the Whole met on February 12, 2008. Discussion included the extension of the auditor's agreement, easements for installation of warning signs and poles for emergency notification, rescinding a letter to the Siting Council regarding Pfizer, and a tentative lease agreement for Par Four restaurant. Representatives from Pfizer were in attendance, and gave a presentation on the proposed Pfizer Power Generating Facility.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS**2008-0041 Extension of Auditor's Agreement**

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT EXTENSION FOR PROFESSIONAL AUDITING SERVICES

WHEREAS, the laws of Connecticut and the Town of Groton Charter require the Town Council to appoint a Town auditor or auditors, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton in 2005 appointed the firm of Blum, Shapiro for a term of three years, with an option for two additional years, and

WHEREAS, the firm of Blum, Shapiro has shown a high level of experience in municipal auditing and has served well as Town Auditor for the latest three years, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may execute a two-year extension of the current auditing contract with Blum, Shapiro.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0045 Millstone Emergency Notification Siren Replacement Project - Additional Site

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EASEMENTS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF EMERGENCY WARNING SIREN POLES AND EQUIPMENT

WHEREAS, Dominion Nuclear Connecticut, Inc., is replacing warning sirens within the Town's Emergency Planning Zone, and

WHEREAS, two additional sites have been identified as needed to provide better coverage of our population for emergency notifications, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may grant easements in favor of Dominion Nuclear Connecticut, Inc., for the placement of such siren systems on Ward Avenue adjacent to the railroad right-of-way, approximately 100 feet north of the intersection with Mosher Avenue, and on the north side of Industrial Drive, approximately three-tenths (0.3) mile east of the intersection with Depot Road.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0046 Pfizer Power Generating Facility - Discussion

RESOLUTION RESCINDING PREVIOUS RESOLUTION AND WITHDRAWING A LETTER TO THE CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

WHEREAS, the Town Council at its February 6, 2008 meeting passed a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to send a letter to the Connecticut Siting Council concerning a petition of Pfizer Inc. for a Declaratory Ruling for the construction and operation of an addition to the combined heat and electrical generating facility in Groton, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council was under the impression that they needed to respond to the Siting Council immediately in order to have their comments available for the Siting Council meeting scheduled for February 14th, and

WHEREAS, Town Council Committee of the Whole and representatives from Pfizer had an opportunity to meet on February 12th to review Pfizer's proposed project, and

WHEREAS, in addition to receiving an overview of the project, Pfizer representatives were able to address the issues and concerns raised in the letter to the Siting Council, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council withdraws its request for a public hearing but let the letter remain within the purview of the Siting Council.

A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted as Amended.

Councilor Sheets stated that the Siting Council should have an opportunity to discuss the letter, as they have technical staff at their disposal. She further stated that the information passed on to the Council regarding the critical timeline for the submission of the letter was received directly from the chief Secretary of the Siting Council and the Assistant Attorney General.

MOTION TO AMEND

A Motion to Amend the original Resolution to withdraw the request for a public hearing, but not the letter to the Siting Council was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Schmidt.

Councilor Monteiro stated that she contacted a member of the Siting Council and was assured that even though the ammonia level will be 19%, there would still be a review of the safety factors regarding use, storage, and transportation at the proposed facility.

Councilor Bond believes that Pfizer chose to purchase ammonia at the 19% level due to the fact that it was readily commercially available.

Councilor Kolnaski does not support the amendment because she does not agree with portions of the letter. She further stated that the request for an Advisory Committee should come from the City.

Councilor Streeter spoke with Mr. Phelps and asked if Pfizer had chosen a 20+% ammonia level whether it would have automatically initiated a hearing, and was informed that it would not have. He also spoke with Mr. Annino regarding noise abatement, and was assured that the noise would be minimal.

MOTION TO AMEND

A Motion to Amend the Resolution by replacing the word "misimpression" with "impression" in the second WHEREAS was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Bond.

VOTE on Motion to Amend by replacing the word "misimpression" with "impression" in the second WHEREAS passed unanimously.

VOTE on Motion to Amend to withdraw the request for a public hearing, but not the letter to the Siting Council passed 6 In Favor, 2 Opposed. (Opposed: Councilor Kolnaski and Mayor Watson)

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 6 - Councilor Bond, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter
Opposed: 2 - Mayor Watson and Councilor Kolnaski

2008-0048

Referral of Par Four Restaurant Lease to Planning Commission

RESOLUTION REFERRING PAR FOUR RESTAURANT LEASE TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLVED, the Town Council refers to the Groton Planning Commission, under Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-24, the proposed lease for Par Four Restaurant.

A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Streeter, that this matter be Adopted

and Referred to the Planning Commission.

The motion carried unanimously

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

2008-0056 Status of Property Foreclosures

STATUS OF PROPERTY FORECLOSURES

The Finance Committee is asked to survey the number of pending and executed foreclosures in the Town of Groton since January 2006 continuing through January 2008, by month and year, and report these numbers to the Council with an evaluation of whether a problem exists or can be anticipated, and recommendations for further investigation, if any, to help buffer residents and secure tax receipts. Assistance of the Finance Director may be necessary.

2008-0057 Status of Municipal Bond Insurance Markets

STATUS OF MUNICIPAL BOND INSURANCE MARKETS

The Finance Committee is asked to investigate whether Groton's bond offerings for the school renovation, water treatment plan, senior center renovation, and animal shelter projects are being impacted or may be impacted by the growing crisis in municipal bond insurance markets (including the auction market).

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:36 p.m. was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant