



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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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, April 15, 2008

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 Harry Watson.

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

Members Absent: Councilor Bond and Councilor Brown-Tracy

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

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Paul Bates.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2008-0099 Proclamation Recognizing Earth Day 2008

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING EARTH DAY 2008

Read

Councilor Sheets read a proclamation recognizing Earth Day.

Councilor Kolnaski expressed her appreciation to Councilor Sheets for her efforts and the abundance of information she has provided to the Environment and Energy Committee.

Recess for Public Hearings

Mayor Watson called a recess for the Public Hearings at 7:34 p.m.

2008-0075 Gravel Street Pump Station Lease - Update

Heard at Public Hearing

Mayor Watson received a letter from Stephanie Marshall, Owner of Tidal River Clothing at 8 West Main Street, in support of the West Main Street project.

The Mayor received a letter from Eric Janney, Executive Board Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, 14 Holmes Street, in support of the lease of the parking area connected to the Gravel Street Pump Station.

Mayor Watson also received an email from Charles Stevens, 12 Stony Hill Drive, stating his opposition to the Gravel Street Pump Station lease.

Paul Bates, 47 Church Street, asked if the general public would be allowed access to this area, and if there is anything in the lease that would limit its use.

The Town Manager responded that the parking spaces would be used exclusively by the condo owners, but it would not be fenced off. He also stated that the leased property does not go up to the water, and there would still be a walkway near the water for Town use.

Bob Cooper, Owner of Cooper Shoppe at 23 West Main Street, stated that when this initially came before the Council, there was a strong email campaign from downtown merchants, and a majority of the merchants are still in support of this project as it is important to tourism.

Frank McLaughlin, 14 Pearl Street, declared that the time delays have been frustrating, and that we need a better atmosphere for shopping in the downtown area. He is in support of the project.

Christine Cooney, owner of Puritan & Genesta Natural Foods in downtown Mystic, stated that everyone has acted in good faith and it is time to proceed with this project.

Rod Desmarais, the developer, gave an update on the current status of the project. He is anxious to move forward and hopefully get pilings in the ground and a concrete base in before winter and to start the construction of the building itself in spring 2009.

Councilor O'Beirne requested that Mr. Desmarais be invited to give a further update at a Committee of the Whole meeting so that Councilors can ask questions about the project.

There being no further comments, Mayor Watson closed this Public Hearing at 7:48 p.m.

2008-0069 Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Ordinance

Heard at Public Hearing

Still being in recess, Mayor Watson opened the Public Hearing on the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Ordinance at 7:49 p.m.

There being no comments, Mayor Watson closed the Public Hearing at 7:50 p.m.

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

2008-0094 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meetings of March 31, 2008 and April 1, 2008 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2008-0089 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 - \$385.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Karen T. Eisenbeiser - \$5.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

Mohegan Sun - \$1,500.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

Comcast Financial Agency Corporation - \$2,500.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

Pfizer Foundation - \$50.00 - Library Discretionary

Groton Heights PTO - \$246.53 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

Colonel Ledyard PTO - \$246.53 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, 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**

Councilor Kolnaski attended the ribbon cutting ceremony at the Hilton Garden Inn and an Issues Committee Meeting for Ledge Light Health District.

Councilor Streeter received emails about the budget, volunteer firefighter tax abatement, and the public garden. He has the name of the coordinator of the previous Town garden and plans on contacting him. Council Streeter attended the ribbon cutting at the Hilton Garden Inn, and visited Par Four Restaurant where renovations have begun.

Councilor Sheets received an email congratulating the Council on action taken regarding the education budget and an email regarding proposed lighting at the Noank Town dock.

The Town Manager stated that a referral has already been made on the lighting situation and this item will be discussed at the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

Councilor Schmidt received email and regular mail items regarding the budget, information from the Old Mystic Fire District, and correspondence about allowing "sandwich" boards to be placed outside of businesses in certain parts of town.

Councilor Monteiro received emails and a letter regarding the community garden, budget issues, and sign enforcement. She attended the ribbon cutting ceremony at the Hilton Garden Inn.

Mayor Watson attended the ribbon cuttings for the bank at Fitch Senior High School and the Hilton Garden Inn. The Mayor noted that the Council has had several budget sessions over the last two weeks, including the last two Saturdays. He attended the installation of officers at the Groton Elks, and was present at the Fitch Middle School Career Day where he talked about his past career and about being Mayor.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

At a meeting on April 9, the RTM voted to postpone action on the Buddington Road transfers until the June meeting to enable them to review additional information they have received. The RTM will be starting its budget sessions with public comment on April 29 at 7:30 p.m. at the Senior Center.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk attended a gathering honoring Belton Copp IV who, after many years, has resigned from the Copp Family Park Board of Overseers. He will be replaced on the Board by his son, Belton Copp V. She presented a plaque on behalf of the Town.

d. Town Manager

The Council has almost completed its budget review. On April 22 there will be a Committee of the Whole meeting where a series of resolutions setting tentative mill rates will be presented, followed by a special Town Council meeting to adopt those tentative mill rates. He noted that the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a Groton Business Update on April 17; Ledge Light Health District will be conducting its second tabletop school dismissal exercise on April 23; an annual Arbor Day celebration will be held on April 25; and on April 26 there will be a business caravan for public officials and citizens to see development sites that have recently been completed.

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

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 Streeter

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Monteiro

No meeting, no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson

The Mayor reported that Councilors have attended numerous budget meetings over the last couple of weeks.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

None.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:06 p.m. was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Monteiro and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant