



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Town Manager
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Meeting Minutes

Town Council

Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Natalie Burfoot Billing, Heather Sherman Bond, Catherine Kolnaski, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Paulann H. Sheets, Thomas J. Skrmetti, and Elissa T. Wright.

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Billing, Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Sheets, Councilor Skrmetti and Councilor Wright

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

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

was led by Terry Eames.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

None.

IV. CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Gleanna Doyle, 11 Allen Street, Mystic, President of the Southeastern Dog Park Association, spoke of the need for a dog park in the Town. She emphasized the importance of dogs being able to play and socialize in an open space.

Laura Heller, 19 Packer Lane, Mystic, spoke in support of the Town establishing a dog park. She said it would be a place for dogs and people to socialize.

Millage Small, 191 Prospect Hill Road, cautioned Town employees about the usage of Town equipment and buildings to broadcast their opinions on the upcoming school referendum. Mr. Small said it is a violation of State law.

John Valentine, 762 Groton Long Point Road, spoke in support of building a new high school instead of adopting the proposed plan that will be going to referendum on April 27. Mr. Valentine feels it is important to furnish the children with a good environment in their last four years of education. Mr. Valentine explained by building a new high school, the current high school building could then be used as a combined elementary and middle school, or even as offices for the business owners currently located on Flanders Road.

Terry Eames, 41 Pine Island Road, urged the Council to be more vocal on its stance regarding the upcoming school referendum. Mr. Eames said Groton's mill and debt rate are near the lowest in the State. Mr. Eames said Jeter, Cook, and Jepson's report on the King Property came in with no major contamination problems. He spoke in support of building on the King Property and told the Council their advocacy can make a difference in the vote.

William Blaisdell, 88 Shennecossett Parkway, spoke in support of building Eastern Point School on the King Property and in support of the Fitch High School renovations. He would like the residents to invest more in education and in the future of the children. Mr. Blaisdell spoke of the dedication and long hours put in by the School Design Committee to put this school plan together. He feels it is a wonderful plan and would like the residents to vote "yes" for the King Property on April 27.

Steve Corley, 855 Gungywamp Road, feels the Board of Education budget is too high and would like to see some reductions in salaries. Mr. Corley suggested charging a fee for a library card, library books, and movies to create more revenue for the Town. He spoke of the need to improve the entrance into the Copp Property and establish a parking area.

Ed Ettinger, 174 Cedar Road, Mystic, spoke about the explanatory text on the school referendum sent out by the Town. He felt many items were left off the map, making it misleading to the public. Mr. Ettinger feels the Mayor's letter published recently in *The Day* is misleading to the public and should be corrected.

Jeff Armstrong, 63 Meech Avenue, spoke in support of the King Property stating Fuss and O'Neill found it to be an excellent land site for building. Mr. Armstrong supports the Mayor and all the work he has done.

Jim Musante, 195 Seneca Drive, said the way the explanatory text has been worded regarding the estimated dollar amounts to be spent is misleading to the public. He spoke against building a new school on the King property citing not only the cost but the overabundance of rock there.

Frank Williams, Seneca Drive, spoke about the FY2005 budget. He feels too much money is spent on salaries and services purchased by the Board of Education. Mr. Williams noted Stonington is building a new high school for less than Groton will be paying for renovations to Fitch High School. He feels Groton is getting "short-changed" in their estimated building costs.

Diane Marley, 172 Crosswinds Drive, stated she is angry at what she feels is manipulation to coerce residents to vote in favor of the King Property. Ms. Marley said she had met with George Marcus and he indicated there would be a \$7 million dollar increase if Eastern Point School is built on the King Property.

Rick Norris, West Shore Avenue, noted the high school being built in Stonington has a lower cost than Fitch High School's proposed renovations because it has less square footage and about half the number of students. He urged residents to vote, "yes" in the upcoming referendum.

Mike Doyle, 15 Elm Street, asked residents to support building Eastern Point School on the King Property and to vote "yes" at the referendum.

Kevin Trejo, 536 Shennecossett Road, asked the Council to remove the passing lane on Thomas Road explaining that it is dangerous with a 30 mph speed limit. Mr. Trejo said he is confused by Ms. Marley's comments about George Marcus, as he was the person who proposed going forward with the current school plan. He asked the residents to vote: "Yes, King, Yes, Yes."

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Councilor Skrmetti requested a letter be sent to the Traffic Authority regarding Thomas Road. Councilor Skrmetti said if the Town does not look out for the best interest of the children and schools it will end up a very sad community.

Councilor Billing noted by law the Council is prohibited from advocating publicly their positions about the school referendum. She explained that is one reason that not much is being heard from the Councilors on their individual positions. Councilor Billing explained that a fee cannot be charged for library books and cards or the Town would lose State funding for the Public library. Councilor Billing did indicate that a fee can be charged for videos.

Councilor O'Beirne said the Council will be voting on the installation of a parking lot at the Copp Property tonight to make it more accessible for the public.

Councilor Wright made a point of clarifying that there are no State Regulations as to the size of school sites. She said State Reg.10-287-C-15 only mandates the maximum acreage site for a school that is obtaining State acquisition grants. Councilor Wright also clarified that the Board of Education specifications adopted on June 9, 2003 do not address site size.

Councilor Sheets asked for a point of clarification from Town Clerk Tarbox regarding public figures advocating their opinions using Town buildings and equipment. She recently watched a Board of Education meeting on television and the members were stating their positions regarding the upcoming school referendum.

Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox referred to a handout she had distributed to the Town Council. She noted there was a misunderstanding with the Board of Education regarding this issue. She spoke with Dr. Mitchell, Superintendent of Schools, today and he indicated the Board of Education video has been taken off the air. Clerk Tarbox said the law is confusing.

Councilor Billing noted the handout does not state that officials cannot speak on camera, although she came to the meeting tonight with the impression it was not allowed.

Councilor Bond requested a referral to Public Works to take down all the signs regarding the April 27 referendum that are located on Town property.

Mayor Watson declined a referral for this issue, noting the referral would not be acted upon until after the referendum.

Town Manager Oefinger explained signs are allowed as long as they conform to size specifications and are located ten feet in from the road. Unfortunately, many of the signs around Town are located on State roads and the State would need to be contacted to remove those signs. Councilor Bond said she would call the State to pick them up but feels it should be done by the Public Works Department. Councilor Bond noted she will make a list of all the signs located on Town roads for the Town Manager.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2004-0130 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council of March 29, 2004 and April 6, 2004 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2004-0016 Pleasant Valley Road South Reconstruction - Update

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2004-0022 Review of Policy Changes

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2004-0013 Abandonment of a Portion of Cedar Lane

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

2004-0075 Elimination of Pumpout Services for Mouse Island

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

2004-0137 Appointment of Susan Marquardt to the Zoning Commission

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

2004-0138 Appointment of Brian Shirvell to the Zoning Commission

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

- 2004-0139 Manager, Planning Services Position Description**
This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2004-0140 Assessment Analyst/Analyst Associate Position Descriptions**
This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2004-0141 Copp Property Parking Area**
This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2004-0142 Copp Property Dog Park**
This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2004-0143 Approval of Budgets for FYE 2005**
This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2004-0144 Computation of Tax Rate for FYE 2005**
This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2004-0145 Computation of Tax Rate for Mumford Cove District Fund Budget**
This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2004-0146 Computation of Tax Rate for First Taxing District Fund Budget**
This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2004-0147 Computation of Tax Rate for Second Taxing District Fund Budget**
This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2004-0148 Computation of Tax Rate for Groton Sewer District Fund Budget**
This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

c. Special Trust Fund Contributions

2004-0132 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 - \$455.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Fund
Groton Utilities Matching Funds - \$675.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Fund
Pfizer Employee via United Way of Southeastern CT - \$86.50 - Senior Center Discretionary
Donation in memory of Evelyn Cote - \$100.00 - Senior Center Discretionary
Donations in memory of Robert Anderson - \$200.00 - Senior Center Discretionary
Groton Regional Theatre - \$500.00 - Senior Center Discretionary
Senior Center Performing Groups - \$75.00 - Senior Center Discretionary

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Bartinik, Jr., seconded by Councilor Skrmetti, 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: 9 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Billing, Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Sheets, Councilor Skrmetti and Councilor Wright

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilor O'Beirne received phone calls regarding the School Referendum. Councilor O'Beirne noted there has been a great amount of support from Legislators to keep the SubBase off the

realignment and base closing list; however, the Town will not find out until 2005.

Councilor Kolnaski received a letter from Councilor Sheets regarding the Dog Park. She received a letter from some parents in Texas whose son's car was damaged in Groton.

She attended her first Ledge Light Health District Meeting on April 8, 2004. A public hearing was held, but no one appeared. The members approved the budget that includes Lyme Disease contract authorization renewal.

Councilor Kolnaski said the Board of Education/Town Council/ RTM Liaison Committee is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, April 21, 2004 at 6:30 p.m. at the School Administration Building.

Councilor Wright received communications regarding the budget and referendum. She also received the same letter as Councilor Kolnaski from Mr. and Mrs. Darilek regarding their son's car accident in Groton on Route 1 near the bridge construction project.

Town Manager Oefinger requested a copy of the letter. Mr. Oefinger noted that the Town does not have any liability since Route 1 is a State road.

Councilor Bartinik received communications regarding the King Property.

2004-0153 **Requests for Information/Opinions by Individual Councilors to Town Manager**

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION/OPINIONS BY INDIVIDUAL COUNCILORS TO TOWN MANAGER

This matter was Referred to the Town Council Committee of the Whole. The motion carried.

Councilor Skrmetti received the same letter from the Darileks in Texas, Councilor Sheet's letter regarding the Dog Park, and a copy of a letter sent to Town Manager Mark Oefinger by Councilor Wright. Councilor Skrmetti feels Councilor Wright's letter to the Town Manager is inappropriate and should have been discussed with the Council as a whole before sending it to him. Councilor Skrmetti requested a referral to the Committee of the Whole to discuss the practice of letters being submitted by one Councilor, rather than the Council as a whole.

Councilor Wright said she believes the Town Manager should provide his opinion regarding the School Referendum in writing. She is disappointed that Mr. Oefinger declined to state his position and recommendations regarding the proposed school projects.

Councilor Bond received communications regarding the Dog Park and the School referendum.

Councilor Billing received communications from a resident wanting greater reductions to the Town Budget and calls from residents not wanting further reductions to the proposed budget. She received the same letters as the other Councilors. Councilor Billing agrees with Councilor Skrmetti regarding Councilor Wright's letter to the Town Manager and would like to see a referral made to the Committee of the Whole.

2004-0154 **Mystic Market Tripping Hazard**

MYSTIC MARKET TRIPPING HAZARD

This matter was Referred to the Town Council Public Safety Committee. The motion carried.

Councilor Sheets also received the same letters as the other Councilors. She noted a second fall has taken place in front of the Mystic Market, where the Town placed cement blocks to ensure parallel parking. She requested a referral to the Public Safety Committee.

Mayor Watson met with Diane Marley and Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent to discuss mutual interest in the Groton Good Government Pac and the Town of Groton securing State Funding. On April 13, 2004 he gave "Welcome to Groton" remarks at the Connecticut Emergency Telecommunications Convention at the Marriott. He attended the Mystic Chamber of Commerce meeting and the Mystic Co-op Task Force meeting.

Mayor Watson met with resident John Sparkman on April 19 to discuss the Town budget and operations.

Mayor Watson announced fourth-quarter transfers need to be dealt with before the May RTM Meeting. It was agreed that the Council would have a special COW Meeting on May 4, before the Town Council Meeting to do this.

Mayor Watson received three e-mails from residents, two regarding the budget and a thank you letter from Margaret Mitchell regarding Mouse Island.

On April 19 he received a call from Senator Dodd's office looking for more information concerning TEA-21 funding for Groton as a result of the Mayor going to Washington, D.C. for the NLC Meeting in March. The inquiry was forwarded to the Town Manager.

Mayor Watson met with Councilor O'Beirne, Senator Dodd, and Congressman Simmons on April 15 to discuss BRAC.

b. Representative Town Meeting

Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox said the RTM is currently conducting Committee Budget Meetings.

c. Clerk of the Council

Clerk of the Council Barbara Tarbox announced the vacancies on Town Boards and Commissions. She noted a list of vacancies have been posted in several public places and can also be seen on television channel 2. She noted any residents interested in applying should contact the Town Clerk's office.

Ms. Tarbox said the Town Clerks office has received many requests for absentee ballots from non-resident property owners wishing to vote in the April 27 School Referendum.

d. Town Manager

Town Manager Mark Oefinger proposed setting a date to continue the Freedom of Information meetings with Sue Phillips and then continue on with conflict of interest discussions. Mr. Oefinger suggested four dates the Council could meet that are on non-COW nights due to the fact the FOI meeting may take a couple of hours.

Councilor Bartinik proposed limiting the meeting to a half hour and conducting it prior to a COW meeting.

Councilor Sheets feels that would not allow enough time and that it is important "on the job" training.

Mayor Watson requested the Town Manager's office call the Councilors and set up a date and time for the FOI meeting.

Mr. Oefinger noted to the residents the restrictions to putting election signs in public. He said Public Works has not picked up signs in the past.

Councilor O'Beirne simply asked that the organizations ensure the signs are installed on private property and not Town or State property.

Town Manager Oefinger announced that the next Group I, Group II, and COW meetings are cancelled due to the School Referendum.

Mr. Oefinger said he would like a Councilor to be appointed to serve on the Consultant Selection Committee for an economic development strategy.

Mayor Watson appointed Councilor Bond since she is Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee.

Mr. Oefinger said the Council will meet on May 4 at 6:30 p.m. prior to the Town Council meeting to discuss fourth-quarter transfers.

Town Manager Oefinger encouraged residents to call Connecticut Light and Power or Groton Utilities, depending where they live, if they notice any street lights out.

He said the Department of Transportation has notified him they will be working in July on I-95 near Exit 88 and in the vicinity of the Noank-Ledyard overpass. Mr. Oefinger said there was an informational session held last week regarding installation of barrier curbing near the reservoir.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OUTSOURCING

This matter was Referred to the Town Council Committee of the Whole. The motion carried.

Councilor Skrmetti received a call from an IBM Representative that would like to give an informational presentation on outsourcing to the Town Council. Councilor Skrmetti requested a referral. Mayor Watson granted a referral to the Committee of the Whole.

e. Town Attorney

None.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS**a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Billing**

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 & Recreation - Chairman Sheets

No Meeting. No Report.

e. Finance - Chairman Wright

No Meeting. No Report.

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

Chairman O'Beirne read the April 13, 2004 Committee Report, which is on file in the Town Clerk's office.

(Chairman O'Beirne agreed to amend the minutes per Councilor Sheets' request to show the votes.)

g. Public Safety - Chairman Skrmetti

No Meeting. No Report.

h. Public Works - Chairman Bartinik

Chairman Bartinik read the April 13, 2004 Committee Report, which is on file in the Town Clerk's office.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson

Mayor Watson said the Town Council completed the Committee of the Whole Budget Meetings on Saturday, April 17, 2004.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS**2004-0013 Abandonment of a Portion of Cedar Lane**

RESOLUTION FOR THE ABANDONMENT OF A PORTION OF CEDAR LANE

WHEREAS, a recorded property map showing Cedar Lane in Noank includes a designated right-of-way which has never been used and is situated beyond the present end of the usable portion of the lane and within the apparent and presumed property of a resident, and

WHEREAS, there has never been a Town plan to use that portion of the indicated right-of-way for Cedar Lane, and there is no foreseeable purpose or intention for the Town of Groton to build or use any extension of Cedar Lane, and

WHEREAS, the indication of a Town right-of-way in official land records unfairly impedes the sale or encumbrance of the residential property involved, and

WHEREAS, the Groton Planning Commission on February 23, 2004, sent a report in favor of the abandonment of the Town's interest of a 727 square foot portion of Cedar Lane, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton has no deeded interest or title in the said right-of-way, and consequently holds no asset or value in the said right-of-way, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that upon the approval or concurrence of the Representative Town Meeting, the Town Manager may execute a quit claim deed in favor of the owners at 40 Cedar Lane to relinquish any and all claim or ownership by the Town of Groton in a right-of-way of 727 square feet, more or less.

Refer to RTM

A motion was made by Councilor Bartinik, Jr., seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted and Referred to the Representative Town Meeting.

Councilor Bartinik explained that this is a small portion of land that is being quit-claimed by the Town to the residents at 40 Cedar Lane. It was not clear who the owner of the piece of land was, which made it difficult for the residents at 40 Cedar Lane to have a clear title to their property to refinance or sell it. The quit-claim confirms that the Town doesn't have an interest in the land and clears the title for the residents of 40 Cedar Lane.

The motion carried unanimously.

2004-0075

Elimination of Pumpout Services for Mouse Island

RESOLUTION CONCERNING PUMP OUT SERVICES FOR MOUSE ISLAND

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Works asked to be relieved of the seasonal tasks of providing a pump out boat service for three houses on Mouse Island due to staff time required, the cost, and the perceived dangers entailed in the work, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council agreed by resolution on March 2, 2004, to end the Town-provided pump out service, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has responded to the concerns expressed by property owners of Mouse Island, as supported by other residents as well, and

WHEREAS, further study by the Department of Public Works staff has located a waste-removal contractor whose good and reliable work is well known to Town staff, and who will perform the pump out service at a price that will be paid for by the Mouse Island residents, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager is directed to make arrangements for a contractor to provide seasonal pump out services to Mouse Island using the Town's equipped boat, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that in the event of the failure or inability of any chosen contractor to perform the pump out services as needed, Town staff will resume the performance of pump out service until such time as a reliable successor contractor shall be engaged to perform the same service.

Discussed

Motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Bond that this matter be adopted. Mayor Watson received a call from the Chairman of the Shellfish Commission stating if pump out services were not restored to Mouse Island some shellfish beds would have to be closed.

Motion to Amend to include a "Whereas" that the property owners of Mouse Island are aware of this resolution and are in agreement with it, was made by Councilor Billing, seconded by Councilor Sheets.

The vote to amend carried unanimously.

2004-0075 Elimination of Pumpout Services for Mouse Island

RESOLUTION CONCERNING PUMP OUT SERVICES FOR MOUSE ISLAND

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Works asked to be relieved of the seasonal tasks of providing a pump out boat service for three houses on Mouse Island due to staff time required, the cost, and the perceived dangers entailed in the work, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council agreed by resolution on March 2, 2004, to end the Town-provided pump out service, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has responded to the concerns expressed by property owners of Mouse Island, as supported by other residents as well, and

WHEREAS, further study by the Department of Public Works staff has located a waste-removal contractor whose good and reliable work is well known to Town staff, and who will perform the pump out service at a price that will be paid for by the Mouse Island residents, and

WHEREAS, all three Mouse Island property owners have indicated this resolution is agreeable, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager is directed to make arrangements for a contractor to provide seasonal pump out services to Mouse Island using the Town's equipped boat, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that in the event of the failure or inability of any chosen contractor to perform the pump out services as needed, Town staff will resume the performance of pump out service until such time as a reliable successor contractor shall be engaged to perform the same service.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

2004-0137 Appointment of Susan Marquardt to the Zoning Commission

RESOLUTION APPOINTING SUSAN MARQUARDT AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE ZONING COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that Susan Marquardt, 96 South Road, is appointed as an alternate member of the Zoning Commission for a term ending 9/30/06.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

2004-0138 Appointment of Brian Shirvell to the Zoning Commission

RESOLUTION APPOINTING BRIAN SHIRVELL AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE ZONING COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that Brian Shirvell, 290 High Street, Mystic, is appointed as an alternate member of the Zoning Commission for a term ending 9/30/08.

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

Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously.

2004-0139

Manager, Planning Services Position Description

RESOLUTION APPROVING A POSITION DESCRIPTION - PLANNING

WHEREAS, an organizational review carried out by Town staff indicates that it is now appropriate to restructure certain aspects of leadership and planning work at the senior level of the Office of Planning and Development Services (OPDS), and

WHEREAS, it is desirable to have a management level position that entails both supervisory leadership and high level planning and technical responsibilities, and

WHEREAS, the OPDS Director and the Human Resources Manager have recommended replacing the position of Assistant Director of Planning & Development with the new position of Manager, Planning Services, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the establishment of the new position of Manager, Planning Services, in lieu of the position of Assistant Director of Planning & Development.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

2004-0140

Assessment Analyst/Analyst Associate Position Descriptions

RESOLUTION APPROVING POSITION DESCRIPTIONS - FINANCE

WHEREAS, the Finance Department has undergone difficulty in filling their Assessment Analyst position with individuals who hold the credential of Certified Connecticut Municipal Assessor (CCMA) and who are fully qualified to perform appraisal and assessment work, especially relating to personal property and motor vehicles, and

WHEREAS, staff has determined that the proposed Analyst Associate position could accomplish most of the functional components of the Assessment Analyst position, with the exception of certifying audits, and

WHEREAS, the staff's review of the qualifications required for the various essential functions and tasks of the Town Assessor's office has also led to an updating of the experience requirements for the existing position of Assessment Analyst, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the new position description of Assessment Analyst Associate and the revised position description of Assessment Analyst.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Watson called a recess at 9:40 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 9:52 p.m.

2004-0141

Copp Property Parking Area

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONSTRUCTION OF A PARKING AREA FOR THE COPP PARK

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton owns the area known as the Copp Property, also referred to as the Copp Family Park, which was purchased as part of a Town open space acquisition program, and

WHEREAS, the Town, in the act of acquiring the Copp Property, and as a condition of the purchase of that property, entered into an agreement providing for future use of the property to be governed jointly by the Town and by the Copp Park Board of Overseers, and

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut Bonding Commission has made a grant-in-aid of \$65,000, through the Groton Parks Foundation, to be used for the design, permitting and construction of an entrance and parking lot, and

WHEREAS, the construction of a paved entrance from Route 184 and accommodations for vehicle parking will facilitate the use of the Copp Property for recreational uses that were intended since its acquisition, and

WHEREAS, the Copp Park Board of Overseers has supported and participated in the application of the state grant for a parking area, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council, on June 4, 2003, authorized the Town Manager to apply for all necessary state and local land use permits for this purpose, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager shall direct that an entrance apron and parking area be constructed at the appropriate entrance area for the Copp Park according to approved plans, and may use any combination of contracted services and Town crews as may be most efficient for this purpose.

A motion was made by Councilor Bartinik, Jr., seconded by Councilor Skrmetti, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Billing said that upon receipt of Councilor Sheets' letter, she had called the City of Groton to talk about this project and the proposed Dog Park; however, she was still unclear about the specifics and asked Town Manager Oefinger to clarify it.

Mr. Oefinger said a full set of plans has been developed to show specifications and designs for the parking lot. The Dog Park is merely an open field with a fence around it and a path in the field. Mr. Oefinger said the Town went through a formal referral process, with Groton Utilities fully involved, to put this project in place.

The motion carried unanimously.

2004-0142 Copp Property Dog Park

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONSTRUCTION OF A DOG PARK AT THE COPP PARK

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton owns the area known as the Copp Property, also referred to as the Copp Family Park, which was purchased as part of a Town open space acquisition program, and

WHEREAS, the Town, in the act of acquiring the Copp Property, and as a condition of the purchase of that property, entered into an agreement providing for future use of the property to be governed jointly by the Town and by the Copp Park Board of Overseers, and

WHEREAS, the planned construction of a paved entrance from Route 184 and accommodations for vehicle parking will facilitate the use of the Copp Property for recreational purposes that were intended since its acquisition, and

WHEREAS, the Copp Park Board of Overseers has supported the provision of a dog park at a convenient distance from the entrance and parking area that is to be developed by the Town, and

WHEREAS, it is understood that Groton residents and the SE Connecticut Dog Park Association will provide and contribute the funds for construction of said dog park, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council, on June 4, 2003, authorized the Town Manager to apply for all

necessary state and local land use permits for this purpose, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager shall arrange for and direct the construction of a dog park at the Copp Property in compliance with approved plans and all pertinent permits and regulations.

Discussed

Motion to adopt was made by Councilor Skrmetti, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski.

Councilor Sheets referred to a memo distributed to the Council from the engineer at Groton Utilities dated October 28, 2003. The memo states the proposed dog park is in close proximity to the reservoir. Councilor Sheets said she would like this referred back to the Planning Commission so they can review the memo that was received the same day the Planning Commission approved the project.

A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Bond, that this matter be Re-referred to the Town Council Committee of the Whole.

The motion made by Councilor Sheets was originally to amend the resolution to re-refer it back to the Planning Commission. Later in the discussion, Councilor O'Beirne suggested that this might not be the correct procedure.

Town Clerk Tarbox explained that the motion should be to re-refer rather than to amend and noted that the item can be re-referred to the Town Council Committee but not to the Planning Commission.

Mayor Watson concurred with Ms. Tarbox and indicated that the item should be sent back to the Council Committee.

Town Manager Oefinger suggested a joint meeting between the Town Council and the Planning Commission to obtain more information on the project approval. Mr. Oefinger said he sees no point in re-referring it back to the Planning Commission as they have already approved it. Councilor Wright has concerns with the proximity of the dog park to Great Brook and Buddington Pond, more maintenance by Town Parks crew, and the liability of the Town should someone be attacked or bitten by a dog. She feels a dog park does not seem to be a core service of municipal government during a time when the Town is reducing other services.

Councilor Billing supports the dog park stating no one on the Planning Commission saw the location of the reservoir and pond as a problem.

Councilor Sheets feels the location of the reservoir is a problem as it is located less than 150 feet from the proposed dog park.

Councilor Skrmetti and Councilor Sheets discussed the interpretation of the memo from the engineer from Groton Utilities.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 5 - Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Billing, Councilor Bond, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Wright

Opposed: 4 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Skrmetti

2004-0143

Approval of Budgets for FYE 2005

RESOLUTION APPROVING BUDGETS FOR FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JULY 1, 2004 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2005

RESOLVED, that the budgets for the various funds, hereinafter set forth, are hereby approved and adopted and the amounts on the "Total Appropriation" line are hereby appropriated for the functions specified, and the amounts listed under the heading "Financing Plan" are hereby established as approved budget estimates for the type of revenues specified and include all estimated FYE 2005 cash revenues except FYE 2005 property taxes which will be estimated for budget purposes by separate resolution when the FYE 2005 tax rate is set, and further that a complete detailed document indicating all function appropriations is hereby made a part of this record and shall be submitted to the Town Clerk for Public Record, for budgets as follows:

General Fund
 Golf Course Fund
 Sewer Operating Fund
 Solid Waste Fund
 Mumford Cove Special Taxing District
 First Taxing District
 Second Taxing District
 Revaluation Fund
 Community Events Fund
 Connecticard Fund
 Sewer District Fund
 Capital Reserve Fund
 Fleet Reserve Fund
 Computer Replacement Fund
 Human Services Assistance Fund

Discussed

A Motion to adopt was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Billing.

Councilor Sheets inquired about the status of funds in the Fleet Reserve Account. She expressed her intent to make a motion to amend the dollar amounts of this resolution.

Councilor Billing noted there are no dollar amounts to amend in this resolution.

Town Manager Oefinger explained this is the preliminary approval of the resolutions concerning the budget which will then be sent to the RTM and returned to the Town Council again for final approval.

Mayor Watson feels it is late in the budget process to propose amendments to the resolutions, as the Council has been discussing these items for many weeks.

Councilor Bond does not agree that it is too late to make changes; she understood that changes can be made at anytime during the budget process.

Councilor Billing suggested withdrawing this motion and moving to the next resolution as it contains dollar amounts and could be amended.

Councilor Billing withdrew her second on the motion.

Council Bond withdrew the main motion.

2004-0144 Computation of Tax Rate for FYE 2005

RESOLUTION COMPUTING TAX RATE FOR FYE 2005 TO PAY EXPENSES (APPROPRIATIONS) APPROVED IN THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET ADOPTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

WHEREAS, the Town Council adopted on April 17, 2004 a General Fund Budget providing for expenditures, appropriations or expenses totaling \$101,438,059 and estimated cash revenues exclusive of FYE 2005 property taxes totaling \$43,906,623 be it

RESOLVED, that a tax rate of 22.94 mills is hereby determined as required by Chapter VIII of the Groton Town Charter and based on the following computations.

Total General Fund Appropriations per budget approved by Council (including allocation to a "Reserve Fund for Capital and Non Recurring Expenditures"): \$101,438,059

Less estimated amount to be appropriated from unreserved fund balance of 6/30/04: \$1,553,456.

General Fund cash receipts exclusive of FYE 2005 property taxes \$43,906,623

Amount to be raised from property taxes: \$55,977,980

Amount computed as follows:

\$55,977,980 divided by the new assessed valuation (before Board of Assessment adjustments) of \$2,502,759,934 divided by 97.5% collection rate multiplied by 1,000= 22.94 mill rate.

A motion was made by Mayor Watson, seconded by Councilor Skrmetti, that this matter be Adopted.

Motion to Amend the FY2005 proposed budget General Fund from \$101,438,059 to \$100,839,694, totaling a reduction of \$598,365 was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Bond.

Councilor Sheets explained that the amendment would eliminate \$105,365 from the Fleet Reserve Fund, due to the proceeds from the recent auction going into that account. She further stated that she had heard that \$163,000 could be cut from the Police account. The third account to be reduced is Education by \$330,000 which has been budgeted for kitchen hoods.

Councilor Kolnaski opposes this proposed amendment to the budget. She feels the Council has already met with Town Department Heads, spending many, many hours discussing the budget, and agreed upon the figures in this resolution. She does not feel it is appropriate to reduce budget amounts that have already been promised to departments.

Councilor Sheets feels it is entirely appropriate to propose reductions in the budget at this time. She expressed her opinion that it is the proper role of the Town Council to make the final decision on budget figures after meeting with the Department Heads. She feels the Board of Education's spending of \$110,000 each for three of the elementary schools to replace the kitchen hoods is a high amount. She does not agree that the money should be spent at Eastern Point School when it will not be in use much longer. She noted the Fitch High School alarm is only twelve years old and is in the budget to be replaced. She believes the Department Heads should do a better job and come back with less expensive items.

Councilor Skrmetti does not agree with the amendment being proposed tonight for specific reductions to various accounts. He feels the departments have met with the Town Council on two separate occasions and answered questions about equipment and costs at that time. Councilor Skrmetti noted Wes Greenleaf, Director of Building and Grounds, is not going to ask for any unnecessary items for the schools. Councilor Skrmetti said he may support a general reduction in the budget to lower the mill rate, but he does not support reducing specific accounts at this point in the budget process without giving the Departments a chance for rebuttal.

Councilor O'Beirne noted this is the first time in history he has opposed a reduction in the Board of Education budget. He believes the kitchen hoods are a necessity and a safety issue. If the King Property is chosen, Councilor O'Beirne noted Eastern Point School will still be in operation for a few more years, necessitating a new kitchen hood.

Councilor Bartinik said he has heard criticism of Councilor Sheets' proposed reductions to the budget because of the way she has proposed the amendment. He asked the other Councilors if there are any items they would cut from the budget or changes they would like to propose.

Mayor Watson said he is satisfied with the proposed budget the way it is. He said the agenda to the budget has been out for sometime. He believes that any Councilor who cannot attend a meeting can always contact him with issues to address at the meeting.

Councilor Billing does not support the amendment. She spoke of the reasons she does not support any further reductions without knowing what the impact to the Town would be.

Councilor O'Beirne reminded the Councilors that the Council cannot cut specific line items out of the Board of Education Budget, only the Board of Education can make those decisions.

The vote on the motion to amend failed, 4 in favor (Councilors Sheets, Bond, Bartinik, and Wright) 5 opposed (Councilors Billing, Skrmetti, Kolnaski, O'Beirne, and Mayor Watson)

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 5 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Billing, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Skrmetti
Opposed: 4 - Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Bond, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Wright

2004-0143 Approval of Budgets for FYE 2005

RESOLUTION APPROVING BUDGETS FOR FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JULY 1, 2004 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2005

RESOLVED, that the budgets for the various funds, hereinafter set forth, are hereby approved and adopted and the amounts on the "Total Appropriation" line are hereby appropriated for the functions specified, and the amounts listed under the heading "Financing Plan" are hereby established as approved budget estimates for the type of revenues specified and include all estimated FYE 2005 cash revenues except FYE 2005 property taxes which will be estimated for budget purposes by separate resolution when the FYE 2005 tax rate is set, and further that a complete detailed document indicating all function appropriations is hereby made a part of this record and shall be submitted to the Town Clerk for Public Record, for budgets as follows:

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Golf Course Fund
Sewer Operating Fund
Solid Waste Fund
Mumford Cove Special Taxing District
First Taxing District
Second Taxing District
Revaluation Fund
Community Events Fund
Connecticard Fund
Sewer District Fund
Capital Reserve Fund
Fleet Reserve Fund
Computer Replacement Fund
Human Services Assistance Fund

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

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 7 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Billing, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Skrmetti and Councilor Wright
Opposed: 2 - Councilor Bond and Councilor Sheets

2004-0145 Computation of Tax Rate for Mumford Cove District Fund Budget

RESOLUTION COMPUTING TAX RATE FOR FYE 2005 TO PAY EXPENSES (APPROPRIATIONS) APPROVED IN THE MUMFORD COVE SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT FUND BUDGET ADOPTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

A motion was made by Councilor Billing, seconded by Councilor Skrmetti, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously.

2004-0146 Computation of Tax Rate for First Taxing District Fund Budget

RESOLUTION COMPUTING TAX RATE FOR FYE 2005 TO PAY EXPENSES (APPROPRIATIONS) APPROVED IN THE FIRST TAXING DISTRICT FUND BUDGET ADOPTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

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

Councilor Sheets asked what the source of the 90.5% collection rate is.

Town Manager Oefinger noted this is a very small area and the rate is based on what the Town's past experience.

The motion carried unanimously.

2004-0147 Computation of Tax Rate for Second Taxing District Fund Budget

RESOLUTION COMPUTING TAX RATE FOR FYE 2005 TO PAY EXPENSES (APPROPRIATIONS) APPROVED IN THE SECOND TAXING DISTRICT FUND BUDGET ADOPTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

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

The motion carried unanimously.

2004-0148 Computation of Tax Rate for Groton Sewer District Fund Budget

RESOLUTION COMPUTING TAX RATE FOR FYE 2005 TO PAY EXPENSES (APPROPRIATIONS) APPROVED IN THE GROTON SEWER DISTRICT FUND BUDGET ADOPTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

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

The motion carried unanimously.

2004-0155 Budget Review Process

BUDGET REVIEW PROCESS

This matter was Referred to the Town Council Committee of the Whole. The motion carried.

Mayor Watson requested a referral to the Committee of the Whole to discuss the budget process.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilor Skrmetti, seconded by Councilor Billing to adjourn at 11:00 p.m., and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council

Maegan Paquette
Office Assistant