



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

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## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council Committee of the Whole

*Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Heather Sherman Bond, Catherine Kolnaski, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., John F. Scott, Paulann H. Sheets, James L. Streeter, and Elissa T. Wright.*

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Tuesday, March 28, 2006

7:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

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#### REGULAR MEETING

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

*Mayor Watson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.*

2. **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Scott, Councilor Sheets, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Wright  
Members Absent: Councilor O'Beirne, Jr.

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnyan.*

3. **Calendar and Communications**

*Mayor Watson spoke with Captain Sean Sullivan from the Submarine Base and Captain Sullivan is willing to give the Town Council a tour of a submarine, if everyone is interested.*

*Town Manager Oefinger noted budget information and communications that were distributed to the Council prior to the meeting.*

4. **Approval of Minutes**

**2006-0073 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)**

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole of February 21, 2006, February 28, 2006, and March 11, 2006 are hereby accepted and approved.

**A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Scott, to adopt.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*None.*

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

**2006-0041 Senior Center Needs Assessment**

**Discussed**

*Director of Public Works Gary Schneider provided a briefing on this issue. Funding for the study was approved in the FYE 2005 Capital Improvement Program. The demand for programs, a need to match the facility to current interests and programming, and the need for significant repairs and replacements prompted the assessment. The assessment, which took five months to complete, looked at present and future needs.*

*Mary Jo Riley, Senior Center Supervisor, reviewed current needs and programs at the Center, noting a tremendous growth in fitness programs. Future needs and programs were developed in light of an expanding population of seniors. Ms. Riley reviewed the proposed rooms and their*

uses, and noted the addition of an expanded stage and an aqua therapy area.

Mr. Schneider talked about the current/future repairs and maintenance for the building. He reviewed in detail the items that will need to be addressed in the CIP, which total approximately \$3.5 million over the next ten years.

Tom Arcari, architect, explained that the concept plan was developed based on the capital needs assessment and meetings with seniors and staff. The building is in good shape, so the plan was designed around the existing structure. Mr. Arcari reviewed details of the plan including circulation, the ability to isolate parts of the facility if necessary, storage, the renovated kitchen area, and locker space. The consultant also reevaluated the site layout and proposes elimination of the driveway crossing in front of the building, relocated handicapped parking spaces, and a segregated drop off area. The project also provides an opportunity to change the look of the building and a more traditional New England look has been proposed for the building.

Mr. Schneider addressed staff and operating costs, phasing, and referendum questions.

Mr. Arcari, Ms. Riley, and Mr. Schneider addressed questions from Councilors. The existing building is slightly less than 5,000 square feet and this project will add another 20,000 square feet, including the aqua therapy center. Mr. Schneider noted that the Town would expect to move the seniors during construction.

Mayor Watson noted he is a member of the Senior Citizens Club.

Discussion followed on available land for a community center.

The Committee asked staff to obtain a cost estimate to develop conceptual plans.

**2006-0102 Fort Hill Sewer Project Update**

**Discussed**

Director of Public Works Gary Schneider noted the explanatory text of the bond referendum for the Fort Hill sewer project assumed funding from a state loan and a state grant, which will not be available. This will result in an increase in the annual sewer use fees. Also, the Town will need to secure easements to replace the laterals. If for some reason an easement cannot be obtained at no cost, the project will go on without replacing that particular lateral.

**2006-0072 Appointment of Special Attorneys**

**Discussed**

Councilor Wright asked that the Town Attorney prepare a letter of recommendation regarding special attorneys.

**A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Mayor Watson, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2006-0063 Bus Ordinance Amendment**

**Discussed**

The Town Attorney has prepared the proposed ordinance, and the Town Council needs to determine the seating capacity. Councilor Scott asked for clarification on the case law cited by the Town Attorney, and Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent stated he is prepared to provide an overview for the Council. Town Manager Oefinger noted that Attorney Carey cited the case to make the Council aware that the record needs to be clear as the Town Council moves forward.

**2005-0310 Sandy Hollow Road Curbing**

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Sheets, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

**2006-0042 Sandy Hollow Road Improvements for Proposed Subdivision**

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Sheets, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

**2006-0100 Thames Street Rehabilitation Study**

Not Discussed

**2005-0301 Council Goalsetting**

Not Discussed

**2006-0083 Copp Property Management**

Discussed

*The consensus of the Committee was to schedule a joint meeting with the Copp Property Board to discuss this issue.*

**2005-0298 Potential Land Sale (Mencer)**

Discussed

*Town Manager Oefinger explained this request to purchase two slivers of Town-owned land. Town staff does not feel the Town needs to retain the parcels, however ownership of one of the parcels is unclear at this point. Town Manager Oefinger stated that he does not want the Town or Mr. Mencer to incur any additional costs to do a title search until the Council makes a preliminary determination that they are not opposed to the potential transfer. Should the Town decide to release the property, all adjacent property owners would be notified. By consensus, the Committee had no objection to pursuing release of the land.*

**2006-0046 Fiscal Impact Statements for New Programs**

Not Discussed

**2003-0045 Economic/Strategic Plan Update**

Discussed

*The public information meeting on the plan is scheduled for Thursday, March 30th at 7:00 p.m.*

**7. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List**

*None.*

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

*Councilor Bond read a prepared statement inviting fellow Councilors to return to a constructive form of debate at meetings. She cited the letter written by the Mayor that appeared in the Mystic River Press. Councilor Bond does not agree that the Town Council coerced the Town Manager by providing budget guidelines. Mayor Watson stated he was expressing his opinion. Councilor Kolnaski stated that the Council sets policy; they are not administrators. Mayor Watson feels that constructive debate is a good suggestion.*

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Sheets, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*