



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes - **Draft**

Town Council

Mayor Rita M. Schmidt, Councilors Dean Antipas, Genevieve Cerf, Joe de la Cruz, Bruce S. Flax, Bob Frink, Rich Moravsik, Deborah L. Peruzzotti and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, December 16, 2014

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Schmidt, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Frink, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Watson and Councilor Antipas
Members Absent: Councilor Cerf

Also present were the Town Manager, Mark Oefinger, Director of OPDS, Jonathan Reiner, and the Town Clerk, Betsy Moukawsher.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Matthew McCormack.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

None.

Recess for Public Hearing on:

2014-0263 Mystic Indoor Sports - Request for Financial Incentive

Heard at Public Hearing

The Town Clerk read the call for the Public Hearing.

Matthew McCormack, 501 Ocean Avenue, New London, gave a presentation on his proposal to participate in the Town of Groton tax abatement program.

The Director of OPDS, Jonathan Reiner, explained in detail the tax abatement that Mr. McCormack has proposed. He stated that the current business yields approximately \$20,669 in annual taxes. He also explained some other possible benefits to the community, if this project is built as described. He estimated that the abated taxes would be approximately \$146,496 over the seven year program. He estimated that Mr. McCormack would be paying approximately \$136,823 in taxes over the same period. He stated his support for this proposal saying that this is a good way for the Town to help a struggling business.

Councilor Moravsik asked if there is a construction schedule available. In response, Mr. McCormack stated that he expects to break ground within three to four months.

The Town Manager explained the differences between the existing business and the proposed business, stating that the original business was consider a private club and was treated as an association. He also stated that there needs to be zoning changes to conform to the new business plan.

David Cote, 78 Colony Road, Mystic, stated that he is the owner of a business in Town, Aqua Massage, Inc., and a member of the Economic Development Commission. He explained his enthusiasm for Mr. McCormack's project and hopes that it succeeds. He suggested an alternative proposal to tax abatement. He urged the Town Council to consider a tax deferral program. He explained that the Town would not be giving up any tax revenue, but just deferring the payment. He stated that the Council has time to negotiate this proposal.

The Mayor closed the Public Hearing at 7:42 pm.

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

2014-0335 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of December 2, 2014 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2014-0330 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

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

Jason Richardson - \$150.00 - Spicer Fund
Fitch Class of 1954 - \$400.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Aimee F. Allaire - \$4.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Benjamin Anderson - \$24.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Marcy Casey - \$20.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Sandra Champion - \$9.00 Parks and Recreation Revolving
Carl Conrad - \$20.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Michael Courter - \$10.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Nora Belle Du Rocher- \$20.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Juan Duran - \$5.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Chinwe Erike - \$40.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
James Eskra - \$40.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Larry Grundy - \$15.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Elizabeth Hogan - \$5.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Lauren Huck - \$10.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Arnold Jordan, Sr. - \$15.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Pride Kelleles - \$6.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Heather King - \$10.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Lisa Knobloch - \$5.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Beverly I. Lavalley - \$5.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Eric Martin - \$50.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Amy Matteson - \$50.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Emily Nelson - \$5.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Katherine S. Nelson - \$10.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Nina Nelson - \$5.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Kathryn A. Roschmann - \$10.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Penelope Simmons - \$10.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Katy M. Stoddard - \$6.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Jennifer Stone - \$25.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Lawrence Taylor - \$1.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Merin Troutman - \$10.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

Arianna Turello - \$20.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Johanna Ward - \$10.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Katherine Wilhelm - \$40.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Jeanne M. Yellow Robe - \$2.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Marsha Zimmermann - \$30.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Katherine Zod - \$5.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Noank Rowing - \$3,000 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Mystic Lions Club - \$1,000.00 - Social Services Discretionary Fund
Mystic Rotary Club/Liberty Bank - \$1,601.27 - Social Services Discretionary
Old Mystic Fire District - \$677.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Edith Rafferty - \$200.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Various Donations - \$105.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
BPO Elks Lodge No. 2163 - \$1,000.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Groton Emblem Club - \$10.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Groton PBA - \$250.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Groton Rotary - \$6,872.08 - Social Services Discretionary
Matthew and Karen Morton - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary
David Rose - \$50.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Colleen Sullivan - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2014-0258 Grove Avenue Subdivision/Mardie Lane - Update

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

2014-0331 Connecticut Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development Assessment Grant Program

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 Watson, seconded by Councilor Antipas, 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 de la Cruz reported that he attended the School Facilities Initiative Task Force meeting on December 11, 2014 and stated that the report given by Superintendent Michael Graner outlining the proposed new Middle School was informative.

Councilor Frink also attended the School Facilities Initiative Task Force meeting.

Councilor Watson reported that he attended the School Facilities Initiative Task Force meeting and the December 10, 2014 RTM meeting.

Councilor Flax reported that he attended the School Facilities Initiative Task Force meeting and the December 10, 2014 RTM meeting.

Councilor Antipas reported that he attended the Cable TV Advisory Committee of Southeastern Connecticut meeting on December 4, 2014. They discussed the possibility of regulating the Internet. He also received an email from a citizen stating their support of the proposed tax abatement.

Mayor Schmidt reported that she attended Jim Streeter's presentation on Thames Street at the Groton Public Library. She announced that the second portion of Mr. Streeter's presentation will be held on December 17, 2014. She also attended the L & M Annual Report meeting, the School

Facilities Initiative Task Force meeting, a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new business in Mystic, Giabonni's Beauty Salon and Spa, the Mystic Cooperative Task Force meeting, the Economic Development Commission holiday luncheon, the Tourism Council Board meeting, and the December 10, 2014 RTM meeting.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The Town Clerk reported that the RTM met on December 10, 2014 for their regular meeting and, if they have business, they will meet in January on the 13th at the Groton Senior Center at 7:30 pm.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk reported that the vacancy in the Town Clerk's Office has been filled and that Michael Thorpe will start working in the Town Clerk's Office on January 5, 2015.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager reminded the Town Council of their upcoming schedule and that all meetings are canceled for the remainder of the year. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, as a Committee of the Whole Meeting. He mentioned that he is working on that agenda. He announced that the 2014 Ledge Light Health District Crowley Award was awarded to the Town's Emergency Operation Supervisor, Joe Sastre, for his extraordinary service to public health. He announced that a Freedom of Information training session will be held on Monday, January 12, 2015 at 6:00 pm, at the Essex Town Hall.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community Relations - Chairman de la Cruz

Councilor de la Cruz is making plans to hold a meeting to discuss reviving the Groton Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (GASP) program in Groton.

b. Finance - Chairman Frink

c. Personnel & Appointments - Chairman Flax

d. Rules - Chairman Frink

e. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Schmidt

The Mayor pointed out that Town Councilors need to make it clear that any statement that they make in public is their own opinion and that they do not speak on behalf of the Town Council.

Mayor Schmidt reported that the Committee of the Whole met December 9, 2014. They had two executive sessions with Attorney Eric Callahan; one was regarding pending litigation and the other was regarding the William Seely School property. She also reported that they were given updates on the request by Mystic Indoor Sports for financial incentive, the USS Groton Sail, upcoming State Legislature meetings, the implementation of Police Study recommendations, and a resolution for the Brownfield Remediation Grant Program, which is on the agenda for this evening.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

2014-0331 Connecticut Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development Assessment Grant Program

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WITH THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR A BROWNFIELD ASSESSMENT GRANT

WHEREAS, pursuant to CGS Sec. 32-763 (Remedial Action and Development Municipal Grant Program), 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 \$200,000 in order to undertake the Brownfield Assessment Grant and to execute an Assistance Agreement; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Town Council:

1. That it is cognizant of the conditions and prerequisites for the State financial assistance imposed by CGS Sec. 32-763;
2. That the filing of an application for State financial assistance by the Town of Groton in an amount not to exceed \$200,000 is hereby approved; and be it further

RESOLVED, 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 agreement is offered, to execute any amendments, decisions, and revisions, thereto,, and to act as the authorized representative of the Town of Groton.

A motion was made by Councilor Frink, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Antipas explained his understanding of this program. He stated that the State breaks down the \$200,000 grants as \$195,000 for the site work and \$5,000 for legal fees. He asked the Town Manager what would happen if the Town didn't spend any of the \$5,000 on legal fees.

Town Manager explained that the State will use the \$5,000 for legal fees to pay the firm that processes the assistance agreement. He further explained that the Town would use up to \$195,000 for an assessment of two properties (1208 Poquonnock Road and 244 Monument Street, Groton Heights School). Information gathered on the condition of the building and properties would be used for remediation purposes or would be offered to a buyer, if the Town chooses to sell the properties.

The motion carried unanimously

X. OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Flax had questions regarding the Parks and Recreation report in the Town Council Weekly Status Report. He noted that there seems to be a large increase in the cost for classes compared to last year. The Town Manger will look into the report and get back to the Town Council at the next meeting.

Councilor de la Cruz extended well wishes to the Council for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Mayor wished everyone a Happy New Year and that all enjoy happy, healthy holidays.

Councilor Peruzzotti wished everyone Feliz Navidad.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:09 pm was made by Councilor Watson and so taken.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*