Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor Bruce Flax, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Diane Barber, Greg Grim, Rich Moravsik, Karen F. Morton, Bonnie Nault, Deb Peruzzotti, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, January 10, 2017 | **6:00 PM** | **Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1**

REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Flax called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Barber, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik
Members Absent: Councilor Peruzzotti

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnyan.

3. Calendar and Communications

- Joint Land Use Study on Sub Base - Update

Town Manager Oefinger reminded the Council of tours and interviews associated with the Joint Land Use Study of the Submarine Base.

4. Approval of Minutes

2016-0310 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 meetings of November 16, 2016, December 6, 2016, December 13, 2016, and December 20, 2016 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, to adopt.

The motion carried unanimously

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

2015-0178 Noank School Public Gardens Task Force Semiannual Report

Discussed

Clint Wright from Noank School Public Gardens Task Force read a report that he prepared noting the Task Force's accomplishments in 2016, changes in the task force, and winter plans.

Councilor Moravsik asked about plans for spring. Mr. Wright noted that there are 26 plots leased for one year. The Task Force wants to increase community involvement as the Noank Zoning Regulations permit. Mr. Wright stated the group will brainstorm this winter on how to use the property more as a park.

Mayor Flax asked for a current plan and future plan for the property. Mr. Wright stated that the Task Force is trying to work with Noank zoning on allowed uses.

2017-0013 Pearl Street (Noank) Sidewalk

Discussed

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, explained he is requesting approval of additional funds ($90,000) to replace a deteriorated section of sidewalk on Pearl Street in Noank. The Council previously approved $55,000. Issues arose with grading rights and the need to remove mature trees. The Town would need to raise the road because the sidewalk is elevated so high. The other option is to lower the sidewalk and create a sloped area, but the affected property owners do not want that option.

Councilor Nault recognized Diane Ferguson, 81 Pearl Street. Ms. Ferguson noted that this issue has been going on for years. Everyone agrees the sidewalk needs to be replaced. It is dangerous and a liability to the Town, but there has not been enough money. Ms. Ferguson stated the sidewalk is an eyesore outside of her historic home that needs to be removed. She distributed a number of photos of the area.

Mr. Schneider noted that design work could not be started until the funding was available. With the downsizing of the department, civil engineers are doing inspections rather than design work. The cost increase is associated with resetting the existing granite and raising the road. This option may require grading rights from the property across the street. The road is not currently scheduled for repaving.

Discussion followed on paying for the project with the road maintenance bond funds, if allowable. Mayor Flax expressed concern with the additional cost associated with saving the mature tree. Mr. Schneider noted the tree is on private property, so it would have to be taken by eminent domain.

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

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Watson, to amend the motion to appropriate the funds from Capital Reserve if it is determined that the road maintenance bond funding cannot be used.

Councilors expressed a preference for placing the project in the FYE 2018 CIP if the road bond funding cannot be used.

The motion to amend failed by the following vote:

In Favor: 6 - Mayor Flax, Councilor Grim, Councilor Morton, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Nault, Councilor Watson
Opposed: 2 - Councilor Antipas, Councilor Barber

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0277 Disposition of Town Owned Property Acquired through Tax Foreclosure

Discussed

Director of Finance Cindy Landry and Tax Collector Cindy Small were present to discuss seven properties acquired by the Town through tax foreclosure. The Town Council must determine whether to retain the properties for Town use or sell. Staff is recommending that two properties be offered for sale and five retained on the tax rolls. Ms. Landry explained the rationale behind staff's recommendation.

A motion was made by Councilor Grim, seconded by Councilor Nault, to refer the disposition of seven Town-owned properties to the Planning Commission under CGS Section 8.24.

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0295 Contingency Transfer for Wage Adjustments

Discussed

Cindy Landry, Director of Finance, explained that during development of the FYE 2018 personnel budget, staff discovered an error in wage calculations for the telecommunicators. This requested transfer from Contingency will make the salaries whole for FYE 2017.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0014 Fraud Risk

Discussed

Cindy Landry, Director of Finance, noted this referral was requested by Councilor Grim. The FYE 2015 auditor's management letter included a recommendation for a fraud risk assessment and a fraud tip line. The tip line is considerably cheaper than a full assessment. Ms. Landry provided information on the different tip line services available. The purpose of having this item on the agenda is to ask the Town Council if they want to include funding for this service in the FYE 2018 budget.

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

Ms. Landry has talked to other towns and they are happy with their tip line services. The Board of Education does not have a tip line, but they could piggy back on the Town's service for a fee. Councilor Moravsik suggested contacting Groton Public Schools to see if they are interested in purchasing the service. Ms. Landry noted that the FYE 2016 CAFR management letter will likely include the same comment.

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0312 Appointment of Tree Warden

Discussed

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, noted that towns are required to appoint a tree warden whose duties are outlined in state statutes. The Town's previous tree warden retired. Mr. Schneider has recently taken classes and been certified as a tree warden, and is asking to be appointed by the Town Council.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0204 Review of Town Services and Operations

Not Discussed

Discussion of this item was postponed to January 17th.

2017-0015 Fair Housing Action Plan for 2017

Discussed

Paige Bronk, Manager of Economic and Community Development, explained the need to adopt an amended Fair Housing Action Plan for 2017 as required by Community Development Block Grant Program guidelines.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0016 Mystic Education Center Brownfields Grant - Update

Discussed

Paige Bronk, Manager of Economic and Community Development, explained that the Town

Council previously authorized submission of a Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) grant application for marketing the Mystic Education Center. DECD has indicated that the state may want the Town to serve as a temporary receiving agent for the property to expedite disposition to a private developer. Staff has been exploring potential concerns with the Town Attorney.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0017 Economic Development Logo/Brand Identity Competition

Discussed

Paige Bronk, Manager of Economic and Community Development, distributed an amended referral memo outlining a proposal to conduct a logo/brand identify contest. Planning and Development Services would like to provide $250 for the winning idea.

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

The motion carried unanimously

Recessed at 7:38; reconvened at 7:44 p.m.

2016-0296 Town Manager Recruitment

Discussed

Bob Zagami, Director of Human Resources, introduced Randi Frank noting her HR background and familiarity with Groton and Connecticut.

Ms. Frank reviewed her personal and professional background, and noted she will be partnering with Bob Slavin. Ms. Frank provided sample profiles for executive search efforts. She noted it is very important in the search process to meet with stakeholders, especially in Groton because of the various entities. Stakeholders include department heads, boards and commissions, the RTM, and citizens.

The Town Council must determine what they are looking for in a town manager and identify the big issues coming up in the organization to determine if candidates have the background and experience.

The profile that her firm develops stresses what the Town wants to highlight. The profile would be advertised with ICMA and other places as appropriate. Ms. Frank will work with the Town to develop a list of 12-15 semi-finalist candidates, followed by a finalist list of 5-7. Ms. Frank will notify the Council if current employees or Groton residents apply.

Ms. Frank noted that the Council must consider timing of the effort. The Council will need time for meetings and the interview process.

Other services provided include going to top candidates' locations to meet the people they work with. Ms. Frank can also do a goal setting session and evaluation process with the Town Manager and Council.

If the Council desires a full search, Ms. Frank will stay until a candidate is hired. If the town manager leaves within one year, Ms. Frank will conduct the recruitment process again and only charge expenses. If the Council does not desire a full search, Ms. Frank can work with the Human Resources Director and charge an hourly fee, but there are no guarantees.

Recruitment is a three month process. Discussion followed on a partial search (hourly rate) versus a full search and other costs/expenses such as advertising, bringing in candidates for

interviews, etc.

Ms. Frank would recommend a nationwide search, but she can concentrate efforts in New England if desired by the Council.

With respect to hiring an Assistant Town Manager, Ms. Frank would recommend letting the Town Manager choose his or her own assistant.

Mr. Zagami asked about relocation packages. Ms. Frank noted that they are not common in New England. Most candidates would want a contract, which would include a relocation package, car or allowance, and a retirement package. A residency requirement is expected. If candidates don't like the housing stock in Groton, they won't apply. The search can be completed by March 10th, but the Council would have to start soon.

All Councilors need to be present for the final interviews; only the Council rates the candidates.

A motion was made by Mayor Flax, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, to enter executive session at 8:47 p.m. to discuss choosing an executive search firm and to invite the Town Manager and Director of Human Resources to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session concluded at 9:10 p.m.

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

to hire Randi Frank Consulting LLC to perform the Town Manager search, with the contract not to exceed $24,000

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0309 Amtrak Northeast Corridor Rail Investment Plan Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement

Discussed

Discussion followed on the comment period on the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement for the Amtrak Northeast Corridor Rail Investment Plan.

The Council discussed forming a subcommittee comprised of Rich Moravsik and Bonnie Nault.

2016-0260 FYE 2018 Budget Discussion

Not Discussed

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

None.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

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Friday, January 13, 2017 | **2:00 PM** | **Town Hall Annex - Community Room 2**

SPECIAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Flax called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Barber, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik
Members Absent: Councilor Grim, Councilor Nault and Councilor Peruzzotti

Also present was Town Manager Mark Oefinger.

3. NEW BUSINESS

2016-0239 DEEP/GOSA Tilcon Property Purchase

Discussed

Graham Stevens of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection provided an overview of his office and background. He explained that the state goal for open space is 21% by 2023. Groton is currently at 17-18%.

Discussion followed on the purchase of the Tilcon property by the state and Groton Open Space Association (GOSA).

4. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Moravsik and seconded by Councilor Morton to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.