



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

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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, February 12, 2008

7:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL**

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

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

3. **Calendar and Communications**

Councilor O'Beirne noted he is concerned that the last Town Attorney's bill was higher than normal due to "miscellaneous labor negotiations". He asked the Town Manager for a more detailed breakdown of the charges.

4. **Approval of Minutes**

2008-0043

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 January 22, 2008 are hereby accepted and approved.

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

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 8 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Bond, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter
Abstain: 1 - Councilor Schmidt

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

2008-0046

Pfizer Power Generating Facility - Discussion

Recommended for a Resolution

Gary Annino and Mike Lallier of Pfizer were present to address the Council. Also present in the audience were Bill Freckman from Pfizer and Ken Baldwin of Robinson and Cole. Mr. Lallier provided a handout to the Council which was reviewed by Mr. Annino. Mr. Annino noted Pfizer's community outreach effort relative to his project and noted that Pfizer encourages public feedback. All community comments will be incorporated into the Siting Council record, however no adverse comments have been received to date. Mr. Annino provided a brief history of the Pfizer site. Mr. Lallier provided a history of the Pfizer utility plant. He noted Pfizer's desire to develop a newer and better way to provide power. Steam utilization at the facility has gone down with the elimination of the manufacturing operation and electric utilization has gone up. Mr. Lallier noted aerial photos of the site in 1990 and present day. He described the current utility plant that contains six boilers and four steam driven generators that generate less than half the

annual electrical demand and all of the steam required on site. Pfizer utilizes two fuels on site: No. 6 residual fuel oil and natural gas. This project will install a single high-efficiency combustion turbine which will make steam from the exhaust gas of the turbine and make additional electricity. This will result in a vast increase in the efficiency of the thermodynamic cycle.

Mr. Annino reviewed proposed changes to the plant layout including construction of a 12,000 square foot building close to the existing utility building, installation of a 160 foot exhaust stack, and elimination of two boilers and one stack. The project includes an ammonia injection grid. Aqueous ammonia is the most commonly used in this type of plant and Pfizer has chosen to use the lowest concentration of commercially available ammonia (19%). Mr. Annino reviewed environmental factors associated with other alternatives. There will be one 5000 gallon truck delivery per month. Mr. Annino noted the truck route and emphasized that Pfizer is well staffed and supported by mutual aid in the case of an emergency situation.

Mr. Annino showed Councilors a photo of the existing site and a rendering of the proposed facility. Pfizer has been particularly conscious of noise generation. Noise modeling will be done to assure that the facility will meet or be less than the existing site noise level. Mr. Lallier added that benchmarking of similar facilities was done. At other sites, the turbine engines were located within a sound enclosure and were quieter than the normal steam generation sounds. He reviewed the benefits of the project to the community including the use of clean energy technology, higher efficiency, and less load on the existing distribution system.

Mr. Annino identified key issues of concern that were reviewed as part of the Siting Council process, as follows: noise, air emissions, aesthetics, and other environmental effects. The facility requires Connecticut Siting Council approval, as well as Coastal Area Management and local land use approvals.

Mr. Lallier and Mr. Annino reiterated details of the proposal to address the points raised in the Council's letter of concern to the Siting Council.

In response to questions from Councilor Monteiro, Mr. Annino noted the lowest concentration of commercially available ammonia (19%) was chosen to reduce risks. The closest neighbors to the facility would be across Shennecossett Road on Bayview Avenue and they were given an opportunity to come and speak and voice concerns at the community outreach forums.

Councilor Sheets noted that the Council is pleased with the proposal and the environmental benefits. She asked why the use of ammonia was not mentioned in the application process and she questioned noise generation from equipment outside of the building. She also asked if Pfizer would be willing to set up an oversight committee as suggested in the Town Council's letter. Mr. Annino noted that the use of ammonia was definitely discussed at the previous public outreach meetings. There was no attempt made to mislead the public. All information required for the Siting Council application was included. With respect to establishing an oversight committee, Mr. Annino stated that Pfizer has never been a bad neighbor or had an adverse relationship with the neighbors, so he would prefer to address issues directly rather than setting up a committee. Mr. Lallier and Mr. Annino are both available at any time to field neighbors' concerns.

Councilor Kolnaski thanked the Pfizer representatives for coming and noted all of her concerns have been addressed and she does not feel an oversight committee is necessary.

Councilor Streeter asked about the noise impact on New London. Mr. Annino noted that the same precautions have been taken on the river side of the project. Councilor Streeter also asked that delivery drivers be made aware of the specific delivery route so that Thames Street is not used. Mr. Lallier noted that all vendors are held to strict requirements including safety policies.

Councilor Bond asked if DEP permits are required for air and water quality because of the ammonia use. Mr. Annino noted that Pfizer holds a Title 5 permit. There is an air quality permit application pending and running in parallel with other approvals. Pfizer's wastewater treatment facility is already permitted.

Town Manager Oefinger distributed a letter dated February 11, 2008 from S. Derek Phelps of the Connecticut Siting Council. The Town Manager noted that Mr. Phelps called him on Monday, February 11th to review the issues raised in the letter that the Town sent to the Siting Council. Mr. Phelps indicated that the Siting Council often receives requests from municipalities for additional time to review pending applications and that the Siting Council routinely tables issues. In light of the issues raised in the Town Council's letter, the Siting Council will postpone review of Pfizer's application (originally scheduled for February 14th) to allow Pfizer to address and potentially resolve the Town Council's concerns. Councilor Sheets inquired under whose authority the Town Manager requested that this be removed from the Siting Council's agenda. The Town Manager explained that he did not request that this item be removed from the agenda, but that Mr. Phelps offered to do so in light of the Town Council's plan to meet with Pfizer on February 12th. The Town Manager noted that removal of this item from the Siting Council's agenda, while not specifically requested by him, was a logical consequence of the discussion that he and Mr. Phelps had.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, to rescind the letter previously sent to the Connecticut Siting Council regarding Pfizer's application for a co-generation power plant.

Councilor Monteiro noted that she did not understand that the letter the Council sent was going to lead to an evidentiary/public hearing process. Attorney Ken Baldwin noted the letter did not set anything in motion, however the Siting Council was going to meet on Thursday to decide the hearing issue and would have taken the Council's letter into consideration.

Councilor Sheets asked Pfizer to document the limited commercial availability of aqueous ammonia. Mr. Annino noted his research indicated three available concentrations, but other concentrations could certainly be obtained. Based on Pfizer's use of 19% ammonia, Pfizer will meet whatever requirements are necessary. If 20% ammonia is procured, the Pfizer will conform to those requirements.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 7 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt and Councilor Streeter
Opposed: 2 - Councilor Bond and Councilor Sheets

2007-0027 Burnett's Corners

Discussed

Mayor Watson noted that Mr. Mitchell was not present. Staff was asked invite him to the next meeting.

2008-0041 Extension of Auditor's Agreement

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

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0014 Par Four Restaurant Lease

Discussed

The most recent draft lease was distributed. The Town Attorney has determined that the lease must be referred to the Planning Commission under CGS 8-24. Town Manager Oefinger explained that proposed interior renovations will be done by the restaurant owners. Other improvements to the building (e.g. roofing) will appear in the CIP.

A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Bond, to recommend a resolution

referring the Par Four Restaurant lease to the Planning Commission under CGS 8-24.

The motion carried unanimously

2003-0198

Public Water & Sewer on Flanders Road/Industrial area

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger distributed the final report for review and future discussion. A presentation by staff and the consultant was scheduled for the February 26th Committee of the Whole meeting.

2006-0282

School Improvement Project - Phase II

Discussed

Councilor O'Beirne indicated will put his comments/concerns in writing to Councilors since he will not be at the next meeting.

John Scott, Chairman of the Phase II School Design Committee, updated the Council on the Committee's activities to date. The Committee has toured available schools and established a set of goals (identify greatest need, identify Phase II with an eye toward what the public will accept, identify a facilitator, review options, and report to the Town Council). The greatest need identified by the Committee is addressing the middle schools and reducing the number to two. Next, the Committee would like to address Claude Chester, S. B. Butler, and the remaining wing at Northeast Academy. The next priority would be finishing Fitch High School, and then addressing the remaining elementary schools. Mr. Scott described a "domino effect" once the middle schools are addressed. Next the committee identified a facilitator. Once the Council settled with JCJ on the window issue, the Committee met with JCJ regarding next steps and decided to engage them to update the Pre-K-12 Master Plan. In January, the Committee received a Scope of Services. There will be no School Design Committee meetings in February to allow JCJ to put some information together. The next meeting will be March 7th for a tour of two new middle schools whose facilities seem to fit Groton's goal for educational facilities. The Committee has also asked staff to show the Committee middle schools that have been renovated to new. The goal is to have something to the Town Council for a November referendum.

In response to a question from Councilor Sheets, Mr. Scott reviewed preliminary discussions relating to West Side Middle School.

2007-0310

FYE 2009 Budget

Not Discussed

2008-0044

Bluff Point to Preston Bike Trail

Not Discussed

2008-0045

Millstone Emergency Notification Siren Replacement Project - Additional Site

Discussed

Joe Sastre noted that the Council previously approved easements for Dominion for replacement sirens. Dominion has identified two areas in Town where additional sirens are necessary: Ward Avenue in Noank and Industrial Drive. The Council previously approved an easement for Industrial Drive, however the location conflicts with underground utilities so a new location across the street was identified. Councilor O'Beirne asked if Noank Zoning has reviewed the Ward Avenue location. Mr. Sastre stated that Noank officials are aware of it, but he does not know if they have had specific discussions with Dominion. Town Manager Oefinger received an inquiry from Paul Bates of Noank about a stake in the ground off Ward Avenue. Mr. Sastre subsequently met with Mr. Bates regarding the new siren. The Town Manager will follow up with Noank officials.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0009 Legislative Policy (2008 Standing Referral)

Discussed

Staff asked the Committee to review this item in advance of the meeting with legislators next week and the NLC Conference.

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

None.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Bond, to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.