



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Scott L. Newsome, Representatives Karin Adams, Robert Bailey, Jeanne Baker, Joe Baril, Alicia T. Bauer, Rafael Burgos, Jr., Clarence Casper, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Jim Evans, Thomas A. Frickman, Bob Garcia, Nancy Gilly, Matthew G. Longino, Jim Loughlin, Emily Maher, Brandon Marley, Jackie Massett, Lisa McCabe, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe L. Merritt, Jim Nault, Kathy Neugent, Lian Obrey, Juliette M. Parker, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Carolann Quinn, Dutcha Slieker-Hersant, Joan Steinfeld, Irma J. Streeter, James L. Streeter, Archie Swindell, Patricia Wagner, Lori A. Watrous, Gary Welles, Ivy R. Williams, and Jonathan Wilson.

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

REGULAR MEETING

Moderator Scott Newsome called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Baker, Rep. Baril, Rep. Burgos, Jr., Rep. Casper, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Evans, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Kent, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Maher, Rep. Marley, Rep. Massett, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Nault, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Parker, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Powers, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Slieker-Hersant, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Welles and Rep. Wilson

Members Absent: Rep. Bauer, Rep. Longino, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Williams

Moderator Newsome stated that 30 members were present and he declared a quorum.

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner, Economic/Community Development Manager Paige Bronk, Rick Norris of the Public Works Department, Mayor Bruce Flax, Town Councilors Grim and Morton, Seamus McNamee of Great Blue Research Inc., Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Town Clerk Office Assistant II Michael Thorpe.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 14, 2016

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Massett, seconded by Rep. Adams.

The vote on approval of the minutes carried 27 in favor, 3 abstentions. Abstaining: Reps. Evans, Powers and Wilson.

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

Rosanne Kotowski, 24 Ann Avenue, Mystic, voiced her concerns about amending Ordinance #229 that established the Groton Enterprise Zone. She believes that committing to 20 years of additional tax abatements is something the RTM should be concerned about before voting to approve this ordinance. She feels that if approved, this ordinance would add to the tax burden on Groton taxpayers.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Newsome stated that Reps. McCabe, Quinn, Wagner and Watrous notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

Moderator Newsome notified the RTM of a Special Meeting of the Town Council Committee of the

Whole at 6:00 p.m. on January 17, 2017 at the Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1. The revised Agenda was distributed to all RTM members. The FYE 2018 Budget will be discussed and the RTM is invited to attend.

Moderator Newsome welcomed Shawn Powers, representing the 4th District, and Frederick Kent, representing the 6th District, as the newest members to the RTM,

Rep. Neugent announced that Rep. Obrey was elected as the Democratic Floor Leader to replace Rep. Conley who had resigned due to her election to the State House of Representatives.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

1. Financial report

Town Manager Mark Oefinger reported that the Fund Balance as of December 31, 2016 was approximately \$9.9 million. He reported that the FYE 2017 General Contingency was appropriated at \$425,000 with a current balance of \$352,310. He reported that the Capital Reserve Fund balance as of December 31, 2016 is estimated at \$1.5 million.

2. Monthly briefing

Town Manager Mark Oefinger highlighted items from the Town Manager's Monthly News report. He announced that the Groton Public Library received \$58,349.22 from Groton Utilities through the 2016 Neighborhood Assistance Act program. The funds are earmarked for the conversion of GMTV studio lights to LED fixtures. He noted that attachment 1 was a letter from Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resources Recovery Authority regarding the FY 2018 Tipping Fees that will remain unchanged from FY 2017. He referred to attachment 2, a press release from the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation for the graduation of Groton Town Police Captain Steve Sinagra from the FBI National Academy Program on December 26, 2016. He mentioned attachment 4, a letter from Suisman Shapiro Attorneys-At-Law noting a \$2,000 holiday donation to the Elihu Spicer Trust Fund. He referred to attachment 7, an invitation to John Piacenza's retirement gathering on January 31, 2017 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Spot Restaurant. Tickets are \$20.00 per person. He noted attachment 8, a flyer from CCM for the municipal training, How to Run Legal and Effective Public Meetings, on February 2nd from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Ledyard High School Auditorium, 24 Gallup Hill Road, Ledyard. He urged RTM members to attend the Town Council Committee of the Whole on January 17, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex as it will be a follow-up discussion from the Joint Town Council and RTM meeting held on November 16, 2016.

G. REPORT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic/Community Development Manager Paige Bronk addressed the RTM stating that the Office of Planning and Development Services had contracted with Great Blue Research, Inc. to have phone surveys completed targeting residential and business groups. The effort was conducted to supplement the recently completed Groton Market Analysis Project. Also, it is a part of the overall community and business outreach efforts. Over 7,936 calls were made by Great Blue to achieve the 350 residential responses. In addition over 2,739 calls were made to achieve the 100 business responses.

Seamus McNamee of Great Blue Research reviewed a power point presentation. The handout for this presentation was previously distributed to RTM members at the Regular RTM Meeting held on November 9, 2016. He highlighted Great Blue's background, the project overview, key study findings and considerations. He responded to questions and comments about the survey. The Great Blue Survey is posted on the Town website along with a supplemental document which contains questions and answers about the survey.

Rep. Marley departed, 29 members present.

H. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner explained that the three new legislators from Groton met on December 15th with Commissioner Currey from the Department of Administrative Services. Groton was notified that the school project will be on the priority list pending action by the Bonding Commission. He stated that the Town Council had recently approved the hiring of an architect to begin the planning process for the three new schools. He mentioned that the BOE will be attending the Town Council Committee of the Whole on January 17, 2017. The meeting will address the Education Cost Sharing shortfall for FY17 as well as the planning for the FY18 budget. He invited the RTM members to attend the 4th Annual Northeast Academy Arts Celebration. Performances will be held on January 18th from 5:15 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., January 19th at 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m and 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., January 20th 9:30 a.m to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Northeast Academy Arts Magnet Elementary School, 115 Oslo Street, Mystic. Dr. Graner spoke of the enormous contribution that Town Manager Mark Oefinger has made to the Town and school system. He stated that he will be greatly missed when he retires this spring.

Rep. Steinford stated that she had attended a Christmas Concert at Cutler Middle School and was looking forward to the 4th Annual Northeast Academy Arts Celebration.

Responding to Rep. Pasqualini, Town Manager Mark Oefinger noted that the Town Council had approved the hiring of an architect. He stated that it would be months before the hiring process is completed and was hopeful that the Bond Authorization was approved by that time. He added that the State allows design work before final approval as long as we follow their procedure.

In response to Rep. Merritt, Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that it his understanding that the Town had acquired the property on Colver Avenue by foreclosure.

Rep. Maher departed, 28 members present.

I. LIAISON REPORTS

Rep. Obrey stated that the Economic Development Committee has been reaching out to local businesses and talking to them about areas of improvement. Anyone who has an interest in talking to the Committee is welcome to contact them.

J. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE - Chairman Quinn

Temporary Chairman Nault read the minutes of the meeting held on January 11, 2017. The minutes are on file in the Town Clerk's Office.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and make a recommendation on Referral 2016-0292 Adoption of Ordinance to Amend the Enterprise Zone Ordinance.

Moderator Newsome explained that the Ordinance has been adopted by the Town Council and that it would require a 2/3 vote of the RTM membership to veto it.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Garcia, seconded by Rep. Evans and so voted unanimously.

A motion to veto Referral 2016-0292 Adoption of Ordinance to Amend the Enterprise Zone was made by Moderator Newsome, seconded by Rep. Garcia.

Responding to Rep. Swindell, Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that Branford Manor developers are looking for a predictable number for their investors on the amount of taxes that will have to be paid. He noted that in this agreement their taxes will be increased every year. He added that despite all the legal language in the amendment it basically gives the Town authority to

approve additional tax abatements or deferrals in the Enterprise Zone.

In Response to Rep. Wilson, Town Manager Mark Oefinger confirmed that if the taxpayer does not continue to meet all eligibility requirements the agreement can be terminated.

Rep. Gilly mentioned that the wording we are looking to adopt in the amendment comes from State Statute.

Responding to Rep. Kent, Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that some of the wording in the amendment may need legal interpretation.

Rep. Obrey stated that this amendment is a good investment and that it is essential that we work with developers.

The vote to veto Referral 2016-0292 Adoption of Ordinance to Amend the Enterprise Zone Ordinance failed 27 opposed, 1 abstention. Abstaining: Rep Adams.

2016-0292**Adoption of Ordinance to Amend the Enterprise Zone Ordinance****ADOPTION OF AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ENTERPRISE ZONE ORDINANCE (#229)**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF GROTON THAT:

1. Ordinance # 229, adopted July 18, 1995 and codified at § 14.5-3 of the Code of Ordinances, shall be amended by adding the following thereto:

a. (e)(1). Per Connecticut General Statutes § 32-71(e), the Town of Groton, acting through its Town Council, in its complete discretion, may approve additional tax abatements or deferrals of real property taxes for properties within the enterprise zone created by subsection (a) of Ordinance #229, on such terms and subject to such conditions that the Town Council deems necessary to achieve the purposes of the enterprise zone as manifested in Ordinance # 229 and in General Statutes Chapter 585, including § 32-71(a) through (e).

b. (e)(2). An applicant for additional tax abatements or deferrals pursuant to this subsection (e) shall comply with all Town of Groton requirements for applications for tax abatements and deferrals under subsection (b) of this Ordinance and under the Town's Enterprise Zone Description of Tax Benefits for Residential Properties and/or Enterprise Zone Guidelines, and shall provide the Town Council such other information in such forms as the Town Council requests in support of its application.

c. (e)(3). No such additional abatement or deferral shall be effective unless it is set out in a written agreement between the Town and the taxpayer that is approved by the Town Council upon the recommendation of the Town Manager, the Assessor, the Tax Collector, and the Director of the Office of Planning and Development Services, and is approved as to form and legal sufficiency by the Town Attorney. Any such agreement, whether for an abatement and/or for a deferral, shall be expressly subject to all requirements of §§ (b)(2-8), inclusive, of Ordinance #229, and all requirements of General Statutes §§ 32-71(b) through (e), inclusive. Any such written agreement shall include provisions requiring the taxpayer to provide the Town with written reports at least annually containing information necessary for the Town to determine whether the taxpayer has continued to meet all eligibility requirements hereunder. No such agreement shall have a term longer than twenty (20) years from the date of the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the improvements upon which it is based, inclusive of any period during which the assessments and/or deferrals provided by subsection (b) of this Ordinance are in effect.

d. Any agreement entered into between the Town and a taxpayer pursuant to § (e)(3) hereof

shall be recorded on the Land Records of the Town of Groton.

e. This Ordinance Amendment shall be effective forty-five (45) days after its enactment by the Town Council, unless vetoed by the RTM.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES -

No meeting, no report.

3. EDUCATION - Chairman Neugent

No meeting, no report.

4. RECREATION - Chairman Wilson

No meeting, no report.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman McDermott

No meeting, no report.

Rep. Gilly departed, 27 members present.

6. PUBLIC WORKS- Chairman Deane-Shinbrot

Chairman Deane-Shinbrot read the minutes of the meeting held on January 11, 2017. The minutes are on file in the Town Clerk's Office.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and make a recommendation on Referral 2016-0250 LED Conversion of Streetlights.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Moderator Newsome, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini and so voted unanimously as amended.

Responding to Rep. Obrey, Rick Norris of the Public Works Department noted that there would be a 65% to 75% savings on electrical costs with additional savings on maintenance.

In response to Rep. Powers Mr. Norris stated that the lights were equipped with timers for additional savings.

Rep. Kent asked if residents could submit input on which lights are replaced.

Mr. Norris stated that he is open to feedback and that any recommendations will be taken into consideration. He can be contacted at rnorris@groton-ct.gov.

Responding to Rep. Swindell, Mr. Norris clarified that the lights being replaced are Town lights only and that the City has a follow up project to replace their lights.

In response to Rep. Pasqualini, Mr. Norris stated that he was not aware of any issues that the LED lights would have on surveillance cameras but would look into it.

2016-0250 LED Conversion for Streetlights

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENTS TO CONVERT TOWN OWNED STREET AND PARKING LOT LIGHTS TO LIGHT-EMITTING DIODE (LED)

WHEREAS, the Town Council previously authorized the Director of Public Works to contract with Tanko Streetlighting, Inc. to conduct an Investment Grade Audit of the Town-owned street lights and parking lot lights, and

WHEREAS, Tanko has completed the audit and developed a conversion plan to replace the existing High Pressure Sodium (HPS) street and parking lot lights with Light-Emitting Diode

(LED) lights, and

WHEREAS, the contract with Tanko requires Town Council concurrence with the conversion plan prior to proceeding with the installation phase of the project, and

WHEREAS, financing alternatives were reviewed and a financial plan for the project was developed, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council concurs with the conversion plan and financing the plan through rebates and loans from Eversource, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager, Mark R. Oefinger, is authorized to complete the streetlight conversion and execute the financial plan.

A motion was made by Moderator Newsome, seconded by Rep. Frickman, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Massett

No meeting, no report.

K. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

None.

L. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

M. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Moderator Newsome, seconded by Rep. Wilson and so voted unanimously. The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 9:37 p.m.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Michael Thorpe, Town Clerk Office Assistant II