



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Meeting Minutes

Town Council

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, September 16, 2008

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Mayor Harry Watson.

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

Members Absent: Councilor Monteiro

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Mayor Watson.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2008-0217 Proclamation Recognizing the 125th Anniversary of the Founding of the Mystic Hook and Ladder Company

Read

The proclamation was read by Councilor Streeter.

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

2008-0225 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of September 2, 2008 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2008-0222 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL FUNDS

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

George Marshall - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Pfizer United Way Campaign - \$61-86 - Social Services Discretionary

Various Donations - \$580.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

City of Groton - \$43.75 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2008-0029 Global Warming Assessment

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0107 FYE 2008 Audit

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0215 Acceptance of Open Space at Neal Subdivision

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0218 Year Round Expanded DUI Enforcement Grant

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0220 TVCCA Supportive Housing Program Grant

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 Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Bond, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar. The motion carried unanimously

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilor Streeeter attended a Thames Street Revitalization Meeting, the dedication of the new addition at Fitch Senior High School, and a fund raiser for the Groton Animal Foundation. He, along with Councilor O'Beirne, Councilor Bond, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Brown-Tracy, and Mayor Watson, was present at the Citizenship Recognition Day Event which was well attended. Councilor Streeeter received an email announcing an Open House at the Noank Volunteer Fire Company on October 4, and another email regarding ID cards for retired police officers. He announced that on September 21, 2008 Marilyn Comrie will make a presentation at the Groton Public Library for the 70th anniversary of the 1938 hurricane. Councilor Streeeter, in response to a letter to the editor concerning alcohol on Town property, stated that fire department facilities belong to their respective fire districts and they have their own regulations. The Town Manager stated that all town buildings have a "no alcohol" policy.

2008-0232 ID Cards for Retired Police Officers

ID CARDS FOR RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS

A referral will be forwarded to the Public Safety Committee regarding identification cards for retired police officers.

Councilor Kolnaski attended a Police Officer swearing-in ceremony, a Phase II School Design Committee meeting, and a Ledge Light Health District meeting. She encouraged citizens to attend the 100th Anniversary of Town Hall on September 17, 2008. Councilor Kolnaski brought up the need for additional Council representation on the Town Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee. Councilor Brown-Tracy and Councilor O'Beirne volunteered to fill this void.

Councilor O'Beirne received the same emails mentioned earlier.

Councilor Bond also received the emails mentioned above. She announced that the Fall Festival which will be at Poquonnock Plains on October 11, 2008. Also on October 11, 2008, there will be a reenactment at the Jabez Smith House and a dedication ceremony for the Tercentennial Playground.

Mayor Watson received the same emails mentioned earlier. He attended the dedication ceremony

for the addition at Fitch Senior High School, a Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority meeting, and the ribbon-cutting of Lighthouse Voc-Ed Center on Route 1. The Mayor also attended a transportation meeting where they discussed instituting a shuttle in Mystic to alleviate parking and traffic problems in that area.

Councilor Sheets received the same emails as other Councilors, and she also attended the dedication of the addition at Fitch Senior High School. Councilor Sheets received several calls from potential volunteers for the Task Force on Climate Change and Sustainable Community and has encouraged them to contact the Town Clerk to express their interest.

Councilor Schmidt received the same emails mentioned above.

Councilor Brown-Tracy received the same emails as other Councilors. She attended the dedication of the new addition at Fitch Senior High School.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The RTM met September 10, 2008, and passed a resolution for funds to repair the police station.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk thanked those on the Citizenship Day Committee and staff for their participation in the Citizenship Recognition Day Event, and it was noted that a blog has been created which includes a slide show of the evening at grotontownhall.blogspot.com. The Town Clerk swore in a new Board of Education member, Dan Campbell. She stated that absentee ballots will be sent out this week to many countries worldwide. There is great interest in the upcoming election, and therefore a need for many volunteers to work at the polls. The celebration of the Anniversary of the Dedication of Town Hall is September 17, 2008. There will be an open house throughout the day and visitors may sign the original Visitor Register from 1908. At 5:30 p.m. "Morton F. Plant" will present a deed of gift to the Mayor, and the Town will also present a symbol of its appreciation to Mr. Plant in the form of a loving cup.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager suggested that the September 23, 2008 meeting be cancelled and rescheduled for September 30, 2008. Councilors agreed with the Town Manager's recommendation. The Town Manager stated that there is a core group of individuals interested in finding out more about Morton Plant and the whereabouts of possible memorabilia and artifacts that may have survived in connection with him, and he encouraged individuals to utilize the blog provided by the Town Clerk earlier. He reported that the dry water line to install service at Northeast Academy has been tested and accepted. There will be a "Shred-it" Day at the Senior Center on September 20, 2008 and the Fall Festival on October 11, 2008. The Town Manager received a packet of information from the State Attorney's office requesting that the Town delay issuing a demolition permit for 23 Library Street to allow the defense counsel to do an independent investigation as to the cause of the fire. The Town Attorney recommended that the Town proceed with demolition, but be willing to wait a short time with the assurance that the defense attorney would complete his investigation in a timely fashion. The Town Manager requested that the Council reconsider its action on the Homeland Security Grant Risk Analysis Software.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Brown-Tracy

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Bond

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Sheets

No meeting, no report.

e. Finance - Chairman Schmidt

No meeting, no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman O'Beirne

No meeting, no report.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Monteiro

No meeting, no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson

The Mayor stated that the Committee of the Whole discussed resolutions on global warming, the financial audit engagement letter, and two grants.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilor Streeter indicated that he received a packet of information about the Homeland Security Grant Risk Analysis Software. He still has concerns regarding the possibility of acquiring a management contract; redundancy in security analysis for Electric Boat, the SubBase, Army, National Guard, etc.; and the statement that after one year Groton would offer its services to other departments in New London county, as this would tax one or more police officers. Councilor Streeter is still against approving this grant.

Councilor Sheets read the informational packet and came to the same conclusions as Councilor Streeter.

X. NEW BUSINESS

2008-0029 Global Warming Assessment

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

WHEREAS, the Town Council's Environment and Energy Committee has given extensive consideration to a range of possible local responses to the causes and effects of climate change, and

WHEREAS, there is a statutory mandate by the State of Connecticut, under Public Act 08-98, directing municipalities and other governmental units to meet certain future goals to reduce carbon emissions and increase the use and efficiency of sustainable energy resources,

WHEREAS, it is desirable for municipalities to take the lead and to engage knowledgeable citizens in a collaboration to investigate climate effects, energy efficiency and more sustainable living arrangements, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council establishes, for a period of two years, a Task Force on Climate Change and Sustainable Community, said task force to consist of nine members and three alternates, to be appointed by the Town Council for terms of two years, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Task Force shall deliver an annual report and plan of action to the Town Council, such reports to be given at the Town Council meetings next following July 4, 2009, and 2010, and the Task Force shall meet with appropriate committees of the Town Council when appropriate, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution incorporates by reference the Task Force organizational statement attached to the agenda for this date.

A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Sheets pointed out that Public Act 08-98 directs the State of Connecticut to achieve statewide reductions in carbon emissions and in setting those goals, it does not single out municipalities as this resolution indicates.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0107

FYE 2008 Audit

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE FINANCIAL AUDIT ENGAGEMENT LETTER DATED JUNE 8, 2008

WHEREAS, the Town Council at their February 19, 2008 meeting authorized the Town Manager to execute a two-year extension of the current auditing contract with Blum Shapiro, and

WHEREAS, Vanessa Rossitto of Blum Shapiro attended the September 9, 2008 Committee of the Whole meeting to explain the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Statement on Auditing Standard No. 114 entitled "The Auditor's Communication with those charged with Governance", and

WHEREAS, at that September 9, 2008 meeting, Ms. Rossitto reviewed the engagement letter pertaining to the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008 financial audit with the Committee of the Whole, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may execute the financial audit engagement letter with Blum Shapiro.

A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0215

Acceptance of Open Space at Neal Subdivision

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING OPEN SPACE AT NEAL SUBDIVISION IN MYSTIC

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton has been offered a parcel of open space consisting of 1,890 square feet at the northeast corner of the Neal Subdivision, which fronts at 119 New London Road, Mystic, and

WHEREAS, that parcel of open space directly adjoins a substantial parcel of open space that was previously acquired and dedicated from the Wolfbrook Subdivision east of Noank Ledyard Road and Daniel Brown Drive, and

WHEREAS, the Groton Planning Commission recommended acceptance of this open space at its meeting of August 12, 2008, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town of Groton accepts the open space identified herein.

Refer to RTM

A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, that this matter be Adopted and Referred to the Representative Town Meeting.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0218

Year Round Expanded DUI Enforcement Grant

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT APPLICATION 2008-2009 COMPREHENSIVE

DUI ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM AGAINST DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS AND INTOXICANTS (DUI)

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton annually uses State of Connecticut Department of Transportation grants to provide extra patrol shifts for driver safety and DUI enforcement during a number of enforcement dates including major holidays, and

WHEREAS, a 75% funding grant for the 2008-2009 Comprehensive DUI Enforcement Program, with the Town paying 25% of the costs, is within the budget and work program of the Groton Town Police, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may apply for a 2008-2009 state DUI grant of up to \$73,300, with the Town to provide matching funds of up to \$18,325.

A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Streeter, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0220

TVCCA Supportive Housing Program Grant

RESOLUTION APPROVING TVCCA/HUD SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM GRANT

WHEREAS, homelessness is being addressed on several fronts by numerous programs but remains an ongoing problem for Groton and neighboring communities, and

WHEREAS, homeless persons with disabilities and homeless families in which at least one member is disabled require extensive counseling, support and case management services, and

WHEREAS, the Supportive Housing Program, operated by TVCCA as the grantee of record with the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, provides funding to enable agencies and municipalities to provide counseling, support and case management services via participation the Housing Collaborative Network, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the Town Manager, Mark R. Oefinger, to enter into an agreement with Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. to accept grant funding in the amount of \$9000 to conduct a Supportive Housing Program in Groton for the period of February 1, 2008 through January 31, 2009 and to utilize said funding to supplant a portion of the salaries and related fringe benefits of selected Groton Human Services staff, who shall provide counseling, support and case management services to the specified Groton client population via participation in the Housing Collaborative Network.

A motion was made by Councilor Brown-Tracy, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Sheets questioned whether the Town is currently collaborating with MASH. The Town Manager stated that it is one of Groton's resources. Councilor Sheets suggested a presentation from MASH to further inform Councilors about their program.

The motion carried unanimously

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:19 p.m. was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant