



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

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

## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council

**Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Natalie Burfoot Billing, Heather Sherman Bond, Catherine Kolnaski, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Paulann H. Sheets, Thomas J. Skrmetti, and Elissa T. Wright.**

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Tuesday, October 5, 2004

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

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#### REGULAR MEETING

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*Mayor Harry Watson called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.*

#### I. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Sheets, Councilor Skrmetti and Councilor Wright

Members Absent: Councilor Billing

*Also present were Acting Town Manager Doug Ackerman, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Office Assistant Maegan Paquette.*

#### II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

*The Salute to the Flag was led by Ed Ettinger.*

#### III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

##### 2004-0285 Proclamation of Comcast Cares Day

Read

*The proclamation was read by Councilor Bartinik.*

#### IV. CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

*Ed Ettinger, 174 Cedar Road, Mystic, spoke about the architect selection for the new schools. He recently read a small article in the The Day newspaper announcing that the firm Jeter, Cook, and Jepson had been awarded the new school building contract. Mr. Ettinger feels an issue of importance, such as this, should have received more public coverage. Mr. Ettinger would like to see the appointment of Jeter, Cook, and Jepson rescinded and a public hearing held to get taxpayers' input.*

*Mr. Ettinger noted that a public hearing was held the previous evening that no Town Councilors attended. The issues discussed were establishing a full day kindergarten and new school district divisions that may be established to address racial imbalances. Mr. Ettinger noted that these proposals are state requirements that could put an extra tax burden on residents. He feels the Town should not comply with the State requirements if enacted.*

#### V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

*Councilor Skrmetti agrees with Mr. Ettinger concerning mandate; however, the State can impose fines on the Town for failure to comply.*

*Councilor Sheets read the article in The Day announcing that the firm of Jeter, Cook, and Jepson had been selected as the Town's architect for the new school building project. She agrees with Mr. Ettinger that the public and the Town Council should have been informed during the selection process. She was under the impression that the Permanent School Building Committee would approach the Council to inform them as to how a final selection had been made.*

*Mayor Watson suggested reviewing the Town Council and COW minutes to find out if the Permanent School Building Committee was suppose to notify the Town Council before the final selection of the architectural firm was made.*

*Councilor Bond agrees with Councilor Sheets. She remembers being told the PSBC would notify*

*the Town Council before an architectural firm was hired. She noted the Town is investing a large sum of money in the new schools and the Town Council, as well as the public should have been better informed of the selection process.*

*Councilor Bartinik suggested having the PSBC members attend a Town Council meeting and explain what criteria were used in the selection of Jeter, Cook, and Jepson over the other applicants.*

*Councilor Sheets noted that if the PSBC and Town Council meet, it should be televised for the public to also be informed.*

*In response to Councilor Sheets' question, Mr. Ettinger said he did not know the dollar amounts being discussed regarding the implementation of an all day kindergarten and racial integration of school students.*

## VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

### a. Approval of Minutes

#### 2004-0287 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council of September 21, 2004 are hereby accepted and approved.

**This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.**

### b. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

#### 2003-0229 Fort Hill Homes NRZ Property Maintenance Code

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

### c. Special Trust Fund Contributions

#### 2004-0283 Contributions to Special Trust Funds

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

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

Various donations - \$495.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Groton Utilities - \$174.75 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

**This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.**

### Passed The Consent Calendar

**A motion was made by Councilor Skrmetti, seconded by Councilor Bartinik, Jr., 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 O'Beirne received a phone call from a resident in Pequot Village that he forwarded to the Town Manager's office. He received a letter from a Mystic resident concerned about the removal of a section of sidewalk. He will provide a copy of the letter to Town staff to address the resident's concerns.*

*He received a letter from resident Ed Ettinger regarding the issues he spoke about this evening during citizens' petitions.*

*Councilor O'Beirne thanked everyone involved in the creation of the new "Submarine Capital of the World" sign. He suggested a formal letter of thanks be sent to everyone involved in the making of the new sign.*

*Councilor Kolnaski attended the Town Council/RTM/Board of Education liaison Committee meeting on September 22, the Southeastern Connecticut Breast Cancer Health Task Force 4th*

*Annual Municipal Leaders Reception to kick off National Breast Cancer Awareness month on September 28; and the Universal Pre-Kindergarten Informational Meeting on September 29 at West Side Middle School.*

*As the Council member appointed to the Ledge Light Health District Board, she attended the meeting on September 30. Two resolutions were passed. The first is to submit an application to the Connecticut Breast Health Initiative to institute a "Breaking the Silence Campaign" program. The second resolution is to formally invite the Town of East Lyme to join the health district.*

*The HRSA award of a \$2 million grant for three years to address health care access for uninsured and underinsured residents of New London County was discussed.*

*Councilor Kolnaski noted some members of the Ledge Light Health District are disturbed by negative remarks and criticisms made by Town Council members.*

*She asked that any concerns be reported to her and she will relay the concerns to the Board.*

*On October 3, she attended the 50th Anniversary Dinner of the U.S.S. Nautilus. Many former crew members present were recognized and received awards. She found the event to be very touching as she had been a member of the group that helped bring the Nautilus to Groton as its permanent home.*

*Councilor Wright is in receipt of correspondence between Stuart Reininger of West Mystic and Police Chief Vanasse regarding police authority to exclude small boats from the Town dock at the end of Main Street in Noank. She would like research done into whether the dock was designed with a multi-use purpose in mind and whether there has been any subsequent Council action to limit its usage.*

*Councilor Sheets also attended the USS Nautilus 50th Anniversary Dinner. She noted that her husband Herman did a great deal of research and development on submarines fifty years ago when the USS Nautilus was commissioned.*

*She attended a Conservation Commission meeting on October 4. She said it has been very frustrating to see areas being developed that the Commission had proposed setting aside as open space. She feels an open space plan needs to be developed and approved by the Town Council and Conservation Commission.*

*Mayor Watson attended a Corps of Cadet Review at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy that was put on for COG representatives on September 24. On September 30 he attended the 50th Anniversary of the U.S.S. Nautilus commissioning at the museum and on October 2 he attended the dinner at the Groton Inn and Suites. He went to a DEP/EPA ceremony at the Noank dock to designate a no discharge area for boats on September 27.*

*The new "Submarine Capital of the World" sign was unveiled on I-95 on September 30. On September 30 the Mayor helped celebrate the airport's 75th anniversary. He also attended Shellfish dye testing with Steve Mansfield on South Road on September 29.*

*Sixty Comcast Cablevision employees helped paint, build shelves and landscape at the Riverfront Daycare Center on October 2. This was part of the Nationwide Comcast Cares Day.*

*Mayor Watson announced Fall Free Days for bulky waste will be held on October 23, 24, 28, 29, 30, and 31 at the Town landfill.*

*He received a letter from a citizen in regard to a sidewalk being removed on Burrows Street.*

*Mayor Watson announced the opening of the Big Y Supermarket will be held on October 21 at 10:30 a.m.*

*He received a call from the Town Attorney who would like to brief the Council on Navy Housing privatization.*

#### **b. Representative Town Meeting**

*Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox announced the next RTM meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 13, 2004 at the Senior Center. The RTM will be discussing the Fort Hill Homes ordinance and meeting with the Town Council to discuss the annual budget.*

#### **c. Clerk of the Council**

Clerk of the Council Tarbox noted that the Town Clerk's office has been busy issuing absentee ballots for the upcoming presidential election to be held on Tuesday, November 2, 2004. Thus far, 460 absentee ballots have been issued and sent to 18 different countries and many FPO and APO addresses. Clerk Tarbox noted rumors have been circulating that absentee ballots are only counted if the election is close. That is not true she stated; all absentee ballots received are counted. Provisional ballots are decided by the Registrar of Voters.

The Town Clerk's office will be open on Saturday, October 30, 2004 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. to issue absentee ballots.

Due to an overwhelming turnout on Election Day 2000, the Town Clerk's office will be closed on Election Day 2004 for all transactions with the exception of election business.

Town Clerk Tarbox noted that Land Records recorded a sale of over \$10 million which netted approximately \$53,000 in conveyance tax for the Town.

**d. Town Manager**

Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent spoke with a resident of Pequot Village who will be bringing in a list of concerns from the residents.

On October 28 the Martin Luther King Trust Fund Scholarship Dinner will take place at the Mystic Marriott. The Town Councilors can notify Mr. Vincent if they would like to attend. Mr. Vincent met with Governor Rell's assistant at the last CCM meeting and discussed an additional one percent tax to Town hotels. He did relay that the Town Council supports the hotel tax increase. He recommended that the Council have another legislative meeting to discuss this and other topics.

Mr. Vincent was pleased to announce that he has started meeting with the CCM legislative committee. Their primary list of priorities for this year includes smart growth and a build-out analysis for the State.

**e. Town Attorney**

None.

**VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Billing**

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 & Recreation - Chairman Sheets**

No meeting. No report.

**e. Finance - Chairman Wright**

No meeting. No report.

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

No meeting. No report.

**g. Public Safety - Chairman Skrmetti**

No meeting. No report.

**h. Public Works - Chairman Bartinik**

No meeting. No report.

**i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson**

**IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*Councilor Sheets asked if the Town Attorney will be giving an update on the status of the damaged sidewalk on West Main Street in Mystic at the next Town Council executive session.*

*Mayor Watson has given the information regarding the damaged sidewalk to Acting Town Manager Doug Ackerman to address.*

*The Mayor noted that the Town Attorney plans on discussing privatization of Navy Housing at the next Town Council executive session.*

*Councilor Sheets noted that Gretchen Chipperini, the property owner where the damaged sidewalk is located, has filed a motion for a protective order in court.*

**X. NEW BUSINESS**

*Councilor Sheets received a report from Finance Director Sal Pandolfo which listed the veterans that qualify for the new ordinance increasing their property tax exemption starting in 2005. She would like to know what the dollar figures are associated with the new ordinance.*

**XI. OTHER BUSINESS**

*None.*

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Bartinik and so voted unanimously.*

*Attest:*

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk  
Clerk of the Council*

*Maegan Paquette  
Office Assistant*