



John L. Salomone
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR STEPHEN WOODS

MINUTES

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING
Conference Room L-101 Lower Level – Town Hall

7:00 P.M.

July 22, 2014

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Woods at 7:10 p.m. in the Auditorium after being moved from L101 due to the large group of residents who wished to participate.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ROLL CALL

Councilor Borjeson
Councilor Castelle
Councilor Cohen - absent
Councilor Dinunzio
Councilor Klett
Councilor Marocchini
Councilor McDonald
Councilor Nagel
Mayor Woods

Staff Attendees:

John Salomone, Town Manager
Andy Brecher, Economic Development Director
Attorney Boorman, Town Attorney
Robert Mulhall, Police Chief
Jaime Trevethan, Assistant to the Town Manager – Administration
Linda Irish-Simpson, Clerk of the Council

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (In Person/Via Telephone)

Ed Seremet, 60 Cinnamon Road: He read a letter expressing his concern to utilize dedicated open space for the construction of the Community Center and felt the Town Council was ignoring the land use plan. Mr. Seremet suggested the Council reconsider their position on this and the use of dedicated open space.

Ed Young, 485 Church Street: He had farmed the Young Deming Farm for years. He indicated he caught the construction company using the property as a pad site for the Metropolitan District sewer lines and removing the top soil. It was pushed into piles and taken to Vernon Circle to the construction company. There were approximately 25-30 truckloads of material removed and indicated he would be filing an FOI request to obtain all contracts and deals made regarding the site.

Leigh Grande, 79 Tremont Street: She expressed her disapproval of the project to build the Community Center on open space. She asked for information on the cost of rebuilding and refurbishing the current Town Hall with minimal new offerings. There was no need for a dance studio, fitness center or a two story atrium and did not feel there was a need to keep the Community Center separate from Town Hall. Mrs. Grande agreed the Town Hall needed to be renovated but was not in favor of using open space.

Madeline Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive: She asked for all participants to be respectful and to listen to all attentively.

Gary Bolles, 28 Burdon Lane: He stated he was insulted that at the recent Public Hearing there were Councilors who kept track of people older than 55, which he said was discriminatory. He said the proposal to build in the Park was in violation of the 20/20 Plan. The area proposed were wetlands and Mr. Bolles indicated that once an area were wetlands it remained wetlands.

Gail Budrejko, 21 Isabelle Terrace: She indicated that some of the Councilors were familiar with the 20/20 Plan but felt others had not heard of it, forgotten about it or not read it. She read various parts of the plan to the Council. Mrs. Budrejko said that the maps in the Plan indicated the entire area of Mill Pond Park was dedicated open space. She asked how the Town could build in an area dedicated as open space, and was the 20/20 Plan considered by the Building Committee or the Town Council.

Patty Foley, 51 Crown Ridge: She indicated she was not in favor of building in the Park since you could not replace approximately 70,000 square feet of space. Mrs. Foley said the Town was built out and there was only 8% open space available, with two-thirds of it being wetlands. She felt the buildings would cost the Town more since there were no energy efficiencies or solar energy, etc. included in the budget.

Sarah Jorgensen, 35 Florence Street: She said although she was a Democrat, the issue was not Republican versus Democrat. Her children were fourth generation in Town and wanted to keep the open space available for all to enjoy. She felt there were other areas in Town to build the Community Center and there should be consideration given to future expansion.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: She indicated there was tension on both sides of the issue and hoped there would be a compromise that would be good for the Town. She will be voting No on the referendum but if there was a compromise, she might reconsider her vote. She asked two questions: 1) Were public hearings held just before decisions were made to satisfy statutory requirements or did the Council really want to hear opinions from residents 2) How many referendums can be held, how long between referendums, does the question have to change and how much of a majority does the referendum need?

IV. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS (Action May Be Taken)

A. Town Hall Renovation Project – Discussion/Updates

John Salomone gave an overview of the brochure that had been designed and reviewed by the Town Attorney, Bond Attorney and the State Election Commission. The brochure will be sent to all residents in Town to give them additional information prior to voting. Once approved and addresses streamlined the brochure would be sent out to the printer and mailed in the next couple of weeks.

On Wednesday he was scheduled to attend a meeting at the Rotary Club at noon to present information on the project.

Councilor Klett was concerned about the brochure stating “Therefore, funding for the project is not expected to result in an increase in the annual tax levy for each taxpayer.” She felt it was misleading since maintenance of the building and additional staffing were not included and felt it would result in higher taxes. She did not feel it should be included in the flyer. Mr. Salomone indicated she had the right to object to anything in the brochure and was sure she would make it clear to the taxpayers ahead of time. He stated the sentence referred to the affect of the debt on the project. If the Council stayed within the parameters of the CIP, the project would be funded without an increase in taxes. He said the brochure was meant to be as neutral as possible. She also asked about whether or not Cross Road would be widened for the project and was told that was not part of the plan. Councilor Klett asked the Bond Attorney about the questions asked by Mrs. Lyons. He indicated there was no limit on the number of referendums, there was no set time limit in between referendums, and the Town did

not have to change the project in a second referendum. It was up to the Committee. He also indicated a simple majority was needed to pass or fail the referendum and there was not a minimum number of voters needed to make it valid. He was asked about the possibility of a supplemental question giving a choice between two options and he stated the Town could not give a choice between two projects. It had to be a yes or no answer.

Councilor Nagel had hoped the Town Council would have had the ability to review the brochure to make comments or suggestions ahead of time. He questioned the parking lot between the Town Hall and Library pictured in the brochure and thought there was a separate fund in the CIP for the parking lot. Mr. Salomone explained the walkway and the present parking lot were part of the site plan and was included in the project. The money the Councilor referred to was money dedicated for additional parking to be constructed adjacent to the Library. The Town Manager stated they did not anticipate Town employees doing any work for the project in answer to the Councilor's question. Councilor Nagel wanted to ensure a plan was in place for the safety of the school children on the day of the referendum and was told the Town Manager would be meeting with the Chief of Police and the Superintendent to discuss those plans.

Councilor Borjeson complimented Mr. Salomone and his staff for their work on the brochure, which addressed the issues and was a fair representation of the project.

Councilor Dinunzio thought the brochure would help the voters understand the project and the issues. He asked why Downes Construction was not sourced in regard to the budget. Mr. Salomone indicated it was a good point and could be added to the brochure.

Mayor Woods asked if there was anything done differently for the preparation of the brochure and the Town Manager stated it was done in-house using available GIS information. The Mayor stated the referendum would go through the democratic process and it was up to the voters to pass or reject the proposal. If it passed, it would go through the standard approval process and if it failed, would be sent back to the Building Committee and Town Council to develop another proposal for the taxpayers. The Mayor thanked everyone involved in preparing the document and thought it was well thought out and fair.

B. Acceptance of Grant Funding – Former National Welding Building

Councilor Borjeson moved the following:

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby approves the acceptance of grant funding in the amount of \$2,000,000 from the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development for a project entitled “National Welding Demolition, Remediation, and Re-use Project” and authorizes John L. Salomone, Town Manager, to make, execute and approve on behalf of the Town of Newington the following documents:

- 1) Assistance Agreement by and Between the State of Connecticut Acting by the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Town of Newington re: National Welding Demolition, Remediation and Re-use Project**
- 2) Certificate of Applicant**
- 3) Declaration of Restrictive Use Covenant**
- 4) Escrow Agreement**
- 5) Negative Pledge and Agreement**
- 6) Affidavit of Commercial Transaction and Statutory Waiver of Notice and Hearing**

and John L. Salomone, Town Manager, is further authorized to execute any and all other documents he determines are necessary to secure the grant.

Councilor Klett stated she would not support the resolution because of her concerns of the Town abdicating responsibility on the piece of property. Councilor Nagel agreed with Councilor Klett since he doubted the Town and citizens would have the final decision on what happened to the property.

Councilor Dinunzio was concerned about the use restriction. Mr. Brecher stated the restriction was for 10 years for transit oriented development. Originally the definition included a large portion of high density affordable housing, which the Town objected to. The Town could allow a single use (commercial, retail, industrial, housing), or a mix of uses.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Marocchini and passed on a roll call vote 5 – 3.

Yes: Councilors Borjeson, Castelle, Marocchini, McDonald, Mayor Woods

No: Councilors Dinunzio, Klett, Nagel

Absent: Councilor Cohen

C. Consideration of Canceling the August 26, 2014 Town Council Meeting

Councilor McDonald moved the following:

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby alters its meeting schedule by canceling its regular meeting scheduled for August 26, 2014.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Castelle and passed 8 – 0 (Councilor Cohen, absent).

V. CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

A. Request for Bid Waiver – MRAP Project

Mr. Salomone and the Police Chief requested a bid waiver to finish the project to make the new emergency vehicle street worthy, which would be used by emergency services and police. Chief Mulhall gave an overview of the project to convert the vehicle from military to civilian use. The cost would be \$54,365 with monies from drug asset seizures used to pay for it. He indicated the vehicle would be stored at the Police station.

The item will be placed on the next agenda.

VI. RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS (Action May Be Taken)

A. Appointments to Boards and Commissions

Councilor Castelle moved the following:

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby makes the following appointment(s):

7. Conservation Commission

Name	Address	Party	Term	Replaces
Alternate:	65 Rosewood Drive	R	Immediate -	Vacant

Tim Manke			11/30/15	
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The motion was seconded by Councilor Klett and passed 8 – 0 (Councilor Cohen, absent).

VII. TAX REFUNDS (Action Requested)

Councilor Marocchini moved the following:

RESOLVED:

That property tax refunds in the amount of \$ 3,178.69 are hereby approved in the individual amounts and for those named on the “Requests for Refund of an Overpayment of Taxes,” certified by the Revenue Collector, a list of which is attached to this resolution.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Nagel and passed 8 – 0 (Councilor Cohen, absent).

VIII. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Action Requested)

A. Regular Meeting, 7/8/14

Councilor Nagel indicated the Council had not approved the May 13, 2014 meeting minutes and will be added to the next meeting’s agenda.

Councilor Nagel moved to accept the July 8, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes and was seconded by Councilor Borjeson. The motion passed 8 – 0 (Councilor Cohen, absent).

IX. WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER, OTHER TOWN AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS, OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC

None

X. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Borjeson stated the first meeting of the Housing Needs Survey Committee will be held on July 29, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. in Town Hall.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (In Person/Via Telephone)

Jeananne McMahon, 17 Copper Beech Lane: She stated there were three components to the project 1) Town Hall Renovation 2) Community Center build 3) Location of the new Community Center on Mill Pond Park. The Town is highly developed and thought no matter where the center was built in Town, people would use it. It did not have to be in the Park and she was against the plan.

Gail Budrejko, 21 Isabelle Terrace: She questioned why during the planning process there were no environmental impact studies done or formal conversations with the Conservation Commission.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: She asked other than satisfying statues, why were public hearings held? She said the references to the project were not consistent and gave four different examples. She felt the map in the brochure should indicate where the wetlands were to understand the project more fully. Mrs. Lyons wanted clarification if the referendum failed, would it go back to the Building Committee, a new site chosen and then a new referendum submitted to the voters. She also wanted an update on the Newington Junction project.

Sarah Jorgensen, 35 Florence Street: She wondered why items throughout Town could not be fixed like lights, pools, or adding a gym to a school instead of using open space.

Gary Bolles, 28 Burdon Lane: He asked if the town employee who had sent the email on town time to approximately 200 people asking for their support for the project had been talked to about the illegal use of town equipment on town time. He would like someone to get back to him on it.

Karen Osgood, 78 Garfield Street: She was concerned about the project and had talked to several representatives at the recent Extravaganza. She asked how the Community Center would help the seniors and others not just the 90 kids cut from the basketball program. She felt the Council should listen to the residents who utilize the facilities and build something for a broad range of voters. Mrs. Osgood stated she would be voting No on the referendum and would continue to educate others about it.

Patty Foley, 51 Crown Ridge: She felt the map in the brochure should have included the trees that surround the property. She indicated that of the \$6 million in CIP approximately \$1.2 million was for debt over 20 years and would not have that money to spend on other needed projects.

Madeline Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive: She asked that the Councilors speak directly into the microphones since they could not hear them in the audience. She asked if the referendum failed would the project go back to the drawing board to be given a thorough redo or would it be recycled and put out to the voters again. She asked what the specific cost of the referendum was.

Dr. Finkelstein, 272 Candlewyck Drive: He stated he was in favor of the project and wanted to recognize the hard work done by the committee over the years. There was a large, vocal group of residents who were against the project but did not know if they represented all of the taxpayers. The building needed to be renovated and he supported the project.

XII. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor Castelle mentioned the following: 1) With a renovated Town Hall there would be warranties on everything so it was expected maintenance and pay-as-go projects would be greatly reduced. 2) If the referendum failed, the Committee would go back, review everything in great detail and understand why the project failed. 3) The site was chosen after several years by unanimous vote of the Committee. The information was available and mentioned at least 24 times in the local newspapers. 4) In 2012 the goal was to keep the Community Center on the campus which was not clearly defined but did mean using the Park in one way or another. 5) Ultimately he wished the bus garages would be moved and the area reclaimed as Park land. 6) The democratic process was in place and the voters should decide on the project, which is how it should work.

Councilor Klett thanked all the residents who came to speak as well as Town staff and volunteers who worked at the Extravaganza, which was very successful. She also stated 1) the Town employee who sent the email regarding the referendum to the Mayor, Town Manager, Chairman of Recreation but not to the Minority Leader, Councilor Nagel, and she wondered why. 2) She was unaware of a survey taken during the last meeting of people who were over 55 3) The Town Council should receive information on the status of the Young Farm property regarding the removal of top soil. Councilor Nagel thanked everyone involved in the project and the individuals who spoke at the meeting whether they were for or against it.

Councilor Dinunzio stated there were umbrellas at Mill Pond Park that were in need of repairs per the lifeguards and asked the Town Manager to check with Bruce Till on the matter. He asked clarification from the Town Manager on the distance needed for fireworks held in the Park.

Councilor McDonald thanked everyone who attended the meeting and appreciated their comments. At the Public Hearing there were approximately 70 people from the public and about 20 spoke. She made informal note of it being a small cross section of the community and compared it with the current meeting which was a broader cross section of Newington. She had heard from a previous councilor that they had ignored the mandate of the people by having the referendum in September and felt it took more than 20 people from a small cross section of the overall community to consider that a mandate of the voters. Councilor McDonald wanted to be sure everyone knew she did not devalue residents over 55. Everyone was valued whether she agreed or disagreed with them.

Councilor Marocchini thanked all the volunteers and staff for their efforts during the Extravaganza which was a success.

Mayor Woods thanked everyone who participated and volunteered for the Extravaganza which was great for the Town. He spoke to the Fire Marshall regarding the fireworks being held in the Park if the Community Center were to be built there. The Fire Marshall indicated there was no code but said that if the building was not occupied at the time the 300 feet distance was OK. He said the site was chosen after many months of meetings with other locations being considered as well. The Mayor urged all residents to vote on September 9. Whether it passed or not their voices would be heard loud and clear. If it failed, the Building Committee would review the project again and determine another plan to bring to the voters.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION RE: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. to go into Executive Session regarding Collective Bargaining. All Councilors at the regular meeting, Town Manager Salomone, Dr. William Collins, Superintendent of Schools, and Stephen Foresi, Director of the Newington Public Schools Office of Human Capital Development were present.

Councilor Marocchini moved to go out of Executive Session at 10:20 p.m. Motion seconded by Councilor Nagel. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Cohen absent)

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Castelle moved to adjourn at 10:20 p.m.. Motion seconded by Councilor Nagel. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Cohen absent)

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Irish-Simpson

Linda Irish-Simpson
Clerk of the Council