

**SPECIAL MEETING  
MAY 17, 2010**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on Monday, May 17, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers, Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, CT.

Present: Councilor Drake, Hurley, Manousos, McAlister, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann

Absent: Councilor Kotkin

Present from the Redevelopment Commission: Daniel Camilliere, Joseph Soja, Paul Thompson, and Michael Zaleski

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk

Chairperson Hemmann called the meeting to order to discuss redevelopment in Town.

Paul Thompson explained the overview of the Redevelopment Agency and the statutes that they labor under which have two distinct points associated with them. One is the properties that are considered must be deteriorated, substandard, a detriment to the community's health or welfare, and have a redevelopment plan with the property owner. The second point is property that is to be considered is commercial property and does not involve residential properties or any work in residential areas. The Agency has examined sixteen potential sites over the past few years, with four promising sites along the Berlin Turnpike, seven sites on the Silas Deane Highway, and five other sites around town. The most pressing sites are along the Silas Deane Highway and the Berlin Turnpike. The three primary sites are the Fun Zone, the Weight Watchers, and the Northeast Utilities buildings. Paul Thompson explained that they have received a proposal for one redevelopment plan, a RFP has been done and they have narrowed it down to one vendor for approximately \$40,000-\$41,000. The focus is on the feasibility analysis of the property based on market conditions, preferred option with the plan for site use of the property, and assistance with the development of statutorily defined redevelopment plan. He explained the key goal of the Redevelopment Agency is to develop a partnership with a developer who is looking at a specific property. The partnership includes working with the property owner. The primary goal is to get economic development accomplished in a timely manner, in partnership with the property owners and with the town community and finding the best use that fits the community's needs.

Chairperson Hemmann asked what the timeline is for the study to be completed.

Peter Gillespie responded that the proposal has three phrases which need to be completed in 90 days and also work closely with the agency and town staff.

Councilor Montinieri asked that Peter Gillespie explain why the focus went from the Fun Zone property to a different site.

Peter Gillespie noted that the owner of the Fun Zone property had no interest in sharing the cost of the study so the Redevelopment Agency moved on. Peter Gillespie added that the Weight Watcher's property is comprised of five separate properties which are side by side which makes for a larger development potential. There are two owners that are willing to become a financial contributor to contribute for a study.

Councilor Hurley asked about activity on the Berlin Turnpike.

Peter Gillespie responded that most of the properties are sandwiched between other properties. In addition to the apartment property, there may be one or two properties that people are looking at.

Deputy Mayor Console asked about the status of the apartment building.

Peter Gillespie responded that there are no plans yet but the owner is working with the Planning and Zoning Commission on regulations.

Deputy Mayor Console asked about the size of the Weight Watchers' property.

Peter Gillespie reported that the Weight Watchers' property runs deep to the railroad tracks and is bigger than the Fun Zone property.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if the surrounding properties around the Weight Watchers' building are owned by different owners.

Peter Gillespie noted there are five or six other property owners which make negotiations complicated. There are two side by side owners who have expressed an interest.

Councilor Hurley asked if the Redevelopment Agency has looked into a legal option of filing a vacancy tax to fund the facade program or offset active business taxes.

Peter Gillespie responded that options are limited in Connecticut. The only states that have authority to file vacancy taxes are Georgia and Kentucky. He reported that the Redevelopment Agency is made up of five members, three which make a quorum and they do have one resignation at this time.

Councilor Hurley asked what the Agency would like to see from the Council in addition to what has been budgeted.

Peter Gillespie responded that as they move forward, to continue to have meetings, the Agency will need the Council's support with any property that is put together and will continue to communicate with Council.

Mr. Tooker asked if he could suggest the property near the railroad tracks.

Chairperson Hemmann announced that the Council has budgeted \$10,000 for the Redevelopment Agency.

Mr. Swanson thanked the Council and reported that the process takes a long time and asked Council that they continue to work together with the Agency.

Joseph Soja announced that his term expires at the end of June and thanked the Agency for the opportunity to work with them.

Councilor Hurley asked what the Agency would need if they could have a blank check for next year.

Peter Gillespie responded that with the studies being done, \$40,000 to \$50,000 would be beneficial.

Paul Thompson added that depending upon the opportunities that are out there, he wants to keep communication open.

At 6:55 p.m., Chairperson Hemmann adjourned the meeting to begin the Regular Town Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk  
*Approved by vote of Council*  
*June 7, 2010*