

**REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 8, 2009**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Console, Forrest, Hemmann, Kotkin, Roberts, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Montinieri, and Chairperson Adil.

Absent: Councilor Cascio

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

**PROCLAMATION**

**HEALTHY KIDS DAY**

Chairperson Adil read the Healthy Kids Day proclamation.

**CONSTITUTION WEEK**

Chairperson Adil read the Constitution Week Proclamation.

**REPORT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, presented the following report:

**WELCOME**

- AHEPA Apartments – 1532 Berlin Turnpike – A CO has been issued for the second Phase of this property which consists of 42 additional apartment units for seniors/elderly.
- Wethersfield Family Dental Center – 899 Silas Deane Highway – Dr. Liu.

**UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

- A building permit application has been issued that would permit Sterling Jewelers to expand into the recently available space adjacent to their store at 965 Silas Deane Highway.
- Renovations are nearing completion on Farm Fresh a fruit and vegetable market at the Goff Brook Shops at 1267 Silas Deane Highway.
- The PZC approved plans for an additional and residential use to the property at 75 Garden Street for Dr. Weston.

## **DEVELOPER/PROPERTY OWNER/REALTOR CONTACT**

- Working with prospective property owner for purchase of 322 Silas Deane Highway and conversion to a financial services office. An application for façade funds has been approved by the EDIC. Application has been filed with the PZC and is scheduled for September 15.
- Working with owners of Hair Works a beauty salon requesting approval for space at the Goff Brook Shops at 1267 Silas Deane Highway.
- Façade Improvements – Subway – 770 Silas Deane Highway.
- 840 Silas Deane Highway – Former Manny’s Auto – Working with prospective tenant for lease of this space.
- 526 Silas Deane Highway - Former Ritz Camera/Photo – working with realtor on possible sale of the property.
- 1178 Silas Deane Highway – Former Fun Zone – Met with property owner to discuss potential buyer’s interest in property.
- Met with realtor to discuss developer interest in commercial property for multi-family development.
- Discussed plans with business owner for potential use of vacant space formerly occupied by Blockbuster Video at 699 Silas Deane Highway.
- Met with owner of Comstock Ferre property to discuss status of property and any potential need for Town assistance.

## **OTHER NEWS AND INITIATIVES**

### **Economic Development and Improvement Commission**

- A mailing was sent to all Wethersfield businesses to promote the Shop Wethersfield program and staff are presently compiling the information for the development of an electronic business directory. The response has been very good.
- The Commission has prepared a detailed RFP in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce on the creation of a more comprehensive business directory and Town Guide. An RFP has been sent out and is due on Tuesday September 8.
- A breakfast with the real estate community is scheduled for October 1 at the Country Club.
- Planning is underway for this year’s Salute To Business, date not yet finalized, likely to be scheduled during the first or second week in December at the Country Club.
- The EDIC will be hosting a booth at this year’s Cornfest scheduled for September 12.

### **Tourism/ Preserve America**

- We selected Design:Clark for the preparation of detailed designs for our wayfinding signage program. Preliminary design concepts have been submitted for review.
- The Historic Wethersfield brochure was recently updated and reprinted for distribution. We now have an adequate supply that should carry us through the end of 2010.

**Noteworthy**

- A draft of a new ordinance that would authorize our Land Use Commissions to charge additional Land Use Fees was approved by Town Council.
- Working on RFP for consultant to update 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development.

Councilor Roberts asked what business was at 372 Silas Deane Highway before and for an explanation of the land use fees.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, said that the property was residential but zoned for commercial. He said that the land use fees will give the Town's land commissions the ability to have the applicant pay for the expenses associated with the Town hiring outside consultants. It would not happen often, only with large scale projects or controversial projects. The existing land fees are small and don't give the Town the opportunity to seek payment for outside services.

Councilor Hemmann led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Harry Lichtenbaum, 16 Towne House Lane, said that he is not complaining about anything but rather commenting on a newspaper article. The article says that Glastonbury is reduction the number of polling places in Town, not actual voting districts. It will save Glastonbury about 25 percent of its election expenses. It makes sense in these tough economic times. It is a great idea that the Town should be considering if it is not already.

Amy Northrop, Director of the Wethersfield Historical Society, said that she is delighted to announce that the new exhibit, Looking Back: Wethersfield Through Photographs, will open with a reception on Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. There will also be a lecture on the making of the photograph book in October.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, said that the financial market is still bad and the Town has to think about cutting back. He said that at the last meeting a resident said that according to the DEP website the Wilkus property is polluted. The Town shouldn't have purchased the property if that was a problem unless the Town was aware of the problem. As citizens, they were not told of the pollution of the property and they should have been. The cash is sitting in the bank account for the purchase of the property. The Town shouldn't have money in hand before the closing, a homeowner would never do it. He said Morrison Avenue is not safe and something should be done about it. He said that he was surprised by the order for the Cottone Field electrical work at the last meeting. He said that the Town should not be paying for this work. A group of citizens was supposed to pay.

## COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Councilor Forrest said that the Energy Committee met with the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology to discuss possible renewable energy opportunities in Town. Solar energy is on the top of the list. He asked that any Councilor who has not commented on the Comprehensive Energy Plan and wants to, submit comments to the Town Manager. He also asked that the Board of Education be reminded to review the Plan. He would like all comments back by Friday, September 18<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Kotkin said that:

1. At the end of August the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board met and discussed Mill Woods Park. The Little League field is a smash hit. There are some small areas of maintenance that need to be address. A lot of foul balls are going over the backstop and the Board is looking at raising the fence. The press box hasn't been finished. Many donations have been received and only \$11,000 will be spent from the building funds. An Eagle Scout is building the batting shed. The Dog Park had its annual dog swim fundraiser and made about \$10,000. The Dog Park Board would like to use the money for drainage.
2. The Budget and Finance Committee met earlier in the evening. He said that despite all the problems with the recession, preliminary numbers show that the Town is ending last year within its financial policy, leaving a little more than 8 percent in the fund balance. The Town Manager gave the Committee numbers on the storm damage. There were a lot of unexpected costs associated with that storm. It was a good thing that the Town had this buffer. Councilor Kotkin stated that during the last budget session Town staff looked for \$250,000 for new tax software. The Committee met with MUNIS representatives and discussed all the efforts that have been made to update the software to meet the Town's needs. It is a significant cost to the Town if it has to go from \$10,000 to \$50,000 a year over five years. The Committee will continue to monitor this. The Committee also discussed the budget impact of the Comprehensive Energy Plan and will have a report to the Town Manager shortly. He said that the Committee only received half of the Town Clerk's reviews. He asked that the Councilors return them so that the Committee can perform her annual appraisal.

Councilor Roberts said that she held Council hours last week and had one resident stopped by. She is a member of the Library Board and had some good ideas to share.

Councilor Walsh thanked Amy Northrop and Doreen Carcia for being at the meeting. He said that he can't wait to see the Historical Society exhibit. He knows that a lot of work went into the book and exhibit. He also thanked Mary Thibeault and Kathy Bagley for all of their work with the fireworks and Harry Lichtenbaum for securing the band that performed that night. He said that it was a great evening with a great turnout. He said that the next 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event will be the parade on September 27<sup>th</sup>. There are 60 groups marching; 15 bands and 13 floats. He

said that he would like to clarify a public comment, no Town money will be used in the Cottone Field lighting work as clearly stated in the motion.

At 7:45 p.m., Deputy Mayor Montinieri arrived.

Chairperson Adil said that:

- Saturday, September 11<sup>th</sup> - Soccer Jamboree at Wethersfield High School and the Cornfest on the Broad Street Green.
- Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup> - Keane Foundation Family Picnic on the Broad Street Green.
- September 17<sup>th</sup> – Intercommunity Inc. event at the Pond House.
- September 18<sup>th</sup> - Stand Down at the Veteran’s Home in Rocky Hill
- The Social and Youth Services food bank is severely low on food. He asked residents to consider making donations.

### TOWN MANAGER REPORTS

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, handed out information on the Wilkus Property and tornado expenses.

Chairperson Adil asked if he could clarify the costs associated with issuing the bonds and what it would be if the Town split the issuance between the Wilkus property and the other projects.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the cost is about \$20,000 to issue the bonds. There are certain costs that are unrelated to a scale. They range from \$500 to \$2,500 depending on underwriting and attorney fees. There would be redundancies in costs in issuing bonds twice.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Wilkus property accounts for only \$2,700,000 of the bond issuance. At the time the Town Manager and Finance Director were concerned that the Town would not have enough cash to bridge over until the tax payments were received in late July. Councilor Kotkin said that it is good that the Town sold the bonds because shortly after the sale the Town had to incur costs from the tornado. The Town did the right thing.

Councilor Console asked for the average interest rate for the bonds issued for the Wilkus Property.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that an interest rate was factored into a daily rate. He said that it was about 4 percent but he will get the numbers.

Councilor Kotkin said that he remembers the average was 3.83 percent over the life of the bonds.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the storm clean up numbers submitted to FEMA were higher than the actual dollars because FEMA values the loss and not the replacement value of the

items. An example of this is the value of a 200 year old tree versus the replacement cost of a smaller replacement tree. The total out of pocket expense for the Town at this point is estimated at \$76,000. The rest of the expense is the difference of values by FEMA and the \$400,000 reimbursement from the insurance company.

Councilor Kotkin said that when he looked at the list of expenses he noticed the Housing Authority sustained a lot of damages. He asked for a report on what happened there.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that he has spoken to the Housing Authority Director and there are about \$67,000 in non-reimbursable expenses. He will have more information for the next meeting.

Chairperson Adil asked if the roofing inspector could inspect all the Town roofs.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said the preliminary report on the revenue has also been handed out.

#### COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“TO RETRACT THE APPOINTMENT OF SCOTT C. COURTEMANCHE TO THE BOARD OF ETHICS BECAUSE HIS APPOINTMENT WOULD EXCEED THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF MEMBERS FROM ONE POLITICAL PARTY”** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Chairperson Adil asked how this occurred?

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, said that there is a different formula for this Board, only two members from each political party can serve on it.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“TO APPOINT JAMES T. HULBERT TO THE WETHERSFIELD ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FOR A TERM BEGINNING 9-8-09 TO 6-30-12 AND CAROLINE A. TEDONE, GERRY SEKLECKI, AND CLAIRE A. MEHAN TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR A TERM FROM 9-8-09 TO 6-30-12”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Hemmann moved **“TO APPOINT KATHY BAGLEY, DONNA MATTISON, AND KATHI LIBERMAN TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR A TERM FROM 9-8-09 TO 6-30-12”** seconded by Councilor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

### OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Roberts moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN, AFTER REVIEW AND APPROVAL BY THE TOWN ATTORNEY, A FREQUENCY RECONFIGURATION AGREEMENT WITH NEXTEL COMMUNICATIONS OF MID-ATLANTIC, INC. AND MOTOROLA, INC. FOR THE RECONFIGURATION OF THE TOWN’S 800 MHZ RADIO SYSTEM”** seconded by Councilor Walsh.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the Town has been working for sometime under the leadership of RaeAnn Palmer to oversee the rebanding process.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that over the course of the last four years she has worked with Town staff, the Town Attorney, and the radio engineer to develop a plan to move the radio system from the existing five frequencies to a different place on the 800mhz band. This process will essentially move public safety and public service away from the telephone frequency. The assumption being that there will be no interference with the telephones. It is mandated and the Town has to do it. The Town has completed the planning process and financial issues have been resolved. The authorization tonight is for funding 128 new radios. 252 user equipment radios will be upgraded to work on the new frequency. Infrastructure on towers will be replaced. The system will be retuned and tested, too. The cost is \$317,000 and will be paid by Nextel. The money will not be passed through the Town.

Chairperson Adil said that he appreciates Ms. Palmer’s work and that of the Committee.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO IMPLEMENT THE ATTACHED SELF INSURANCE RESERVE FUND POLICY”** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

### **FINANCIAL POLICY – SELF INSURANCE RESERVE FUND FOR THE TOWN AND BOARD OF EDUCATION**

1. Pursuant to the Town of Wethersfield Code Chapter 14 – Article II –Section 14-5 and 14-6 and these financial policies, the Town maintains an established Self Insurance Reserve Fund for the purpose of paying for all fees associated with employee medical benefits. This fund is separate from the General Fund, and it shall be audited annually as any other Town funds by the Town’s auditors. Revenue to this fund shall include contributions from the Board of Education and Town, employee co-share contributions, investment earnings and any other miscellaneous funds that relate to this fund. Expenditures from this Self Insurance Reserve fund will include charges from the Health Insurance Administrators for all hospital and medical claims; claim administrative fees; Producer of Record contract fees; actuarial fees; stop-loss insurance fees and any other associated fees incurred on behalf of participating employees of the Town and Board of Education respectively shall be paid from this Fund. The Board of Education is

to be notified by the Town Manager prior to any Town Council motion to transfer funds from this Reserve Fund for other uses. Any transfers from this Reserve Fund must first comply with the goals as outlined in paragraph #5 of this policy. Transfers from this Reserve Fund shall require seven affirmative votes of the Town Council.

2. As per the Town's Code (Section 10-10), the Town shall retain an insurance consultant (who may also be the broker for the Town) to request renewal estimates from the Health Insurance Administrator and will bid out the Administrative services at a minimum of 3 year intervals. The consultant shall review the renewal estimates from the Health Insurance Administrator and will review contractual benefits, past claims, administrative costs, and employee demographics separately for Town employees and Board employees participating in their respective health insurance plans, as well as current trends in health insurance costs. Based on that review, no later than February 1, the consultant shall make a preliminary separate recommendation to the Town and Board of Education respectively as to how much they should include in their budget estimate for the up-coming fiscal year. This recommended amount is subject to change prior to the final adoption of the annual budget appropriation if trend information is reflecting substantially different information from the original estimate provided.

3. Except as provided herein and below, the Board of Education and Town shall include in its itemized budget estimate the amount recommended by the consultant or will both agree together on an acceptable estimate to cover its health insurance costs for the coming fiscal year.

4. After the Town Council makes the appropriation to the Town and the Board of Education for a given fiscal year, the Town and Board of Education shall transfer to the Self Insurance Fund an amount equal to its itemized budget estimate for Self Insurance costs for the year. At the end of each fiscal year, there shall be an accounting of the Reserve Fund by the Town's Finance Director. If the amount so transferred was more than the amount necessary to cover the Town's and Board of Education's health insurance costs for the year, the Town Council may allocate the surplus as a credit to the Town and the Board of Education to offset amounts otherwise due in future fiscal year's in accordance with this paragraph. Any use of funds in this manner from this Reserve Fund must first comply with the goals as outlined in paragraph #5 of this policy. If the amount so transferred was less than the amount necessary to cover the Town's and the Board of Education's health insurance costs for the year, the Town Council shall make appropriate transfers, if any, to assure that all Town and Board of Education health insurance claims for the year are paid from the Self Insurance Reserve Fund.

5. The Self Insurance Reserve - fund balance shall be maintained for liability reserves at a level which will adequately fund the Town and Board of Education's potential loss exposure. The goal of this reserve is to accumulate an amount that is based on 10% of the previous year's annual claims in each area as determined by historical loss data. The balance in this reserve may fluctuate by the actual annual experience of the Self Insurance Reserve Fund or by direct appropriation approved by the Town Council. This reserve shall be reviewed by the Insurance Committee and recommendations for funding levels will be made by the Committee to the Town Council. The Town Council will approve any additional funds to be added during the budget appropriation process towards this reserve. Annual charges to the Departments will be at a level sufficient to maintain the reserve.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the Town has been working with the Board of Education for some time to develop a self insurance fund account to protect the annual budgets from unexpected costs. The policy, as it is written, has some ambiguities that cause some confusion regarding the transfer of money and how the funds are expended if the appropriation isn't sufficient in the budget.

Councilor Kotkin said that there was a discussion among the Budget and Finance Committee members. There were questions about how the money will move. If the money is leftover the

intent is to use the surplus in good years as a reserve to pay for the poor years. The wording leaves ambiguity and contradictions.

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO TABLE THIS AUTHORIZATION”** seconded by Councilor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

#### ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

##### **RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ABANDONMENT OF A PORTION OF FORMER SPRING STREET RIGHT OF WAY IN THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD.**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the following described property, being a portion of that Town land abutting, but no longer within and necessary to the Spring Street right of way due to the roadway relocation, be ABANDONED as an excess portion of the public right of way, and be quit claimed to the abutting property owner Merritt Baldwin aka 225 Spring Street Associates, LLC as noted, subject to such utility easements and access rights which presently exist;

A certain piece or parcel of land situated in the Town of Wethersfield, County of Hartford and State of Connecticut, depicted as **PARCEL B** on that certain map or plan entitled **“COMPILATION PLAN PROPOSED LAND TRANSFERS ASSOCIATED WITH PROJECT #159-171 PREPARED FOR THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD, WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT DATE: APRIL 12, 2001 REVISIONS 5/17/01, 6/25/01 SCALE: 1” = 40’ JOB NO. 51239.00 CADD NO. CP 123901 FILE NO. A-1152 SHEET NO. 1/1”** prepared by DeCarlo & Doll, Inc. 1952 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut and filed with the Wethersfield Town Clerk.

#### MINUTES

Councilor Walsh moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 17, 2009”** seconded by Councilor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Hemmann abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:05 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **“TO ADJOURN THE MEETING”** seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

*Approved by vote of Council  
September 21, 2009*