

## **REGULAR MEETING**

**APRIL 2, 2007**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, April 2, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in the Banquet Room of the Pitkin Community Center.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Drake, Forrest, Kirsche, Kotkin, Montinieri, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Fortunato and Chairperson Adil.

Also present: RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Chairperson Adil welcomed the members of the public to the new location of the Town Council meeting. He said that the meetings will be video taped and broadcast on public access television.

All stood for the pledge of allegiance to the flag which was led by Councilor Kotkin.

### **PROCLAMATIONS**

#### **MAURICE "MOE" CATTANIO - 50 YEARS OF SERVICE - FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Chairperson Adil said that Moe was at the meeting to be congratulated for his grand accomplishment of reaching 50 years as a member of the Wethersfield Fire Department. He read the Proclamation for Moe Cattanio.

Chuck Flynn, Fire Chief said that he is proud to be able to recognize a second gentlemen to reach 50 years of service to the Town. Many people may recognize Moe Cattanio as the safety guard at Wethersfield High School. He is a great individual who has given so much to the Fire Department. Congratulations on 50 years.

Moe Cattanio thanked everyone who came to the meeting. He is proud to be connected to the Town of Wethersfield. He said it is going to be very difficult to break away from the Fire Department.

Anthony Dignoti, Fire Company 3 Captain, said it is an honor to have such a fine person in the Fire Department. Moe is extremely dedicated and Moe is the true leader of company three.

#### **ARBOR DAY**

Chairperson Adil read the Proclamation declaring Saturday, April 28th as Arbor Day in the Town of Wethersfield.

Lisa Leonard said that there will be an hour long ceremony at Emerson Williams School on Saturday, April 28th in honor of Arbor Day. She encouraged all residents to take part in the day.

#### **7TH GRADE GIRLS BASKETBALL**

Chairperson Adil invited all of the members of the team to join him at the podium. He read the Proclamation recognizing the 7th Grade Girls Travel Basketball team.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT - PETER GILLESPIE**

Peter Gillespie presented his monthly report to Council. He said that:

- Recently Completed projects/new businesses: 200 Silas Deane Highway - Rocky's Ace Hardware has opened. A

- ribbon cutting is being planned for Friday, April 13th; 884 Silas Deane Highway - City Fish has opened its dining room; 1260 Silas Deane Highway - Jefferson Radiology has installed a new MRI trailer to the facility.
- Approved Development Projects Under Construction: 291 Ridge Road - Granberry Homes filed an application with the Planning and Zoning Commission to remove the over 55 restriction on the property. The Planning and Zoning Commission did not approve the request; 312 Silas Deane Highway - an application has been filed to convert a residential building into a small insurance firm. The Planning and Zoning Commission has approved the application.
  - Planning/Design Stage: Comstocke Ferre and Company is still going through the Historic District Commission permitting process. The Town is continuing to monitor this proposal; 5th Avenue Motel is planning an expansion that was tabled by Planning and Zoning Commission.
  - Developer/Property Owner Contact: FunZone - He has spoken to individuals concerning the use of the FunZone property. He is hopeful that a proposal may be forthcoming. Goff Brook Shops - He spoke with developer about the possibility of more restaurant use at this site. Olsen House - He spoke with Mr. Clynch concerning his plans for use of the building. Hartford Hospital - He is having discussions regarding its need for additional space.
  - Silas Deane Highway Revitalization Program: The Town has received comments from ConnDot on the Church Street intersection plans and will meet with Decarlo and Doll to discuss the next step. He would like to see the project out to bid by May with work to start this summer.
  - Other News and Initiatives: The Town had a breakfast with the Top Taxpayers on March 29th. The Redevelopment Agency is nearing completion of the first phase of its activity and would like to make a brief presentation at the Special Meeting in April. The Preserve America forums were held on March 21st and 22nd and were a nice kick-off to the planning process.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked what would be the next step for the owner of Granberry Homes and what may be potential problems.

Peter Gillespie said that the request was for the removal of the age restriction on the 12 units in the large brick building only. The Town is concerned that the developer may not be able to sell the units. The Town will continue to work with him. He should be receiving the CO in the next few weeks. His additional marketing may bring good results. He may also come back to the Planning and Zoning Commission in the future.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked how many of the 12 units are occupied.

Peter Gillespie said that no units are occupied yet as the certificate of occupancy has not been issued. It is a unique product on the market as it is apartment style over 55 living.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if there is a transportation impact assessment was done in conjunction with the 5th Avenue Motel proposal.

Peter Gillespie said that the property owner is not changing the existing curb cuts or changing the existing traffic patterns so the State is not involved. The Planning and Zoning Commission is concerned with the existing access to the property. It has two curb cuts and the commission may want the property owner to remove one of them.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato, in regard to the Olsen Property, said that she is pleased to hear about potential tenants.

Peter Gillespie said that Mr. Clynch has received drawings from his structural engineer and can now move forward. He has talked to a few potential tenants but the structure is not in a commercial zone. The Town will have to work closely with him to make sure the tenants are not going to have a negative impact.

Councilor Drake asked if the Town has passed papers on that property, yet.

Peter Gillespie said that the Town still owns the property.

Councilor Drake asked if the Town is still on track with transferring the property.

Peter Gillespie said that he doesn't know the legal end of the arrangement with Mr. Clynch. He can find out.

Councilor Kotkin asked about Hess Oil. He said he thought that there were very limited options for the use of that property.

Peter Gillespie said that the property in question, has been split apart from the Hess Oil tank and runs between them and the Putnam Park building. The property is wetlands and in a flood plain.

Councilor Forrest asked if a map could be included with some of the projects once they reach the development and improvement stages so Councilors can see exactly where the properties are located.

Councilor Cascio asked three questions -

- What type of business may be interested in the Porch and Patio building?
- If the owner of the empty Amici's building has been asked about leasing the property. Can the signs for Amici's be removed?
- Have you had any conversations with tenants for The Standish House, yet?

Peter Gillespie said that:

- The business has not submitted a proposal so he is keeping it confidential to protect their interests.
- Ocean State Job Lot Corporation owns the property and they are not really working on marketing the property.
- Doug Shipman, Director of the Historical Society is taking the lead with the Standish House. He has had inquires from a list of 7 or 8 interested parties. He created a packet with detailed information on the building for interested businesses and the restaurant community state-wide.

Councilor Cascio said that the Planning Department works hard to get new business to town. Some times it is successful and others it is not. He said residents often ask him why a property is vacant. He asked if the Planning Department could post on the Town website something to the effect that the Town doesn't have the final say in what goes in a building, it is the property owner.

Peter Gillespie said that there is a story behind every property that can complicate transactions. He said he doesn't know what the answer is regarding the public relations aspect of it. The Town has done its best with its programs. Hopefully the redevelopment agency will be a catalyst for new and exciting things to come in the future.

## **PRESENTATION ON CLEAN WATER SURCHARGE OPTION - MDC PROJECT**

Robert Weimar thanked the Town Council for having the MDC at the Town Council meeting. He said that he would like to update the members on the MDC project and specifically how it relates to the Town of Wethersfield and the actual charges that have been proposed for the Town to pay for the project. He presented the following presentation on the Clean Water Surcharge Option:



[MDC Clean Water Project](#) [1.3 MB PDF\* file]

Councilor Kotkin said that the current rate is \$1.96 per 100 cubic feet and under the proposal it would be \$8.27 per 100 cubic feet in 2024.

Bob Weimar said that price includes both the surcharge and the inflation on the current rate. The inflation rate is an average of 4 percent a year. Energy and chemical use may drive the cost up. It is a 75 percent increase over the 17 year

period. The general rate of increase for water system is between 4-6 percent per year. The current water rates of competitors are in the range of \$6.00 now. They will be at about \$12.00 and MDC will be at about \$8.50 in the year 2024. One competitor is the Connecticut Water Company.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the MDC feels the use of water will go down as the price increases.

Bob Weimar said that the MDC did feel usage would drop and an allowance was made for it in the budgeting process. The MDC anticipates a 5 percent loss in the early years and 2 percent in the out years.

Councilor Forrest said that there are 8 MDC member towns but water is supplied to other towns, too. He asked how many additional towns receive MDC water.

Bob Weimar said that he believes an additional three or four towns receive water on a fee basis. Unionville received water from the MDC but the Connecticut Water Company takes the water.

Councilor Forrest asked if the graph represents the 8 member towns or the 12 towns that receive MDC water.

Bob Weimar said that the numbers are based on the assumption that all of the towns that receive water would be paying the surcharge. If the other four towns were not paying the surcharge, it would be an annual ad valorem tax levy of about .5 percent.

Councilor Forrest asked what the feeling was at the State Capital.

Bob Weimar said that of the member Towns that the MDC has met with, all are in favor of this approach. The only issue is whether the towns not receiving sewer systems by the MDC should receive the surcharge. The Legislature will be evaluating a number of factors, including the levy of a surcharge. The only issue that has arisen is the extent to which the districts requirements for minority job involvement are carried through in the bill. There is some specific language, right now, to increase the percent of minority job opportunities. There are also some concerns with the verification of conformity to the requirement. The District Board would also like to see an increase in district-wide minority involvement.

Councilor Forrest asked if the MDC had a sense that the Legislators felt that this needed to be moved ahead this year.

Bob Weimar said that the towns need to tell their legislators how they feel. The other towns, through their management have told the MDC that they support this plan.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked how the fees would be collected.

Bob Weimar said that the billing will be directly applied to the water bill. The bill will have two lines on it, both based on the same usage. He said that water bill next year would show \$1.96 per 100 cubic feet basic water use and \$.30 per 100 cubic feet clean water surcharge. The two would be added together and included on one water bill.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if the MDC looked at population trends when it created the formulas.

Bob Weimar said that it was looked at in a general sense. Some allowances were made for a rate of increase as it has been over the last ten years. No substantive analysis was made. MDC is assuming water use remains steady.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said there is also an interest in conservation that may impact water usage moving forward. What would be the impact if the water usage was done.

Bob Weimar said that the rates are all based on certain assumptions and will be subject to review throughout the program. The first review would be in about 5 years after the bulk of the work has been completed.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the sale of water to the non-member towns could be fairly categorized as an enterprise or fair market sale.

Bob Weimar said that was correct. The water is sold at a competitive price.

Councilor Montinieri asked if there was the potential for a greater market for sale of water in the future and can that offset some of these increases.

Bob Weimar said that the Board is attempting to evaluate that idea. A strategic planning process has begun. One of the components is to develop the water resources the MDC has to their maximum extent. There are resources that are not currently being used. There is also a belief that the MDC should review the overall fee structure for water to ensure the costs for water and its development are being apportioned across all the users. The MDC is currently doing an assets management study to determine the values of the assets and the amount of upgrade required to them and making sure that there is an adequate plan for the water management.

Councilor Montinieri asked for the feel of viable water capacity in the MDC system with respect to free enterprise as a volume compared to the 8 member towns.

Bob Weimar said that it is well over 30 percent.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the total project cost is \$1.6 million and if it is corrected for inflation.

Bob Weimar said that all of the numbers on the chart are corrected for inflation.

Councilor Montinieri asked if there was a document available to show the Wethersfield projects as they interface with a timeline.

Bob Weimar said that the MDC is still in the process of evaluating what the nature of the projects will be, evaluating the sewer structure, and making modifications. It will then come back and make recommendations for improvements to the system to the Towns. This should take the next 9 months or so. The Town would then submit the plans to DEP for approval.

Councilor Drake asked if the MDC could explain again the use of the term surcharge instead of rate increase.

Bob Weimar said that the MDC is charging more money for paying for the sewer costs. The difficulty is that under the charter the MDC requires modification to charge the water system users for a sewer expenditure. There is a special approval required at the Legislature. The belief is that this surcharge should not be a permanent charge, but should be removed at the completion of the project.

Councilor Kirsche said that at a previous presentation the MDC mentioned that some of the pipes are underground and date back 160 years, especially the conduit that leads to the river from Newington to East Hartford. Are these systematic improvements that will be going on there after or will improvements wait another 160 years.

Bob Weimar said that MDC is implementing an asset management program that will take all of the conduits and other systems that it operates and puts it in a schedule for repair and replacement. The concern is that the MDC doesn't want to see this sort of problem happen again. The system is at the point where it is in critical need of improving.

Councilor Walsh moved **"TO REFER THE CLEAN WATER SURCHARGE OPTION - MDC PROJECT TO THE INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE FOR FURTHER REVIEW IN CONSULTATION WITH THE TOWN MANAGER TO BRING A RECOMMENDATION BACK TO THE TOWN COUNCIL"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Chairperson Adil thanked Mr. Weimar for his presentation and said that some of the numbers presented tonight may be difficult to digest and the Town wants to give it its full thought.

Bob Weimar said that the critical thing for the MDC is that the Legislature will be voting in June and the MDC is looking for the Town's to instruct their delegates.

Chairperson Adil asked that the Town Manager have the Infrastructure Committees findings by May.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato moved "**TO TAKE OUT OF ORDER ITEM B.1.C.- REPEAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL APPEALS BOARD - CHANGES TO ENVIRONMENTAL CODE AND ITEM B.1.D. - AMENDMENT TO TOWN COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE**" seconded by Councilor Forrest.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### HEARING

#### REPEAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL APPEALS BOARD - CHANGES TO ENVIRONMENTAL CODE

No one spoke for or against the Ordinance.

#### AMENDMENT TO THE TOWN COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE

No one spoke for or against the Ordinance.

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Mike Casperino, 15 Marshalls Meadow, said that it was heartening to see that the Town is in discussion concerning the revitalization of the Silas Deane Highway. He said there are places in Town that are beautiful now that the Town is allowing to be destroyed with large (5x4x2 feet) utility boxes that say High Voltage. He showed the Council photographs of additional large utility boxes placed on poles around the Town. There ought to be some way to meet with the DPUC and discuss these boxes but apparently anything can be put on the poles in the interest in supplying what they supply to its customers. He said he can't believe the utility companies would be allowed to place these types of boxes in Westport. As long as the Town allows the utilities to get away with it, they will continue to do it. He asked if a ground wire came lose, would it carry enough voltage to kill someone walking by. He would like to have the Town Council instruct the Town's legal counsel to write a letter to the DPUC or AT&T and ask them to meet with Town officials.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, said that the MDC presentation was very interesting. He said that someone at MDC must be receiving big raises if people are paying \$200 a year for water. In regard to economic development, he said it would be nice to hear what the grand list values will be with the new construction and newly repaired buildings in Town. He said that he doesn't think the Town Council has prepared itself for the implosion of the housing market, especially with large tax increases. The Town's are feeling a big loss as many college graduates are not returning to the State because the cost of living is too high. Many seniors are also leaving Town because of the high taxes. Years ago, the Town Council should have kept taxes low and not spent every nickel the Town has.

Edward Terald, 894 Ridge Road said that there is little participation at the Town Council meetings. He asked if the Town Council wondered why more people don't attend the meetings. He said that residents complain a lot about taxes but don't come to the meetings. He said he thinks people don't come to the meetings to talk because the Town Council doesn't listen. He wanted to know why the Town Council members won't carry on a dialogue with the public during Public Comments. The Town Manager commented publicly that she is going to try to hold the tax increase to 5 percent this year. He said that the Town Council should be watching were it spends every dollar. He asked if the Town had to continue to pay the salary of the special education teacher that stolen text books from the Town.

Chairperson Adil said that is a Board of Education personnel matter.

## COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Councilor Walsh said that:

- The Redevelopment Agency will make its presentation on April 10th.
- The Historical Society meeting last week centered on the Standish House. They are seeking information from professional restaurateurs regarding what improvements would be necessary to make the property more marketable. They are interested in expediting the process.
- The Annual Taste of Wethersfield will be held on Saturday, April 14th. Tickets are available through the Historical Society.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that:

- Shared Services met and had a brief presentation by the Superintendent of Schools regarding the renovation to Hanmer and Wethersfield High School. She requested that all Councilors receive a copy of the presentation. The committee also received an update on the educational justice lawsuit. The lawsuit has been stalled in court on a procedural matter. The Governor's education proposal also came out and the Town's are waiting for the legislature to act so that the Town will have firm numbers before it passes the Board of Education budget. The Committee also received an update on the MUNIS system implementation and facilities plan that the Board of Education staff has been working on.
- The Budget Committee met to discuss a possible foreclosure. There was a recommendation by Councilor Forrest to look at the tax payment schedule to allow for more frequent payment of taxes to four times a year. State law prohibits the Town to collect taxes monthly. A quarterly payment schedule would impact the Town in staffing and lost revenue from investments. The Agent of Record candidates were interviewed and a list of candidates was finalized by the Insurance Committee.
- At the Library Committee meeting, Building Committee members were there to discuss the phase one renovations and the beginning of phase two. The Committee also discussed its budget and staffing during the renovation period.
- She had Mayor's hours last week. No one attended.

Councilor Drake said that he attended the Keeney Foundation meeting. The architect has brought forward two or three configurations. The Committee is moving ahead. He said that he had office hours two weeks ago and two people meet with him. One gentleman had paperwork issues and he sent him to the Town Manager. The other gentleman wanted to talk about the Library/Town Hall project. He said that he doesn't see a sense of urgency by the Town Council to push this process forward. He said that he doesn't feel the sense of urgency either. Maybe as a group, the Committee is getting tired.

Chairperson Adil said that the Building Committee will be at the Special Meeting next week to award the bid for Phase two.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that there is considerable time spent at the Library Board meetings discussing the renovations. She said that she speaks with the Town Manager and Town Engineer concerning the need to move the project ahead. Phase two has incentives built into the bid process. She is concerned about the impact the closing of the Library has had on children, especially with the summer reading program. The Library Board Committee has discussed triage measures to get through the next fifteen months or so.

Chairperson Adil said that Councilor Montinieri is the Council liaison to the Building Committee, he may have some additional insight.

Councilor Montinieri said that based on the efforts of Town Staff and quality of the bidders, the committee is extremely optimistic. The timeframe suggests to the Committee that the work will be good and the budget will be met. He said that when a contractor goes into a facility as old as the Town Hall, it comes into things that the Town just doesn't anticipate. There are not incentives to finish early but rather provisions in the contract for options with respect to how the project unfolds. The Library staff and Town Hall staff have done unbelievable work keeping the facility

operating. Fifteen months is a workable time frame but it is still a long way off for residents to receive less services. No one on the Committee is tired. They are energized and aggressive and thoughtful. They are a very diligent group, with great commitment to seeing the project through.

Councilor Forrest said that the Memorial Day Parade Committee met and determined that Woman in the Military will be this year's theme. They are receiving nominations for parade marshal. The Wethersfield Police Union made a \$500 donation to the parade committee. The Parade Committee is always seeking contributions. The viewing stand is being moved about 1/4 of a mile down the Broad Street Green to lengthen the parade. The Conservation Committee met and continued to work on the Heritage Way Trail. Gene Grayson is looking for guidance, he is organizing a few hikes around Town.

Councilor Kotkin said he attended a Park and Recreation Board meeting. The Board has interviewed architects for Mill Woods Park. The Board is discussing holding a Public Meeting with area residents to address concerns about the park.

Councilor Cascio said that the Memorial Day Parade Committee has selected two Parade Marshals. Mr. Spellacy is now obtaining background information on the two women. The Committee has been searching for a flyover during the Parade. There are just not enough flyovers available. The Committee also discussed another option, an eternity flight - the releasing of doves over the cemetery. The Committee decided not to follow up with the eternal flight.

Councilor Kotkin said he wanted to thank Mr. Casparino for talking about the utility boxes. The boxes are low to the ground and do have high voltage warnings on them. He said that it would be very appropriate to have someone from AT&T address the Town Council or one of the Town Committees to address safety. He asked that as part of the review of the MDC proposal, to find out if the fee would be tax deductible. If the fee is paid through property tax, it may be tax deductible where as if it is an incremental expense on the water bill, it would not be.

Chairperson Adil said that:

- This Thursday, the Town will have a retirement party for Jan Neumuth, Town Assessor at the Community Center from 5-8 p.m.
- The Historical Society will hold its annual Taste of Wethersfield on Saturday, April 14th at the Keeney Center.
- On Friday, April 20th the Friends of the Eleanor Wolf Buck Nature Center will hold their annual spring dance at the Community Center.
- The State of the Town Breakfast held by the Chamber of Commerce will be held May 23rd at the Wethersfield Country Club.
- The Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce will hold its annual dinner on May 16th at the Wethersfield Country Club.
- Dollars for Scholars will hold its annual ceremony on May 23rd at the Community Center.
- Budget Workshops begin on Monday, April 9th.
- He, along with Councilor Walsh and Lee Kuckro are going to Stamford to get redevelopment idea from the City of Stamford.
- Dr. Proctor is retiring. His retirement dinner is June 8th.

## COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Forrest moved "**TO APPROVE THE ORDINANCE REPEALING FROM CHAPTER 75, SECTIONS 13 & 14 - ENVIRONMENTAL CODE APPEALS AND APPEALS BOARD OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT**" seconded by Councilor Kirsche.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk said that she is asking for the amendment of section 13 and removal of section 14 as they are no longer necessary.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Kirsche moved **"TO APPROVE THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD - CHAPTER A180, TOWN COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE TO CHANGE THE TIME AND LOCATION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS AND TO CHANGE THE FIRST SENTENCE IN THE EXECUTIVE SESSION PORTION OF THE CHAPTER"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk said that the regular meetings will now be held at the Pitkin Community Center on the first and third Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. The Executive Session changes have to do with the statutes they reference.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF WILLIAM HOLDEN FROM THE CLEAN ENERGY TASK FORCE, THE REMOVAL OF THE NAMES OF JAMES M. SWEENEY FROM THE INLAND WETLANDS AND WATER COURSES COMMISSION, LOUISE RYAN FROM THE DISABILITIES, WETHERSFIELD ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH, AND JAMES WOODWORTH FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL CODE APPEALS BOARD"** seconded by Councilor Walsh.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato moved **"TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENTS TO THE FOLLOWING BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:**

**Central CT Health District**

Dianne L. Doot                    D    420 Church Street                    4-02-07 to 6-30-09

**Cox Cable Television Advisory Council**

Julie L. Montinieri            D    Board of Education                    4-02-07 to 6-30-08

**Committee on Culture and Arts**

Jean C. Galinsky                D    33 Mill Street                         4-02-07 to 6-30-08

**Disabilities, Wethersfield Advisory Committee for People with**

Lauren E. Muscarella        D    149 Clearfield Road                 4-02-07 to 6-30-08

**Economic Development and Improvement Commission**

Anthony J. Homicki            D    201 Cumberland Avenue             4-02-07 to 6-30-09

Alternate -

Thomas R. Dean                D    33 McMullen Avenue                 4-02-07 to 6-30-07

**Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Commission**

Brent M. Owen                 D    42 Wells Farm Drive                 4-02-07 to 6-30-07

" seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Forrest ABSTAINED from the vote on Lauren Muscarella and Councilor Montinieri ABSTAINED from the vote on Julie Montinieri. The motion passed.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

SIGN ORDINANCE

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE THE SIGN ORDINANCE"** seconded by Councilor

Montinieri.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager said that this item was tabled at the March meeting because of concerns with non-profit organizations and school group's placement of signs. The temporary signs section of the Town's Planning and Zoning Code, item 10 - Off Premise Event Signs are allowed for an event for a public, charitable, educational and religious institution not located on the same property. It requires staff approval. They can place them on the Town right-of-way for a limited time.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked how this ordinance will be enforced.

RaeAnn Palmer said that it will be a combination of the Police Department and Building Inspection Division. The Building Officials can issue a citation for a violation of this type of Code. Staff has been working on pulling signs up and catching the person putting the signs up. A citation could be issued by the Town on Monday, if the signs are found on a weekend.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that this is a real problem for the Town and she is open to increasing the fines to deter this activity.

Councilor Cascio said that the Town has a listing of businesses in Town. He asked if mailings were done periodically to keep businesses up-to-date on Ordinances or something can be posted on the internet.

RaeAnn Palmer said that it would be a good idea.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE to approve the Sign Ordinance. The motion passed 9-0-0.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Councilor Montinieri moved **"TO TABLE THE TRANSFER OF \$2,800 FROM THE CONTINGENCY FUND TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR WEBSITE CODING SERVICES"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF \$10,630 FROM THE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND TO THE HIGHCREST ASBESTOS ABATEMENT PROJECT FUND"** seconded by Councilor Drake.

RaeAnn Palmer said that this is a Capital Budget Item of \$25,000 for abatement of asbestos. The bid came in at \$23,000. The work was done over the Christmas recess, the process had to be sped up and was more costly. There was an over expenditure of about \$5,000 and the addition is for the replacement of floor tiles that were removed for the abatement process.

Councilor Walsh said that \$6,800 seems like a large fee.

Mike Turner, Town Engineer said that it is a fee for two components; reviewing the work and making sure it meets the requirements and tracking the paper work to make sure the employees doing the work are properly licensed, they have completed the scope of the project, and that they have properly disposed of the materials off-site. Because this was done over a school vacation instead of the summer there was a compressed schedule for the air quality clearance, to allow the building to be occupied again.

Councilor Walsh asked if this was a standard fee and if it would have stayed within budget had in been done in the summer.

Mike Turner said that the fee was standard and that the project probably would have required more funding even if it had been completed in the summer.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Town originally budgeted \$1500 for the monitoring and he asked if the time compression issue was what drove the cost to 4 times the budget amount.

Mike Turner said that it was an underestimation by the Town for the oversight by the environmental company. He said that abatement projects are bid out individually and that the Town will learn from this underestimation.

Councilor Walsh asked if the bid was changed to allow for a compressed timeframe after it was awarded.

Mike Turner said that it was budgeted without the compressed timeframe but was bid out with the understanding that it would be a compressed timeframe.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO AWARD ON CALL CONSULTING ASSIGNMENTS AS FOLLOWS: ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES - DECARLO & DOLL, INC.; ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES - AEGIS ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS, INC., FUSS & O'NEIL, INC., WESTON & SAMPSON; ENGINEERING SERVICES - LUCHS ASSOCIATES, PURCELL ASSOCIATES, VANASSE HANGEN BRUSTLIN, INC."** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

RaeAnn Palmer said that every three years the Town solicits qualification statement for firms to act as the Town's on-call firms. The Engineering Division develops the list of the three most qualified firms to use when projects are very special in scope or exceed the ability of the Town staff to complete them. Fees are negotiated at the time the scope of services is decided on.

Councilor Forrest asked what made these firms stand out and what is estimated in fees for the firms.

Mike Turner said that town staff looked at the firms for experience and the individual people that the Town would probably be dealing with on projects and their familiarity with Wethersfield and the types of projects the Town will be doing. Cost is also a component but not the most important factor. Each firm listed its hourly rates for various positions within the firm. The Town was looking for the most qualified firm to use. The fees are built into the Capital Budget projects. As an example, he said that the three firms will give the Town a proposal for overseeing the roof project at Highcrest School. The contract will be awarded based on price. All of the firms coming in understand that they are not guaranteed any of the assignments.

Councilor Drake said that the last list of on-call engineering firms had firms that were not interested in doing some of the Town projects. He asked if any of the firms were on the current list.

Mike Turner said that they were not. Firms non-responsive were not included in this list.

Councilor Forrest asked if there were problems in the past, does a three year review seem appropriate.

Mike Turner said that it is a time consuming process for the Town and the engineering firms. The time cycle seems to work.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Kirshce moved **"TO ADOPT THE FAIR HOUSING POLICY AS FOLLOWS - THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD HEREBY ENDORSES THE ATTACHED FAIR HOUSING POLICY TO ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL PERSONS TO RENT, PURCHASE, AND OBTAIN FINANCING FOR ADEQUATE HOUSING OF THEIR CHOICE ON A NON-DISCRIMINATORY BASIS: AND THAT THE TOWN MANAGER OR HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR RESPONDING TO AND ASSISTING ANY PERSON WHO ALLEGES TO BE THE VICTIM OF AN ILLEGAL**

**DISCRIMINATORY HOUSING PRACTICE IN THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

RaeAnn Palmer said that Town Council authorized the Town Manager to apply for another Small Cities Program Grant that gives the Town funding for housing rehabilitation for lower income residents of the Town. This is a requirement of the program.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Montinieri moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN A PLANNING FUNDING REBANDING AGREEMENT WITH NEXTEL OPERATIONS, INC."** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

RaeAnn Palmer said that this is not in any way related to pending litigation. This is related specifically to the rebanding of the Town's public safety radio system which is changing the frequencies that the Town is now assigned by the FCC to the new ones that the Town is being ordered to change to by the FCC. For about 6 months, the Town Attorneys Morris Borea and Alan Tillis, a FCC expert, had worked with the Town Manager's office to create a planning funding request for Nextel to cover the costs associated with the retuning of the Town's radio systems. All of the radio equipment has to be able to recognize the new frequencies while at the same time maintaining public safety radio communications. The Town needs to develop a plan to allow the Town to shut one site off and have a backup while it is being retuned and then bring it back up and shutting the backup off. The Town submitted a plan requesting the Town's estimate of what would be needed. During very grueling negotiations the Town came up with a compromise settled on by a mediator. The Town will receive reimbursement for about \$20,000 in expenses spent on staff time. The Town Attorneys, Motorola, Martin Associations, and Trott Communications will be reimbursed directly by Nextel. This is a compromise with a door left open in both mediation settlement and contract that will allow the Town to go back if it incurs costs and ask for them in the reconfiguration rebanding agreement.

Councilor Forrest said that this may be a very good way to go.

Councilor Drake asked what happens if the rebanding doesn't work.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the rebanding is changing the frequency only.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Forrest voted NAY. The motion passed 8-1-0.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER OR THE TOWN CLERK AS HER DESIGNEE TO APPLY FOR A COMPETITIVE GRANT OF \$50,000 FROM THE HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION GRANT FUND"** seconded by Councilor Walsh.

RaeAnn Palmer said that this is a grant application that the Town Clerk and herself have been working on. It is for \$30,000 to continue the records management program implementation that the Town Clerk started two years ago to actively create a centralized records room. The \$20,000 is for an electronic records needs assessment to look at how the Town creates and stores records and manages the information. The long term objective is to take all of the information the Town collects pertaining to properties and be able to access it all in one place, i.e. assessment, building records, property maintenance codes, fire calls.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that she really likes this grant because it allows the Town to be more efficient in government and more customer friendly. This will put an infrastructure in place that the Town will have for a long time. She extended a hearty thanks to Dolores and RaeAnn for applying for this grant.

Councilor Walsh also commended Dolores and RaeAnn for their work on this grant. It will allow the Town to preserve a lot of its documents and bring Wethersfield into the 21st century.

Chairperson Adil thanked Dolores and RaeAnn and said that it is great to see the staff work that is taking place with the renovations of the Town Hall and Library.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Kotkin moved "**TO AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF \$2,300 FROM THE CONTINGENCY FUND TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF FIRE FIGHTING BOOTS**" seconded by Councilor Kirsche.

RaeAnn said that the Fire Department, with the Town Council's authorization sold an obsolete generator and the Town realized \$2,300 from the sale. The Fire Department is requesting the funds to replace existing rubber boots with leather boots. The leather boots are waterproof, more comfortable to wear, and more flexible allowing for better dexterity.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

## **ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION**

**ORDINANCE PROHIBITING ILLICIT DISCHARGE AND CONNECTION TO STORM WATER DRAINAGE SYSTEMS**

## **MINUTES**

Councilor Cascio moved "**TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 5, 2007 AS AMENDED**" seconded by Councilor Forrest. .

Councilor Kotkin said that he would leave a few typos with Dolores.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato moved "**TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 21, 2007**" seconded by Councilor Kirsche.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Cascio ABSTAINED. The motion passed 8-0-1.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:15 p.m., Councilor Cascio moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Deputy Mayor Fortunato. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

*Approved by vote of Council May 7, 2007*

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\*This linked file is in Adobe's Portable Document Format. To view it you will need Adobe Reader installed on your computer. It is available for free download at:

