

**REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 7, 2013**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, January 7, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, McAlister, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann.

Also present: Paul Hutcheon, Health District Director, David Bailey, Region 3 Coordinator for the Dept. of Public Health, Phil Lombardo, President Volunteer Ambulance, Kim Lombardo, Volunteer Ambulance, Lori DiPietro, Health District, Gina DeAngelo, Board of Education, Michael Emmett, Superintendent of Schools, Timothy Howes, Asst. Superintendent for Human Resources & Finance, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Town Clerk Dolores Sassano led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Mayor Hemmann thanked all the volunteers who helped to bring this program forward.

David Bailey presented the Heart Safe Designation to the Town of Wethersfield and explained that this designation represents a commitment by the Town of Wethersfield to continue training the public in CPR and use with Automatic External Defibrillators and to strive to increase the number of AEDs in your community. Mr. Bailey presented the Heart Safe Designation and a letter from the Commissioner of Public Health to Mayor Hemmann.

Councilor Hurley moved to **“ADD AN ITEM TO THE AGENDA TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS CONTRACT MATTERS AND ALSO INCLUDE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET CHAIRPERSON GINA DEANGELO, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS MICHAEL EMMETT AND ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS FOR FINANCE, TIM HOWES AFTER COUNCIL ACTION NO. 1”**, seconded by Councilor McAlister.

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

**HEARINGS**

Mayor Hemmann explained that they will be suspending the hearing on the creation of a Trust in the Capital and Nonrecurring Expense Fund. She explained that there have been some revisions so that will be reintroduced at this meeting for a public hearing at the next Town Council meeting, January 22, a Tuesday, due to Monday's holiday, at 7:00 p.m.

**Resolution: adoption of the Harbor Management Plan as proposed by the Harbor Management Commission.**

Mayor Hemmann asked Director of Parks and Recreation, Kathy Bagley, to introduce the resolution concerning adoption of the Harbor Management Plan as proposed by the Harbor Management Commission so the public will have an understanding of it.

Park & Recreation Director, Kathy Bagley explained that the Harbor Management Plan was designed to develop a management plan or management tool to continue to look at the Cove, ways to improve it, ways to protect and ways just to make it a great facility and environment for our residents. Ms. Bagley explained the preliminary review process of the Plan by the State to make sure that it meets all the State requirements for harbors and waterways in the State of Connecticut along with review from the Fishery Division as well as other Federal agencies.

Mayor Hemmann asked for public comment on this hearing item.

Jim Harris, 1203 Great Fox Lane, Rocky Hill spoke on behalf of the Wethersfield Cove Yacht Club as a former President, now a Trustee, in favor of adoption of the Harbor Management Plan.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle commented that the objectives associated with the plan certainly are consistent with what is good for this town. But, no where he did see any mention of the potential costs associated for this particular project and urged our officials not to lose sight of what will be the bottom line costs.

Jim Woodward, 5 River Rd., spoke, in part, on behalf of the Great Meadows Conservation Trust which has a special interest in the Flood plain; in particular, we are owners of a parcel on the North West corner of the Cove along Folly Brook and have an easement on the adjacent property. Mr. Woodward explained that one of his goals is to clean up the northeast side of the cove which is along 91 where there is about 60 years of trash blowing across there and coming into Wethersfield and hopes to clean it up next fall during the cleanup. He also mentioned that on Saturday morning, members would be walking the River to the dyke if people were interested in participating.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., agrees with Mr. Ruhe and feels that we should just let nature itself handle the Cove and that we shouldn't spend any money on it.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Ballou Tooker, 65 Harmund Place commented on Wilkus Farm and stated that he is in favor of it remaining a farm for \$220,000 and feels it complements the area.

John Miller, 45 Highland St, spoke on the Wethersfield High School renovations and stated the School Building Committee is advisory and the Councilors should be more involved with it. Mr. Miller also expressed his concerns regarding the traffic flow with the current plan.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave., sincerely apologized for his disruption during the December 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting and promised the Council that it will never happen again.

Joel Wagner, 203 Clearfield Rd. noted the facts of the Wilkus Farm bid as he has seen and heard them. He commented that the bid and sales decision has become complicated but the Goff Rd. property trade, which never should have been a part of the bid, was interjected. Personally he does not want to see the Goff Rd. rock blasted either. The other thing that has complicated the sales is the addition of the consideration of soccer fields behind the farm place, which he favors. He stated that the Town has voted twice on this and it has passed in referendum. He thinks the only decision that can be made is to sell the Wilkus Farm to the highest legitimate cash bid.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented that the state of our State is not doing very well and asked what we are going to do in the next year with our budget. Mayor Hemmann replied that the budget process doesn't start until February. Mr. Young questioned what the increases are going to be and commented on the increases with the Board of Education contract. Mr. Young commented that Mr. Casio has a conflict of interest and should not be allowed to vote on contracts. Both his wife and daughter work in the Wethersfield School system.

Judy Parker, 366 Pine Lane spoke in favor of the Nowak family bid thereby facilitating the future of farming in Wethersfield.

Betty ~~Rosario~~ *Rosania*, 88 Desmond Dr. spoke in favor of the Nowak family proposal.

### COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Manousos reported that the Budget and Finance Committee met last week and will be starting the budget discussions for this coming ~~physical~~ *fiscal* year. He reported something that has been a topic over the last few council meetings was the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust. Councilor Manousos explained that they were figuring out how to best fund that trust for ongoing costs and retiree costs. He reported that they've come up with a plan. It's mostly to front load some of that contribution and then come up with a plan to fund it ongoing for current year needs and stated that it will be in front of Council again soon.

### COUNCIL COMMENTS

Deputy Mayor Console commented on Mr. Miller's comments regarding the parking concept and tennis courts of the High School Project and agrees that there are some major concerns there. He also stated that there is an infrastructure meeting on Wednesday, the 9<sup>th</sup> and would like to express some of his concerns at that meeting. Deputy Mayor Console commented that the entire Council

has a fiduciary responsibility to all the tax payers in town to make sure the \$75 million dollars is spent properly and the job is done properly because we are going to have to live with it for the next 25-30 years and acknowledged Mr. Miller's, as well as other people's concerns about some of the design work. Deputy Mayor Console stated that he is getting more involved in it and reading up as much as he can and agrees that the Council has a big say about it, not just the Committee.

Mayor Hemmann read a couple of letters she received to be read into the record. One was from Sue Tenorio regarding support of the Nowak proposal. The other is from Steve Randall regarding the Harbor Management Plan with a number of recommendations and points presented.

### COUNCIL ACTION

- A. Resignations from boards or commissions. None
- B. Appointments to boards or commissions. None
- C. Resolution concerning adoption of the Harbor Management Plan as proposed by the Harbor Management Commission.

Councilor Hurley moved to **“ADOPT THE HARBOR MANAGEMENT PLAN SUBMITTED BY THE HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION”**, seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Commissioner Drake commented that they did a great job but is surprised that we didn't do this 20 or 30 years ago.

Deputy Mayor Console asked Charlie Forsdick to ensure all the residents in the whole cove area are notified whenever the Harbor Commission does anything and make sure they get their input.

Mr. Forsdick, Harbor Master responded that he has experienced a very good relationship with the abutting property owners on the Cove and the plan, as you see it tonight, provides for the improvement of the relationship between the boaters, people that use the water, and the property owners on the Cove. Mr. Forsdick explained that he has not had any real problems or conflicts with them and stated that just like any other Commission, if there is something brought before it, there is notice given to the property owners that may be concerned about it. He stated that there shouldn't be a problem in the future, they haven't experienced one in the past. He asked Kathy Bagley if there was anything that she wanted to add.

Kathy Bagley stated that one of the things the Harbor Management Commission was always concerned about was making sure we did get resident input regarding this process. She stated that when they started out at the very beginning probably going back a year and some months, they did have a public session where we had a draft and did get it out to residents and to property

owners in that area and encouraged people to come. She explained that they had a lot of residents turn out and give feedback on the plan and also just ask questions about the whole process. She explained that the Harbor Management Commission had just been established a few months earlier so we were able to give a lot of feedback and get a lot of information and as we were developing the plans, we took a lot of the information and input from the residents and put that into the plan because they had some great ideas.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if that would continue as we move forward.

Kathy Bagley responded absolutely. Anytime the Harbor Management Commission does anything of that nature, they are always soliciting and encouraging public input and that they like to have people come to visit them.

Kathy Bagley introduced Tom Ragonese, who is the Chairman of the Harbor Management Commission and the Park and Recreation Advisory Board.

Councilor Kotkin asked Ms. Bagley if she saw the email that the Councilors received from Steve Randall. He was wondering if there were any of the eight points that she would like to discuss before they vote.

Kathy Bagley commented that one of the things that came up tonight was the cost of the plan. She stated that in Wethersfield we do a lot of plans and they are a management tool for us and explained that most of the time we do them we never have any money for them but it gives us a guiding principal and we use that. She explained that I don't have money to make all the improvements to the Cove that we've identified in our Master Plan, but it gives us an opportunity to look for other sources of revenue or funds to come in to help us. She reported that we currently are not looking for town funds for the Cove and that we do have some funds coming in from some federal grants and things that we will be doing and the approval of this plan does not tie any money into it. She explained that any time we would look to do an improvement where we would ask for money or we would go out to get a grant for some funds for a project at the Cove, it still has a review process to go through. You're accepting the plan; it doesn't give us any money, it is a management tool to help us look at improvements in that area. That was one of his questions.

Councilor Kotkin asked if this plan is biased for motorized boats against other uses of the Cove which was one of his comments.

Kathy Bagley responded that there are goals in the plan that talk about the use of the Cove as a water environment for everybody's use. She explained that there are certainly some things that talk about boating, but there are also other things that just talk about areas to come down to enjoy the cove, or do the passive types of activities like fishing. She stated that we spent a lot of time with the State talking about fishing and where the fishing would be at the cove to be both safe for the fisherman and the boaters and there was a lot of give and take with the State about that. She

stated that we looked at fishing. We looked at people just coming down and walking along the cove, enjoying the water going out to the river. All of that is incorporated in the plan. She stated that there are some things because of the nature of the harbor, you do get into boating; you then get into the moorings and some of that also. But we envision it as it's just open for everyone to use and it states that in the plan.

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

At 8:00 p.m., Councilor Hurley moved to **“ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS CONTRACT MATTERS”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

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

At 8:25 p.m., Councilor Montinieri moved to **“EXIT THE EXECUTIVE SESSION”**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Deputy Mayor Console moved to **“TABLE THE TEACHER’S CONTRACT: ACCEPTANCE OF THE LABOR AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE WETHERSFIELD FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

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

#### BIDS

Councilor Kotkin moved to **“AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO FINALIZE A PURCHASE AND SALE CONTRACT WITH RICHARD NOWAK FOR THE WILKUS HOUSE AND BARN PROPERTY UNDER TERMS THAT WOULD PROVIDE THE TOWN WITH \$205,000 FROM MR. NOWAK, WOULD ALLOW THE TOWN TO RETAIN DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR THE PROPERTY, AND WOULD PROVIDE MR. NOWAK WITH A LEASE FOR 10 ACRES OF THE WILKUS PROPERTY FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 10 YEARS. AS PART OF THIS MOTION, I ADDITIONALLY MOVE THAT THE TOWN SET ASIDE PROCEEDS FROM THE WILKUS HOUSE AND BARN SALE IN THE TOWN OPEN SPACE FUND TO ACQUIRE OR SECURE DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR ALL OR A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE 4.2-ACRE PROPERTY AT 214 GOFF ROAD”**, seconded by Councilor Montinieri.

Councilor Kotkin commented that he believes that this motion addresses all the concerns that

have been raised by residents of the Town as well as by his fellow Town Council members. Specifically, the vast majority of town residents who voted to purchase the Wilkus property and save the farm will have their wishes unadulterated. He stated that all of the property with the exception of the area that currently has the house and barn will remain open space. The house and barn will be renovated, not torn down and no additional housing will be built on site. He explained that the buyer is a local resident who has shown his commitment to the Town and this property by being the only person to submit bids and the high bids at that all three times we have put this property out to bid. He stated that Mr. Nowak will have opportunity to farm 10 acres on the east side of Willow St. for a number of years but not in perpetuity and this will give the town an option of utilizing the property for an alternative use such as additional recreational fields in 10 years or less should such a desire arise. He explained that it will also allow a neighboring property owner, Mr. Nowak, in this case, to assist in the ongoing haying of other Wilkus acreage. Lastly, the town will have the means to protect residents in the Goff Rd. area who are very concerned about potential effects of blasting and deforestation on their property. Councilor Kotkin urged his fellow council members to endorse this motion that represents the compromise in the absolute best sense of the word and will permit the town to move forward collectively and in everyone's best interest. Councilor Kotkin also pointed out that he does live on Farms Village Rd. which is not far from the Goff Rd. property and asked the Town Manager and Town Attorney that because he lives so close to the Goff Rd. property if he were somehow conflicted by voting on this. While he did speak on a previous proposal for the Goff Rd. property, he never expressed an opinion for or against the proposal that was ultimately accepted by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Word got back through the Town Manager was that he was clear to vote on this topic.

Councilor Montinieri commented that he obviously has followed the issue of Wilkus Farm for several years, two previous terms on Council. It first became an active part of what we were participating in and obviously a lot of effort has gone into not only passing two referendums on the topic of maintaining open space and substantially incurring the costs to do so, but also we have had the opportunity to hear from, what he would say are distinguished and long-participating members of our community who have been active in this, two of which spoke this evening, former Deputy Mayor Judy Parker and former Mayor Betty Rosania. Councilor Montinieri explained that in addition to members of the community who addressed the bidding process over the last several months, and there is no doubt in his mind that this proposal and motion reflects absolutely the sentiment of the group who have spoken publicly and privately about this matter. It accomplishes the goals that Councilor Kotkin just identified and, most importantly, this motion if passed would assure that the language was provided and the admission of the RFP is also respected. It does not expose the Town to any question with respect to any component of negotiation that is not covered in the RFP. Councilor Montinieri stated that he is in support of it and believes that it is a wise move and it would reflect hard work done by members of the community.

Councilor Roberts commented that she thinks that this is the best way to resolve what to do with the property, Wilkus Farm, and also to maintain property on Goff Rd. She stated that we would

clearly keep the intent of what the referendum of what people passed was for maintaining the Wilkus Farm as open space and preserve its character and also keep it as farm land. She pointed out that on the other hand, it would also take care of the issue that some neighbors have had concerns about the property on Goff Rd. She believes this accomplishes both goals. Councilor Roberts explained that sometimes in government they are accused of not listening to what people want and just ram-rod our own agenda through. Clearly, with the passage of the referendums on Wilkus, the people spoke and Councilor Roberts believes this motion is in accordance with the wishes of the majority of voters in Wethersfield and supports it.

Mayor Hemmann commented that she supports the motion and stated that she was not necessarily for the purchase of the farm in the beginning but it was the Town's will and believes that agriculture is the most appropriate use for the property.

Councilor Drake commented that he is seeing this motion for the first time and questioned why they were just receiving it. Mr. Drake stated that as of right now there is no guarantee of any sort that the land [4.2 acre property, Goff Rd.] will be sold to the Town. He commented that since we just got this, and have not seen anything about the second part; he questioned if it is something that the Town Council are promising that we have, or have we secured an agreement that the Goff Rd. land is going to be sold as far as this motion.

Councilor Kotkin commented that Councilor Drake may be crossing into real estate negotiations and asked if the Town Manager could speak to that point, at least as much as he is comfortable doing.

Councilor Manousos commented that he believes the comment should be addressed to Councilor Kotkin because he forwarded this motion and asked if there was some discussion outside of executive session with a property owner that brought this motion forward.

Councilor Kotkin commented that he has not had any conversations with any property owners outside of Council meetings at any point during this period.

Councilor Manousos asked how they can approve something we have no idea is actually going to be accepted and stated that this is not what is in front of us. He added, if he remembered right, there were five proposals submitted and a group of people decided that only three should be presented. He explained that we have three in front of us today and thinks that is the topic of discussion, not this particular motion, because that is not what is in front of us.

Councilor Kotkin responded that he thinks that if he takes a look at the motion and read the first six lines, it is precisely what is in front of us.

Councilor Manousos commented that it is absolutely not, if you look at the end.

Councilor Kotkin asked if he were suggesting he would endorse the proposal if the last few

sentences were cut out.

Councilor Manousos responded what he is saying is that they have three proposals that were made public and what Councilor Kotkin has proposed is not one of those. Councilor Manousos asked where, in the public information on those three proposals, the last sentence in the motion, is located.

Councilor Kotkin responded that if Councilor Manousos could endorse this, without the last sentence, he would welcome an amendment to the motion. Councilor Kotkin read the motion again, leaving out the last sentence, and stated that it is absolutely consistent with the bid, and a public bid.

Councilor Manousos responded that Councilor Kotkin has ~~comprised~~ *compromised* this process and that we should probably vote on it as it is.

Mayor Hemmann called for a roll call vote on the motion in front of them. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted. The motion failed with a vote of 4 Yes, 5 No. Councilors Kotkin, Montinieri and Roberts and Chairperson Hemmann voted yes and Councilors Drake, Hurley, McAlister, Manousos and Deputy Mayor Console voted no.

Councilor Drake moved to **“AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE FINAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS WITH RJD DEVELOPMENT COMPANY FOR THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS THE WILKUS HOUSE AND BARNs WITH THE INTENT UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF NEGOTIATIONS TO SELL THE 214 GOFF ROAD PARCEL WITH RESTRICTIONS ON THE FURTHER SUBDIVISION THEREOF AND ALL PROCEEDS OF SUCH SALE TO BE DEPOSITED IN THE TOWN’S LAND ACQUISITION FUND”**, seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Councilor Roberts asked if somebody could summarize for the public what it actually means and what the affect will be on farming and farmland.

Councilor Drake responded that there is going to be very little to affect the 70 acres minus the couple of acres will be hayed as what Mr. Nowak was going to do with the 10 and the bid issue to us was, truthfully, the purchase of this property. We took money from the State and it locked the Town up so the only available acreage we have in this whole thing is 10 acres and we are going to lose the 10 acres by making the contract with Nowak Farm. To Mr. Drake that’s big. Councilor Drake added that you are also trading off a whole another neighborhood of open space for a 2-acre site for basically a cinder block barn. Mr. Drake stated the idea that these barns are historic is not even remotely true. They are not historic and nowhere in the original referendum was this supposed to be a farm. People keep saying that but that is not the case, and in fact, when the referendum went out, there was a subdivision plan put out for the house and area in the acreage to be sold. Councilor Drake explained that basically, you’re looking at 10 acres we have

now; and that we are not going to lose basically forever. The idea of telling Mr. Nowak you can't lease for more than ten years is not fair to him because he wants more. Basically taking another neighborhood and destroying it for a small little corner of 80 acres we already have, to me, is just not right. Councilor Drake added that the other thing, right now we are up at Tin Crossing spending Town resources of money to save that area from blasting that's happening in another Town. We are going to let people come in and blow up that whole part of that hill and we are not even looking at addressing what's going to happen to any of those neighborhoods, just like on Nott Street. Councilor Drake commented that there are too many negatives for a 2-acre site and the reality is the barns are not going to stay forever. The hill goes away forever, the barn may stay for 10-20 years but the barn will eventually go away. His thought is it's a cinder block barn, it will eventually go away.

Councilor Montinieri commented on the second proposal. He doesn't think anybody, involved in this negotiation or has looked at this topic over the last year would say, without adding any unknown variable, that the economic value of swapping land up on Goff (that was purchased for \$170,000 for land that we have a proposal on the table for \$210,000) can economically be justified without adding again some variable that is not being discussed. Councilor Montinieri added that having said that he thinks it is clear from the petition that was submitted to the Council at our last meeting that there is an agenda out there. That agenda on its face merits attention and should be discussed frankly, in his opinion, because it is a topic that is important to us. It is clearly cloudy, in his opinion, the direction in which this is going. It is sad and he thinks it is a tragic mistake. He actually thinks that the agenda which is not really that hidden frankly has many ways to be addressed, including the master plan for Millwoods, resources that are available to the Town. Councilor Montinieri commented that we all know how important that topic is to our community historically. The energy that is in play here behind the scenes, while well-intentioned, is wrong and ill-fitted in his mind, because it should be addressed publicly. He added that it should be a part of our discussion, it should not be hidden, the petition that was submitted, made it public. That is an issue we have and have great concern about and think that elected officials in light of that should be very careful about voting given that conflict of interest on that hidden agenda, which he says is not so good.

Councilor Kotkin commented that it may be helpful for people to know what the petition said and noted that there were 60 signatures on it. Councilor Kotkin read the petition to the public regarding RJD Developments proposal allowing the 10 acres to be used for the Wethersfield George D. Richie Soccer Club giving them the opportunity to lease the approved open land from the town creating additional soccer fields for the growing needs of the programs. Councilor Kotkin explained there was a petition that was in the community that talked directly about using and the allowing the Richie Soccer League of which I certainly coached in for a number of years when my kids were little. Two members of our Council are actively involved in and it's a great asset to the community but it specifically talks about this. It is a public document that was submitted to us--that there would be a lease between the Richie Soccer League and the Town for this property. That is the agenda Paul was talking about and just put on the table. This petition was signed by one member of the Council while we were deliberating on three proposals. Never

in his eight years on this Council has he ever had a petition to the Council signed by a member of the Council, especially when we are considering three bids. This is exactly what Paul was talking about; and he cannot support the motion.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted. The motion passed with a vote of 5 Yes and 4 No. Councilors Drake, Hurley, McAlister, Manousos and Deputy Mayor Console voted yes and Councilors Kotkin, Montinieri and Roberts and Chairperson Hemmann voted no.

### ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS FOR INTRODUCTION

Mayor Hemmann explained that we do have an ordinance for reintroduction. It is the Capital and Nonrecurring Expenses Trust Fund. Mayor Hemmann explained that there were some additional language changes that were added to it after the recent Budget and Finance Committee meeting so this will come back to us for a hearing at the next meeting.

### MINUTES

Deputy Mayor Console moved to **“APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 17, 2012”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

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

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented on the conflict of interest of two Councilors who have involvement with the Soccer League. He believes the names of those persons should be well-known to the community at large. He also commented on the Community Calendar and believes that it should list the names of all the town departments and their telephone numbers.

Meg McDunnah, Rocky Hill, commented that there are already several places in Wethersfield to play soccer and she doesn't see the need to have another soccer field in Town.

Eileen Candels, 106 Windmill Hill, commented that we do not need any more soccer fields in town and commented on the lack of parking that may be available in the fields or on Willow St. She also commented that if we can't afford to continue with a partially built and available field in our park, why would we go and try to work out some back room deal with another one. Ms. Candels thanked those four members of the Council for their ongoing support for their vote and for their honesty and integrity in supporting the voters of the Town who voted to preserve open space and to preserve the ability to farm.

Shirley Steinmetz, 375 Brimfield Rd., commented that she was very disappointed with the vote this evening and stated that she was a member of the bipartisan committee that had one focus in

mind and that was to have open space in Wethersfield. It was accomplished, we worked very hard and the people in this Town voted for open space in Wethersfield.

Jim Woodworth, 5 River Rd., commented that the barns are historical and challenged Councilor Drake to meet with him and the representative from the CT Trust for Historic Preservation Barn Project to discuss the historic nature of the barn. Mr. Woodworth also commented that he is not in favor of the RJD Development proposal and stated that he is very disappointed that is passed.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave. commented that he is also very disappointed with the vote and stated his disappointed with the Republicans as well.

Jim Clynych, 903 Ridge Rd., asked the Town Manager to start an investigation. He feels if there was somebody that signed a lease with the soccer it should be unlawful and an act that disappointed people in the Town. He suggests that the Town Manager get the Chief of Police and get an investigation started.

Mr. Bridges responded that a lease was not signed, it was a Petition.

Joel Wagner, 203 Clearfield Dr., commented that he is speechless and doesn't understand how a vote like that can happen. He commented on the conflicts of interest and questioned whether there should be a revote only of people who are allowed to vote. He commented that he would welcome an investigation as well.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented on the conflict of interest regarding signing of the petition. He also commented that we should limit our borrowing in looking for grants because that is putting us deeper and deeper in the hole and stated that the Town of Wethersfield is extremely poor.

Meg McDunnagh Rocky Hill commented that she loves the whole idea of farming and thinks it's sad that the council voted the way they did and feels that the property should have been kept a whole big farm.

Chairperson Hemmann asked for a motion to adjourn.

Councilor Manousos offered to extend the meeting to have open conversation and discussion about this Wilkus proposal because he believes that information has been taken and misrepresented about what this open space bond was to the public. Also that has been what this whole bid process was about and he wanted to make sure that it doesn't get recorded that way and that all the facts are out. Councilor Manousos explained that this isn't about soccer fields or taking and not preserving open space. He stated that the property under which that bond was voted, that referendum is going to be preserved and is not going to be developed into homes and explained that this is about 2 acres of property that was never intended to be owned by the Town, but when you hear what's coming from the other end of the table you'd think that this

referendum was about everything including those barns and that house. He stated that the Town had never intended to buy that property and the Assistant Town Manager who was here during that process could speak to that. This is out of order but he would welcome her to come up here and explain that process. So, it was always intended for it to be sold. The process, it went through the process, the intention, like Jim Woodward, I'm sad that he left, the intention of the additional 10 acres was to try to attract a farmer that would create something for education purposes for the town. He stated that we made a good-faith effort and I was involved with Jim in the goat-cheese farming venture that he had talked about.

Councilor Roberts asked Madam Mayor where we are on the agenda and stated that this is highly unusual. If people wanted to defend their vote or straighten it out it should be under Council Comments.

Councilor Manousos continued to explain the intent of the process and use of the property. A discussion ensued amongst the Councilors.

Mayor Hemmann stated that as the Chair she is interceding and commented that we had an opportunity to speak during discussion at the time of motion and there have been public comments and asked for a motion to adjourn.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:25 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor McAlister.

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

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

(JC/JK ) Approved as *amended* 9-0-0, January 22, 2013