

**Minutes**  
**Redevelopment Agency**  
**Wednesday, January 2, 2008**  
**5:00 pm - Town Hall**  
**Town Manager's Conference Room**

1. **Call to Order** - Chairman Lee Kuckro called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.
2. **Roll Call/Attendance** - Members in attendance: Lee Kuckro - Chair, Daniel Camilliere - Vice Chair, Joseph Soja, Paul Thompson, and Michael Zaleski. Also in attendance: Andrew Adil, Mayor (late) Martin Walsh, Town Council Liaison; Ken Rizzio, EDIC Liaison; Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager; and Peter Gillespie, Town Planner/Economic Development Manager.

Members absent: none.

3. **Public Comments** -

Mr. Kuckro distributed copies of an e-mail message sent from Kenneth Sokolowski, 79 Main Street. In the message Mr. Sokolowski provided his comments on a 12-26-07 letter from the UConn Center for Survey Research and Analysis.

John Pratt, 32 Surrey Road: Mr. Pratt said that the public needs more information on how the tax burden would be reduced if the Town spends money on redevelopment. That is, describe what will be the cost and the return on the investment, how the return will be achieved, etc. He said he believes that Glastonbury did something like this with their Salmon Brook business center. That is, the amount of the proposed tax credits and redevelopment subsidy was known in advance, so the public knew what it was getting into. He also suggested that the Town's website be written with simpler wording and avoid "real estate speak".

Lee Standish, 278 Hartford Avenue: Mr. Standish said that he understands a survey may be done to see why the referendum did not pass. He said he hopes that the questions are not leading so the Town truly finds out why.

4. **Approval of Minutes** - December 5, 2007 - The Agency members did not receive their copies of the draft minutes until the beginning of this meeting, so Mr. Kuckro recommended tabling the vote on the minutes until the next meeting.
5. **Public Opinion Survey** - Ms. Therrien said that she had contacted several universities about doing a survey on redevelopment issues. She said that Quinnipiac University does not do outside work. Central Connecticut State University does surveys, but will only do the mail-in type. The cost would be about \$10,000 - \$11,000 to get enough returns for a valid survey (i.e. 300 returns from approximately 1,500 mailed). The UConn Center for Survey Research and Analysis responded in a letter dated 12-26-07. The Center does both mail and telephone surveys. Ms. Therrien said the Center included an approximate cost, but recommended meeting to discuss the Town's objectives and to give a more accurate price. Copies of the letter were distributed.

Mr. Kuckro said that the survey should include a question asking residents if they feel overtaxed, and whether and where redevelopment should be undertaken. Mr. Soja said he liked the idea of a telephone survey so people could give more feedback than just an answer to a question. Ms. Therrien said that would make it hard for a survey to be considered statistically accurate. Paul Thompson suggested a website forum or an e-mail survey, to give people an electronic option.

Mr. Camilliere said that a survey should be considered down the road, but not now. He said that the referendum vote speaks for the people and feels that there has been good coverage in the newspapers about the issues. Mr. Zaleski said that a survey may provide useful information, but may not be the most effective use

of the Agency's time and the Town's funds. He prefers the approach of holding public forums with information on specific projects, so the public has the detailed information they have asked for. He said the Town can better advocate for redevelopment in forums, because the referendum process put legal limits on the Town's ability to do that. Mr. Zaleski said that each town has its own demographics and other factors that developers look at. He suggested that the Agency get developers to attend the forum and tell residents what they like and don't like about Wethersfield.

Mr. Camilliere said that State Legislators have the ability to send mailings, and wondered if information could be sent out that way. Ms. Therrien said that there are limits on the numbers of pieces of mail the legislators can send out at one time. Mr. Soja said that his sales background makes him want more information about what are the residents' objections, so he favors having a survey done.

Mr. Kuckro suggested that the Agency continue to look into doing a survey while it looked into holding public forums. He asked Ms. Therrien to see if the Director of the UConn Center would attend a future Agency meeting. He also asked Mr. Gillespie to see if there are developers that would be willing to attend public meetings. Mr. Kuckro said that any public meetings should also include information the public seems to be lacking, such as: the small amount of developable land available, the high dependency on residential tax base, and the work that the Town Planner's office already does to promote redevelopment.

6. **Redevelopment Agency Web Page Improvements** - Mr. Gillespie said that he plans to make additions and improvements to the Town's website to follow-up on some of the discussions about making more information available. He said he will draft something in the form of "Frequently Asked Questions" and distribute it to the Agency members for comments prior to posting. Mr. Thompson asked that the Agency be updated on the number of hits the website gets, to get a sense for the interest level.
7. **Additional Information Requests and Topics for Future Meetings** - Mr. Gillespie said that redevelopment is most often done in specific geographic areas around which plans are developed. He recommended a series of forums, starting with more general information, then getting into specific examples. Mr. Zaleski agreed that this would be a great way to drill down into the details of a project so people could better understand what is needed. Mr. Kuckro asked Mr. Gillespie to write up an outline of topics for such a series, so the Agency could discuss at their next meeting.
8. **Executive Session To Discuss Real Estate Matters** - Mr. Thompson motioned to go into executive session at 5:42 p.m. to discuss real estate matters. Mr. Zaleski seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor. During the executive session, the Agency members discussed real estate matters, and no votes were taken. Mr. Thompson motioned to come out of the executive session at 6:27 p.m. and return to the regular agenda, Mr. Zaleski seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.
9. **Next Meeting Date** - January 16, 2008 at 5:00 pm. (regularly scheduled meeting).
10. **Correspondence** - Mr. Gillespie said that the only correspondence he received was the e-mail message from Ken Sokolowski that was mentioned earlier in the meeting.
11. **Call to Adjourn** - Mr. Thompson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 p.m., Mr. Zaleski seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted, Kevin T. Sullivan  
Agency Recording Secretary