

**REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 6, 2011**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Tuesday, September 6, 2011 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: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager; Peter Gillespie, Planning and Development; Michael Turner, Chief Engineer and Director of Public Works; Michael Zaleski, Chairperson, Economic Development; RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager; and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Hurley led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Chairperson Hemmann asked for a moment in silence in remembrance of Fred Petrelli.

On behalf of the Wethersfield George D. Ritchie Soccer Club, Councilor Manousos presented a check in the amount of \$33,630 for the lights on Cottone Field.

Chairperson Hemmann expressed her appreciation for the donation from the George D. Ritchie Soccer Club.

**PROCLAMATIONS**

Constitution Week – Chairperson Hemmann read the proclamation and presented it to Barbara Gorman.

United Way Day of Caring – Chairperson Hemmann read the proclamation, it had been sent to the Chairperson of the yearlong Celebration for 20 years of caring in the community.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Public Hearings – Redevelopment Bond Referendum Questions. Peter Gillespie and Mike Zelinsky, Chair of the Redevelopment Agency, gave a presentation on the redevelopment projects.

Jeff Bridges responded to several financial questions that arose from the Redevelopment Public Hearing meeting:

1. **Can the Town earmark the taxes created by these projects for specific use?** Jeff Bridges explained one of the mechanisms to enable the Town to do this is a Tax Increment Financing Fund (TIFF). The Town is proposing a General Obligation Bond because the rates are better and it doesn't dedicate a specific source of income. Another question is whether the developers would receive tax breaks and Jeff Bridges explained

the overall goal of the project is to make sure that there is a net benefit to the Town after the redevelopment. The Town probably would not recommend issuing a tax break unless it is in lieu of cash support so that the debt benefit would still be positive at the end of the day.

2. **Why is another referendum being done when the last one failed?** Jeff Bridges explained that there are projects and properties in Town that are obsolete and underutilized and the goal and mission of the Redevelopment Agency is to continue to look for mechanisms and opportunities to redevelop obsolete properties in conjunction with property owners to make it more beneficial to the Town. If a referendum fails, it doesn't necessarily mean another referendum won't pass or another project won't receive support.
3. **Can the Town afford the additional debt?** Jeff Bridges explained that it can because the Town's debt ratio is relatively low and there is no cap limit that would affect the issuance of the bond. One concern was how much would taxes increase, and Jeff Bridges explained that the overall goal is to make sure the proceeds from the new taxes from the new development would be more than sufficient to pay the taxes.
4. **If bond funding is approved, could the funds be used for other projects?** Jeff Bridges explained that the question will be specific enough where if a referendum is passed for 1000 Silas Deane Highway, those dollars cannot be used for another project. Use of the dollars has to be related to the question that was voted on with the ballot.

Peter Gillespie explained answers to the following questions:

1. **Will the present school system be able to handle the additional school age children generated from these developments?** Peter Gillespie explained that the target market for the multi-family apartments generated with these projects are two different demographics. The first demographic is young professionals ranging in age 20 to early 30's, and lastly "empty nesters" or an older demographic, neither of which is felt will generate a significant number of school age children to the population. He also noted a study that was developed by the Urban Land Institute which has analyzed multi-family housing across the country and it has answered some of these questions with a national study. The statistics reflect that for every 100 single family detached housing units, it can be anticipated that it will generate 70 school age children. The numbers decrease to approximately 25 to 30 children per 100 multi-family housing units.
2. **How were the bond amounts determined?** Peter Gillespie explained that with the 1000 Silas Deane Highway project, the Town is anticipating helping out in several different ways, i.e., environmental clean-up of the property, but nothing has been agreed upon yet. Additionally, the cost of demolition and involvement with some of the acquisition costs

have been considered. With the Berlin Turnpike project, the cost was generated through discussions with the developer based on his conversations with the present owners, and he feels that there is a need for assistance in helping with the acquisition costs, demolition costs and environmental cleanup. The Town anticipates varying levels of environmental remediation with both projects.

3. **What is the experience of the developer?** Peter Gillespie explained that the primary developer is “Fairfield Residential” who has developed over 9000 multi-family units throughout the country. For the Silas Deane project, the Town would be soliciting public proposals to develop the property in concert with the present owner. He explained that the apartment units will primarily be one bedroom units with some two bedroom units, 1,000 to 1,500 square feet. The mix for the Silas Deane Highway has not been determined and is flexible. The Berlin Turnpike units will be 60% one family and 40% two family units. He explained the market of these units will be based on realistic market conditions and imminent domain is not being anticipated for either of the projects.
4. **Why wasn’t office space or hotels considered for these two sites.** Peter Gillespie explained that upon review of the studies, these two items were not feasible. Both markets would not support a new project.
5. **Why was 91 Goff Road included in the project?** Peter Gillespie explained that the Redevelopment Agency has excluded 91 Goff Road from this project.
6. **Do the developers own the property being discussed?** Peter Gillespie explained that 1000 Silas Deane Highway is still owned by the present owner. The developers for the Berlin Turnpike project have indicated that they have had continuous conversations with the present owners and are in the process of negotiating what the acquisition scenarios would be.
7. **There was a concern as to whether the Town is going to provide a landscaping buffer for those residents near the Berlin Turnpike project.** Peter Gillespie explained that there is presently a significant landscape buffer there and the Town anticipates making every effort to maintain or supplement it so that the residents can be afforded some additional protection.
8. **There was a question as to whether a traffic impact study will be done.** Peter Gillespie explained that both of these projects are still in the concept stage and that there is a long way to go; the plans will need to be further developed. It is highly likely that a traffic impact study will be done. Because both of these projects are on State highways, the Connecticut Department of Transportation will have to also review them.

Public Hearings – Redevelopment Bond Referendum Questions:

1. Introduction of bond ordinance for the Appropriation of \$5,000,000 towards the redevelopment plan of the Berlin Turnpike/Nott Street project and authorizing the issue of bonds and notes to finance the portion of such appropriation not defrayed from grants.
2. Introduction of bond ordinance for the appropriation of \$2,000,000 for costs with respect to implementing the redevelopment plan for 1000 Silas Deane Highway and authorizing the issue of bonds and notes to finance the portion of such appropriation not defrayed by grants.

John Fobach, 119 Goff Road, commented that it was his opinion that based on the shape of the Berlin Turnpike property, it was a large number of apartments and perhaps a hotel would be better suited in that space. He also noted that with the potential to have 45 children in the apartment complex, there will be issues with the lack of space for children to play and the traffic issues on Nott Street.

Tony Martino, 374 Highland Street, noted that he has reviewed and compared the two projects, and supports the 1000 Silas Deane Highway project. (See Attachment #1.)

Betty Rosania, 88 Desmond Drive, commented on the passing of Town resident, Jay Amoruso. She gave her support for the 1000 Silas Deane Highway project and suggested they build on that success then continue onto the next project.

Larry Spellacy, 215 Pine Lane, commented on the issues and voiced his support of the 1000 Silas Deane Highway project and thought it had a lot of potential because it was a good area for walking. There is already a mix of business and residential real estate present.

Harvey Sprung, commented that he is the owner of 974-990 Silas Deane Highway (across the street from 1000 Silas Deane Highway) and has spent a lot of time developing those properties and is in favor of the 1000 Silas Deane Highway project. He would like to see it continue down the highway.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, commented that he is in favor of the projects but is against bonding for the projects. He asked if the projects were so good, why weren't the developers investing in it themselves. Perhaps the Town could provide a break after the completion of the projects.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road thought that the Silas Deane Highway project was a better idea than the Berlin Turnpike project. He asked if we [the town] needed to gobble up the cost of all of the children, estimated at 32. Also he thought the presentation was lacking on the issues.

Taxes in Wethersfield are too high; the developer will get a good deal buying it cheaper; the Town shouldn't have to buy the developer.

Robert Garrey, 10 Morrison Avenue, commented that he supports both projects.

Bob Woodward, 456 Middletown Avenue, urged Council to wait on the vote until more research is done. He noted that the Mill Street complex is fully occupied, but at the time it was built it sat fairly empty for a long time. He doesn't want to see the same thing happen with the Silas Deane Highway projects.

Howard Willard, 141 Main Street, appreciates the time that EDIC and Town Council have spent on bringing additional business to Wethersfield. He asked why Wethersfield taxpayers should be willing to donate tax money to subsidize other peoples' investments. If a developer cannot stand on their own, then why would the Town spend its funds on it? (See Attachment #2.)

Brenda Lopez, 12 Woodcrest Avenue, urged Council to postpone the Berlin Turnpike project. Goff Road is presently a very busy road and there are both young children and older people in the neighborhood. She noted that people are going to use the entrance on Goff Road to access the proposed apartment project and this will increase the traffic on Goff Road.

Tony Homicki, 201 Cumberland Road, commented that this is an opportunity to elevate stagnant property in Wethersfield.

Ballou Tooker, 65 Harmond Place, commented that he came to the meeting thinking that the two projects were a good idea, and now after listening to people speak, now feels that the Berlin Turnpike project is not conducive to the residential neighborhood.

Raymond Kryzak, 12 Talcott Place, commented that he had attended the Redevelopment Agency meeting and not one person spoke in favor of these two developments. He noted that he cannot understand why Wethersfield is unable to attract more medical buildings with being so close to Hartford.

Kevin Walsh, Wethersfield, commented that when a Town starts to make a deal with one property owner, more property owners will come forward hoping for a deal also. Once the bond is approved, the Town has no control over how the money is invested and no equity in the project. He supports redevelopment in the Town.

Chairperson Hemmann read into the record an email received from Wethersfield resident, Steve Kelly, 29 Old Smithy Lane. (See Attachment 3.)

Hearing Closed. 8:45 p.m.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

Jim Woodworth, 5 River Road, on behalf of the Wethersfield Nature Center, extended an invitation to the Nature and Historical Bike Ride on Saturday, September 17 at 9:00 a.m. to bike along the Heritage Trail through Old Wethersfield through the Great Meadows, across the Glastonbury Ferry and back. The ride will coincide with the CornFest being held at the Wethersfield Green. Jim Woodworth also spoke on the issue of the Town selling off a parcel of the Wilkus Farm.

Bob Young, 20 Coppermill Road, distributed and discussed Wethersfield's results in the Mastery Tests for the past eleven years. (See Attachment #4.)

## COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor McAlister reported for the Public Works Committee which four items were discussed. First, trash disposal and recycling options for either a single vendor or dual vendor option in which a decision needs to be made in 30 days. Second, the Town has submitted a tax bill to the property owners of the Mitchell Park property who had the understanding that they were not expecting to have to pay taxes. The property owners are also interested in purchasing the property around the senior housing project so that they can refinance. Third, the owners of Harris Farm, located on Back Lane, have approached the Town about purchasing their property, which has previously been zoned for apartment type buildings. He noted that there are no funds available in the Open Space Fund to purchase the property at the assessed price. Lastly, with regards to the repair on the Ambulance building, there is a new material that is being introduced on a roof that already needs to be replaced.

Councilor Drake reported for the Infrastructure Committee and noted that the Energy Committee has been working on a grant through DCS Energy for solar panels on eight different town owned buildings and it has been approved to go forward.

Mike Turner reported the buildings that were being looked at were the Town Hall, the Pitkin Center, Firehouse 1 and 2, three schools and Town Garage.

Councilor Drake reported that most of the solar panels are not going to be attached to the roof and should save the Town approximately \$15,000 a year.

Councilor Manousos reported for the Budget & Finance Committee and there was discussion regarding capital improvements and assessing a mill levy as opposed to a bond for road repairs. The Committee has agreed that placing any question on the ballot at this time on how to fund a road paving program was premature. There was an agreement of using a combination of a mill levy and a bonding may be required. There was also discussion about the current needs, which is at \$1.2 million in the regularly programmed budget this year and the need for it to be increased.

## COUNCIL COMMENTS

Chairperson Hemmann, on behalf of the Town Council, thanked the Town Staff and Department Heads who staffed the emergency operations center during Storm Irene as well as the police and volunteer firefighters who worked diligently during the storm. Planning efforts began on Thursday, August 25 and councilors received frequent updates.

Councilor Hurley commented that the Town Manager and Town staff did an excellent job during the storm and was very helpful working with CL&P.

Councilor Kotkin commented that the Town's organization is a continuing trend on how situations have been handled.

Chairperson Hemmann noted that on September 11, a Picnic of Remembrance will be held at the Broad Street Green and the Ride of Thunder, supporting Special Olympics, will be held on Sunday, September 11.

Councilor Roberts commented that she and Chairperson Hemmann attended the Open House at the Police Department on August 26, for the new canine officer, Joseph Bosch, and the new canine, Owen. She noted that there was a family whose children had collected money from recycling and donated a \$1,000 check towards the canine program to feed the dogs. She asked if the Council could send a letter of thanks to the family. She read an email that she and all Council received from a woman who lives on Schoolhouse Crossing regarding the impact of the Cedar Mountain development and asked for the status on the outstanding issues.

Jeff Bridges reported that the Town submitted a letter addressing the traffic. Russell Road is a state road and not a town road so the Department of Transportation will issue the permits. With regards to blasting, the Toll Brothers have agreed to incorporate the Town of Wethersfield's blasting criteria into their permits. The screening and safety of the detention ponds and drainage structures, and those comments were made before the close of the TPC hearing.

Councilor Roberts reported that the Wethersfield High School Boosters is collecting donations of books, CDs and DVDs and there will be a drop off box outside the swimming area at the high school. She also thanked the Fire Department for coming to her house during the storm for help with the furnace.

Councilor Manousos reported that he had Mayor Hours last week and spoke with Mike Cuttington and shared the following comments made: Mr. Cuttington supports the two redevelopment projects but wanted to make sure imminent domain wasn't going to affect any of the homes and also asked if the transcripts from the Ethics hearings can be viewed on line.

## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges asked Mike Turner, Director of Physical Services and Charles Flynn, Fire Department Chief, to speak on the activities during Hurricane Irene.

Mike Turner reported that he felt the Town's response to the hurricane was successful, due in large part to the training on behalf of the Town Staff as well as Council and individual Department Heads. Mike Turner summarized what was done to prepare for the hurricane. (See Attachment #5.)

Jeff Bridges commented that the Central Connecticut Health Department and the Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance participated with the Town with Hurricane Irene and noted that a very good job was done by both departments.

## COUNCIL ACTION

Redevelopment Bond Referendum Questions: Public Hearing for:

Introduction of bond ordinance for the Appropriation of \$5,000,000 towards the redevelopment plan of the Berlin Turnpike/Nott Street project and authorizing the issue of bonds and notes to finance the portion of such appropriation not defrayed from grants.

Councilor Hurley moved **"TO APPROVE AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$5,000,000 FOR THE COSTS WITH RESPECT TO IMPLEMENTING THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE BERLIN TURNPIKE/NOTT STREET PROJECT, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE PORTION OF SUCH APPROPRIATION NOT DEFRAID BY GRANTS,"** seconded by Councilor Drake.

Jeff Bridges reported that the Redevelopment Committee has excluded 91 Goff Road from the redevelopment plan.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he felt the plot plan should be redesigned to reflect the exclusion of 91 Goff Road.

Jeff Bridges responded that this request has been made.

Councilor Kotkin noted that after reviewing Webster Bank's produced debt service schedule and noted that it appears that the total interest over the ten years is \$1.9 million and that's for \$5 million in bonding. He noted that when Council was talking about the road bonding, it was also \$1.5 million in interest charges but the bond was for \$4 million and asked why the interest is the same for two different amounts.

Jeff Bridges responded that he would have to schedule, but he noted that it may be the rates with the differential.

Councilor Kotkin agreed with Jeff Bridges that the rate was higher, and noted that a coupon was used that was 75 basis points lower to show the economics of this project. If the same coupon (4.5%) is used, this project probably is less economic and he suggested using the 4.5% coupon rather than the 3 ¾ % coupon.

Councilor Drake also noted that property taxes were not included in the package which would be a significant number.

Councilor Kotkin asked Peter Gillespie what could be the maximum number of apartments on this site.

Peter Gillespie responded that the acreage is 6.3 acres and the maximum is right around 152 units unless modifications were done with the zoning regulations.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the Zoning Commission were to reduce the number of apartments, what would happen to the economics of the project.

Peter Gillespie responded that it would depend of what is modified.

Councilor Kotkin commented that there was not a performance financial statements in the Council packets on the Berlin Turnpike property and asked if one existed.

Peter Gillespie responded that there is a preliminary set of documents that the Town has asked for additional detail on and is forthcoming.

Councilor Kotkin noted that this matter is being voted on tonight and information is needed and asked why it was not made available for tonight's meeting.

Peter Gillespie responded that the numbers had not been imbedded and were preliminary in nature and the Town wasn't comfortable with distributing the numbers.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the 84,500 square feet a gross number or rentable space number in terms of the apartments.

Peter Gillespie responded that this was not clarified on the concept plan but he believes it is a gross number.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the rental space would be less than 84,500 square feet.

Peter Gillespie responded that it would be if the stairwells and common square footage were eliminated.

Councilor Kotkin commented that if he divided the 84,500 square feet by the 152 units, he came to 556 square feet per apartment and asked if he was correct.

Peter Gillespie responded that based on the information from the developer, the numbers were doubled that of the 556 square feet. He added that there is a local requirement that the minimum for a unit is 900 square feet.

Councilor Kotkin explained that if he took the taxes that are expected to be generated, he asked how much of the \$450,000 would come from the apartments and how much from the commercial building, he asked if 90+ would come from the apartments.

Peter Gillespie responded that it may be more than 90%. He added that the majority of the taxes would come from the apartment building and only \$70,000 would come from the commercial property.

Councilor Kotkin asked if it were to work out to be \$3,000 a year per apartment, would it be comparable to what is gotten elsewhere in Town.

Peter Gillespie responded that this is a product that does not have comparables.

Councilor Kotkin commented that this information would be helpful before a vote is taken on the project. He also noted that there was a question as to whether there would be any competition between the two apartment complexes.

Peter Gillespie responded that there may be overlap in competition and it depends on timing and other factors.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the two motels are currently open.

Peter Gillespie responded that one of the motels is partially open.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the Town would be exposed to any relocation costs for a tenant on public assistance.

Peter Gillespie responded that research is being done on this question, but the plan does anticipate, if necessary, a proviso. Transient housing is handled differently from permanent residential and the question has been posed to legal counsel.

Councilor Kotkin commented that the back up on Nott Street entering onto the Berlin Turnpike is significant and the present plan for the complex has a driveway between the Berlin Turnpike and Goff Road in the middle of a hill and he asked if there was a way in which this driveway could be built.

Peter Gillespie responded that the plan is conceptual and a lot of work still needs to be done.

Councilors Drake, Hurley, Manousos, Deputy Mayor Console and Chairperson Hemmann voted AYE. Councilors Kotkin, McAlister, Montinieri and Roberts voted NAY. The motion passed 5-4-0.

Introduction of bond ordinance for the appropriation of \$2,000,000 for costs with respect to implementing the redevelopment plan for 1000 Silas Deane Highway and authorizing the issue of bonds and notes to finance the portion of such appropriation not defrayed by grants.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$2,000,000 FOR COSTS WITH RESPECT TO IMPLEMENTING THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 1000 SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE PORTION OF SUCH APPROPRIATION NOT DEFRAIDED FROM GRANTS,”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Jeff Bridges reported that this is a proposal that has been fostered in a partnership with the existing property owner who is paying for a portion of the redevelopment plan.

Councilor Drake noted that Jeff Bridges reported that on 6.8 acres, there is a maximum of 52 units. He asked how there can be 115 units on 3.5 acres.

Peter Gillespie responded that with the 90-115 units, the 90 is divided by 3.5 is compliant with zoning regulations.

Councilor Drake commented that the Berlin Turnpike site is not a good site for children. He also noted that the developer had stated at the Redevelopment Committee meeting that he expected 3% of children in the apartments.

Peter Gillespie noted that he should have clarified the number. Neither one of the development scenarios anticipates anywhere near the number of children reported by the National Statistics.

Councilor Drake noted that he supports this project and it is difficult to compare the two projects. His concern is that the Town has spent a lot of money on this project and if these projects are voted down, where would the Town go from here.

Peter Gillespie noted that the analysis that was done included the developers taking a look at the performas, ideas and assumptions made. The numbers have been revised several times and is based on reality.

Councilor Drake commented that he was concern that if the project gets voted down, a lot of time, energy and money will have been wasted.

Councilor McAlister commented that he supports both referendums in concept, but the fact that there is not a developer, does not understand what the rush is and what happens if the bond is pulled after all the money has been spent.

Jeffrey Bridges responded that this project follows a more traditional redevelopment process.

Peter Gillespie commented that even if everything goes according to plan, there is still a long way to go for both projects.

Councilor McAlister asked at what point or at what confidence level would a portion or the entire \$2 million be pulled.

Peter Gillespie responded that the Town would only ask for funding as the need arises, unless there was a need for the entire \$2 million immediately. Milestones would need to be established.

Councilor McAlister asked if there is any oversight of the money.

Peter Gillespie responded that the Redevelopment Agency has certain authority and the records will be public.

Jeff Bridges commented that the Town Council approves amounts spent.

Councilor McAlister asked what steps are taken if more money is needed.

Jeff Bridges responded that proposals are submitted by the Town and performas are returned. All the documents are reviewed and if someone comes back stating additional money is needed, the documents will be reviewed again if there is any deviation from the previous explanations.

Councilor Montinieri commented that he does support this project but there are major differences in the two projects. He commented that he felt the Silas Deane project has more viability than the Berlin Turnpike project and hopes that it doesn't get dragged down by the Berlin Turnpike project. He urged the community to review the documents and educate themselves on the projects.

Councilor Manousos noted that he supports both of the projects and the advice and recommendation of the Redevelopment Agency needs to be taken as it has put a lot of time in the projects. If due diligence finds that this project will not work, then Council can decide to scrap the project. With knowing the process and the unknowns in both projects, he asked if there is any value in postponing the projects.

Peter Gillespie responded that a lot of time has been spent working with the redeveloper and the property owner to get to this point in time, and there is clearly interest on both sides and if there is a delay, a window of opportunity may be missed. Giving the public an opportunity on it is what the Redevelopment Agency is looking for.

Councilor Manousos asked how many stories is the Silas Deane project.

Peter Gillespie responded that one building is two stories and the other is a six story building.

Councilor Manousos asked in terms of likelihood of success, would it better to have a developer in hand or a conceptual plan that still has to go to market.

Peter Gillespie responded the level of success varies depending upon projects.

Councilor Manousos asked if with either of the projects, if the money is not needed, then there is no reason to bond.

Peter Gillespie responded that this was correct. He assured Council that he will be as critical with the numbers as he can be and look to the interest of the Town and be as creative as he can be.

Councilor Kotkin commented that he supports this project and the concept of redevelopment and this may encourage more development along the Silas Deane Highway. He worries that the Berlin Turnpike may hurt the chances for the Silas Deane project.

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

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE TO NOT PLACE THE ADVISORY QUESTION FOR A MILL LEVY FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ON THE BALLOT,”** seconded by Councilor Montinieri.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Hurley moved **“THAT THE BOND ORDINANCE APPROVED AT THIS MEETING BE SUBMITTED TO A REFERENDUM VOTE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TOWN CHARTER ON NOVEMBER 8, 2011, BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 6:00 A.M. AND 8:00 P.M., IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ELECTION TO BE HELD ON THAT DATE, UNDER THE FOLLOWING BALLOT HEADING:**

**“SHALL THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD APPROPRIATE \$2,000,000 FOR COSTS WITH RESPECT TO IMPLEMENTING THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 1000 SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY, AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE PORTION OF SUCH APPROPRIATION NOT DEFRAID FROM GRANTS?”**

**AND THAT THE TOWN CLERK PUBLISH A NOTICE OF SUCH REFERENDUM, MAKE ABSENTEE BALLOTS AVAILABLE, PREPARE AND DISTRIBUTE EXPLANATORY TEXT, AND THAT THE TOWN MANAGER BE AUTHORIZED TO PREPARE AND DISTRIBUTE EXPLANATORY MATERIALS,”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Jeff Bridges reported that this action puts this item on the ballot.

Councilor Montinieri asked about the wording for the ballot as it sounded somewhat confusing.

Councilor Hurley commented that there should be explanatory material for residents to review.

Dolores Sassano commented that the information comes out of both the Town Manager and the Clerk’s office.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“THAT THE BOND ORDINANCE APPROVED AT THIS MEETING BE SUBMITTED TO A REFERENDUM VOTE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TOWN CHARTER ON NOVEMBER 8, 2011, BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 6:00 A.M. AND 8:00 P.M., IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ELECTION TO BE HELD ON THAT DATE, UNDER THE FOLLOWING BALLOT HEADING:**

**“SHALL THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD APPROPRIATE \$5,000,000 FOR COSTS WITH RESPECT TO IMPLEMENTING THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE BERLIN TURNPIKE/NOTT STREET PROJECT, AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE PORTION OF SUCH APPROPRIATION NOT DEFRAID FROM GRANTS?”**

**AND THAT THE TOWN CLERK PUBLISH A NOTICE OF PASSAGE AND NOTICE OF SUCH REFERENDUM, MAKE ABSENTEE BALLOTS AVAILABLE AND PREPARE AND DISTRIBUTE EXPLANATORY TEXT, AND THAT TOWN MANAGER BE AUTHORIZED TO PREPARE AND DISTRIBUTE EXPLANATORY MATERIALS,”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges reported that this action puts this item on the ballot.

Councilors Drake, Hurley, Manousos, Deputy Mayor Console and Chairperson Hemmann voted AYE. Councilors Kotkin, McAlister, Montinieri and Roberts voted NO. The motion passed 5-4-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO ENTER INTO LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH PROPERTY OWNERS OF 32 AND 40 JAY STREET FOR USE OF TOWN PROPERTY,”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Jeff Bridges reported the next step would be to have a license agreement prepared by the Town Attorney. The license agreement should include the terms of usage and agreement to remove the garden upon request by the Town.

Councilor McAlister referred to the community garden and asked if a fee is charged for each garden plot.

Jeff Bridges responded that the fee is \$25.00 per plot.

Councilor McAlister asked if something is going to be done consistent with charging for the use of the land or is it going to be free.

Jeff Bridges responded that at this point it has not been discussed.

Councilor McAlister asked if this is going to be offered to this resident only or would it be similar to the plots that have a fee.

Mike Turner responded that he believes the intent is to license solely for those property owners and whether there is a fee attached to that on an annual basis can be determined by the Council.

Councilor McAlister asked what is being authorized at tonight’s meeting.

Jeff Bridges responded that the Council is accepting a Section 8-24 referral which would give Council the ability to negotiate the license.

Councilor McAlister commented that his concern is that someone had called to complain about the use of town property for a personal garden.

Councilor Roberts commented that it sends a bad precedent. Someone had called anonymously to complain and noted that she was suspicious of what the real reason was for the complaint.

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

Councilor Drake moved **“TO ACCEPT THE POSITIVE REFERRAL FROM PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION REGARDING THE SALE OF THE WILKUS FARM HOUSE AND BARNS PARCEL LOCATED AT 138 WILLOW STREET,”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Jeff Bridges reported the Wilkus Farm Ad Hoc Advisory Committee found that the house and barns on the Wilkus Property should be sold, if possible to a farmer, realizing the Town lacked the resources to properly upgrade and maintain the structures. To encourage a farmer considering the purchase of the land, a ten acre track of the Wilkus Farm has been set aside as land to lease for farming purposes. The Town Attorney has been working on the sale and disclosure documents for the parcel. Currently the Town is approximately half way through the two year ground water monitoring on the site. The remediation was an element to the disclosure contained in the sale documents. In addition, the Wilkus Farm parcels the Town intends to keep should also be formally dedicated as part of the revisions of the dedicated parkland ordinance. At their August 16, 2011 meeting the Planning and zoning Commission voted to give a positive referral on the sale of this property.

Councilor Montinieri noted that prior to the acquisition of the land, there was a large group of residents who were involved with the actual proposal to purchase Wilkus Farm for open space. With this particular piece, he urges whoever takes it to the next level, identify the particular way in which the bid process will resume. He suggested contacting the group of people as he has heard the group has some concerns with the this issue.

Jeff Bridges clarified that Chapter 37 of the Town Code is very clear that the Town cannot do a request for a proposal process. It has to be a straight out highest bidder gets the sale and this is the process that needs to be followed. There’s no ability to negotiate the sale or accept proposals on different uses.

Councilor Montinieri asked whether “preference for farming” can be written into the sale document.

Jeff Bridges responded that it cannot be done under the current ordinance.

Councilor Montinieri clarified that the highest bidder gets the sale and the Town has no control of the use.

Jeff Bridges responded that the highest bidder wins and that through Planning and Zoning there would be control over the use of the property.

Councilor Montinieri noted that he has some concern with this because the Wilkus Farm group who advocated for the open space has some very strong opinions about this. He also noted that he does support selling the property, but felt that it needs to be looked at further to ensure the initial intent.

Councilor Drake commented that no one voted on this referendum based on those ten acres.

Councilor Montinieri commented that there were opinions on the barn and the house during the referendum.

Councilor Drake asked what Councilor Montinieri was looking for.

Councilor Montinieri responded that he is anticipating that the people behind getting the open space had some specific understanding about the barn and house. He felt that they would want a voice on how this issue is handled.

Jeff Bridges commented that if Council wants to be able to accept proposals for the property, then the ordinance would need to be modified. If Council agrees to sell the land, and the money that was used to purchase the Wilkus Farm property came from the Open Space Fund, if the intention is to sell the property and repay the Town, the more restrictions that is put on the less the value of the land. Jeff Bridges asked Councilor Montinieri if he could provide him with the names of the individuals from the group.

Councilor Montinieri agreed that he would give Jeff Bridges the names.

Councilor Roberts asked what was the preference of the 10 acres of land.

Councilor Drake responded that it is whatever the buyer, if a farmer, wanted to do with it.

Councilor Montinieri asked if there were any restrictions on the property.

Jeff Bridges commented that electric fencing or barbed wire can be installed and a building cannot be put on the property.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO ACCEPT THE POSITIVE REFERRAL FROM PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION REGARDING THE SALE OF THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS “SAVAGE PARK” LOCATED ADJACENT TO THE CORPUS CHRISTI SCHOOL ON THE SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY,”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Jeff Bridges reported the Public Works Committee, with the recent concurrence of the Town Council, found that the land known as "Savage Park" could be sold for development purposes since the size and location was not favorable for park purposes.

Savage Park is currently in the Town Code, Chapter 111, as dedicated parkland. This ordinance will have to be amended to remove Savage Park from the list of dedicated parkland and replace it with a similar parcel. There has to be a public hearing on the ordinance.

Second Article 7-13 of the Connecticut State Statutes requires that if land that has been set aside for park or recreational space is used for another purpose, in this case for sale, then the Governing body has to hold a public hearing. Finally, Chapter 37 of the Code of the Town of Wethersfield requires the Council to pass a resolution to sell property. There has to be a public hearing on the resolutions. One of the parcels the staff is proposing to replace the Savage Park parcel with is what is known as the YMCA parcel. This is a 4.96 acre tract that was purchased in 2008 and is adjacent to Millwoods Park.

Staff is still working with the Corpus Christi representatives on the coordination of the sale of Savage Park with the sale of their adjacent parcel. We expect a final answer soon.

At the August 16, 2011 meeting, the Planning and Zoning Commission voted to give a positive referral to the proposed sale.

Jeff Bridges notes that Council is not proposing to offer Savage Park for sale at this time. Staff is recommended to have the property re-zoned for commercial.

Councilor Montinieri asked what the difference is between open space and park land.

Jeff Bridges responded that the code specifies it as park land.

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

Councilor McAlister moved **"TO AUTHORIZE STAFF TO APPLY FOR A ZONING CHANGE FROM RESIDENTIAL TO TOWN CENTER BUSINESS DISTRICT,"** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Jeff Bridges reported that the Town Assessor has the value of the lot, which is presently zoned residential, at \$79,400. If zoned as commercial, the parcel value increases to \$91,000 to \$102,000. Also, the value increases if the lot is combined with the adjacent lot from Corpus Christi. Corpus Christi has agreed verbally to sell the land. The Town is waiting for something in writing and to develop a joint sale agreement. The sale will be delayed until these issues are resolved.

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

BIDS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AWARD A CONTRACT TO SHIPMAN’S FIRE EQUIPMENT CO., INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$31,185 FOR FIFTEEN SETS OF TURNOUT GEAR AND TO FIREMATIC SUPPLY CO., INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$29,912 FOR FIFTEEN SETS OF TURNOUT GEAR,”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

RaeAnn Palmer reported the receipt of this grant allows the Town to receive \$61,097 worth of safety equipment for a \$6,110 investment. Staff has requested award to two vendors who have contracts through the State procurement system.

Assistant Fire Chief Schroll reported that for the past several years, one vendor has been used for the turnout equipment. Last year, three different sets of turnout equipment were purchased to try different styles so that is the reason it was awarded to two different vendors this year.

Councilor McAlister asked if the purchase this year of thirty sets of turnout gear will eliminate a request in the next budget cycle.

Assistant Fire Chief Schroll responded that turnout gear needs to be replaced every ten years.

Councilor McAlister noted during prior discussions, there had been conversation about the sizes and different options and inquired if the proper sizes will be ordered for individuals whose turnout gear does not fit properly.

Assistant Fire Chief Schroll responded that everything is custom fitted for everyone.

Deputy Mayor Console asked about the difference between the two different styles of turnout gear.

Assistant Fire Chief Schroll responded that there was a price increase with one of the vendors.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

Amendment to Chapter 111, §111-1 A: Deletion of §111-1 A (6) and addition of §111-1 A (7) to delete Savage Park as dedicated parkland and to designate the YMCA property as dedicated parkland.

Amendment to Chapter 111, §111-1 A: Addition of §111-1 A (8) to designate the Wilkus Farm Open Space parcels as dedicated parkland.

Introduction of resolution authorizing the sale of Town Property: In accordance with Chapter 37 of the Town Code, a resolution to offer for sale the property known as Wilkus House and Barns.

Introduction of resolution to adopt the Redevelopment Plan for 1000 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, CT, Dated June 20, 2011.

Introduction of resolution to adopt the Redevelopment Plan for Berlin Turnpike/Nott Street, Wethersfield, CT, Dated as Amended to August 30, 2011.

### MINUTES

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE AMENDED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 15, 2011”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 10:35 p.m., Councilor Kotkin, moved **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS REAL ESTATE NEGOTIATIONS”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0. Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager were present. No motions were made and no votes were taken during executive session.

At 10:55 p.m., Councilor Hurley moved **“TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:55 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **“TO ADJOURN THE MEETING”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk  
*Approved by vote of Council*  
*October 3, 2011*