

**REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 19, 2011**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, September 19, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, Montinieri, Roberts and Chairperson Hemmann.

Absent: Councilor McAlister and Deputy Mayor Console.

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager, Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Manousos led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Kathy Bagley introduced Marie Massaro, the Grant Coordinator for the Early Readiness Council.

Marie Massaro reported the Wethersfield Early Readiness Council (WERC) is a coalition of committed individuals whose shared goal is to prepare children for success in school by building awareness of the importance of early care and education. Wethersfield is one of 53 communities around the State that is funded by the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund. The results statement is, "all Wethersfield children, birth to 8 years, are safe, healthy, connected to the community and developmentally successful learners."

Councilor Montinieri inquired about the amount of the current grant.

Marie Massaro responded that the amount is \$25,000 for the second year grant.

Councilor Montinieri asked about the results of the health/safety indicators.

Marie Massaro responded that they are just now working with the school districts to start identifying that data. Right now they are using the forms that are required to be submitted by the State for kindergarten through 6th grade.

Councilor Montinieri asked Maria Massaro to elaborate on the connection between the percentage of third graders taking the CMTs and the Kindergarten preparation.

Maria Massaro responded that there are two measures to show how well the children are meeting the overall goals in terms of learning and being ready to learn. CMTs are used as an indicator of general overall readiness of children and are generally accepted. With Kindergarten, there are good measures as to what that child has had when they first start the school year.

Councilor Drake noted that it was reported that the first strategy of planning is coming out this Fall.

Marie Massaro responded that the target time line is March.

Councilor Drake asked if there are any expectations of what they are looking for in resources.

Marie Massaro responded that they are not at that stage yet.

Kathy Bagley explained that part of the Graustein philosophy and the RDA process is to look at existing resources and can it be adjusted. It's not like dollars are being looked at themselves.

Economic Development Report – Peter Gillespie.

TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD
Planning and Economic Development Department
MONTHLY REPORT
September 2011

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RECENT PROJECTS

- The PZC has approved plans for a change of use and façade improvements for the vacant Tim Horton's building at 486 Silas Deane Highway. The tenant is Farmington Bank.
- Plans have been filed to renovate the former Angellino's restaurant at 1115 Silas Deane Highway in the Wethersfield Shopping Center into a Thai Restaurant the Tamarind Grill.
- Attended the ribbon cutting and grand opening for CW Price Clothing at the vacant AJ Wright space at the Stop and Shop Plaza at 1410 Berlin Turnpike.
- The PZC approved plans for a new restaurant for the vacant space at 982 Silas Deane Highway (Building next to Mila Fabric).
- Facade improvements have been approved for the Dunkin Donuts at 225 Silas Deane Highway.
- Nirvana Salon and Academy has relocated to 318 Silas Deane Highway.
- A barber shop D-Bac's has opened at 506 Silas Deane Highway.
- Permits have been approved for interior renovations to accommodate a furniture and clothing consignment store at 732 Silas Deane Highway.
- Plans have been approved for renovation to the Cumberland Farms at 1855 Berlin Turnpike.

OTHER NEWS AND INITIATIVES

Developer/Tenant Contacts

- Discussed interest with developer in the redevelopment of the former Fun Zone at 1290 Silas Deane Highway.
- Discussed interest with potential buyer of property at 60 Beaver Road.

- Met with potential buyer of the office building at 1290 Silas Deane Highway.

Redevelopment Agency

- **1000 Silas Deane Highway** – On August 30 the Redevelopment Agency approved the plans for the redevelopment of this property. The plans call for the demolition of the existing building and the replacement with a mixed use commercial development with residential units on the upper levels. On September 6 Town Council approved language for a referendum that would assist this project in the amount of \$2 million dollars. The Agency is assisting with the language for the explanatory text for this referendum and will be scheduling public information sessions designed to answer the questions associated with the project.
- **Berlin Turnpike/Nott Street** – On August 30 the Redevelopment Agency approved the Plan for the cluster of 4 properties located at this intersection. The proposal is for a mixed use site with multiple buildings. On September 6 the Town Council approved language for a referendum designed to assist this project in the amount of 5 million dollars. The Agency is assisting with the language for the explanatory text for this referendum and will be scheduling public information sessions designed to answer the questions associated with the project.

Economic Development and Improvement Commission

- Construction is progressing on the 3rd phase of the Silas Deane Highway Streetscape improvements in front of Town Hall. Improvements will include the completion of the brick walkways, additional seating, ornamental lighting, new signage and a semi-circular drop off area to service the building.
- Received the State Assistance Agreement from the DECD for the next phase (IV) of the SDH Streetscape improvement program. An additional \$250,000 grant has been provided to the Town from the STEAP program.
- Received a signed State Assistance Agreement from the DECD for \$250,000 to further fund our façade improvement Program.
- Approved additional funds to assist business and property owners for façade improvement projects at 322 Silas Deane Highway – Lifeline Financial and 770 Silas Deane Highway – Subway.
- Façade application pending for site improvements and façade improvements at 450 Silas Deane Highway to accommodate Lamore's Gulf.

Tourism

- **ibrochure** – Completed work with Madden Media on the development of an electronic promotional brochure (ibrochure) which will be used as an alternative to our printed brochure in response to inquiries received from our recent ad in the CT Getaway Guide. Please visit the Historic Wethersfield website to review www.historicwethersfield.org
- The Commission is working with the Pita Group on a number of marketing initiatives relative to our recent grant from the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism. Specifically, we just completed the design of our Fall ad.
- Work continues on the implementation of the **Wayfinding Signage** project. We are presently working with Sign Lite (low bidder) on the engineering and fabrication details for Phase 1.

Meeting/Event Schedule September

September 8	Chamber of Commerce 8:30 am
September 8	EDIC 12 noon
September 13	Redevelopment 5 pm
September 20	PZC 7 pm
September 27	Redevelopment 4:30 pm
September 27	Tourism 5:30 pm

Councilor Manousos asked when Panera Bread will open.

Peter Gillespie responded that it may not open until sometime next year.

Councilor Manousos asked what additional taxes are being anticipated with the Panera project.

Peter Gillespie responded that although the numbers haven't been completed, there is an evaluation of approximately \$300,000.

Councilor Hurley asked if Peter Gillespie could expand on the Cedar Mountain project.

Peter Gillespie responded that the Newington Planning & Zoning Commission has not taken any action on it and are waiting for the Wetlands Commission to issue its review and approval. Next week it will be back on Newington's agenda. Several weeks ago, Wethersfield submitted a memo summarizing the remaining issues and reiterated its concerns with the drainage and screening issues.

Councilor Montinieri asked about an article in the paper that inferred that Newington was interested in purchasing the property as open space and asked if this was an accurate representation.

Peter Gillespie responded that when the project was first introduced, there was a second phase of condominiums on Cedar Street, and this is what is being referenced in the paper.

Councilor Montinieri asked how Wethersfield's influence or strength was measured as an abutting town.

Peter Gillespie responded that at the last meeting, many of Wethersfield's issues were expressed.

Councilor Montinieri referred to the wetlands issue and asked if that was interfaced with the issue of the water impact on Wethersfield, and asked what group is it under – wetlands or DEEP [Department of Energy and Environmental Protection].

Peter Gillespie responded that it is more of a Planning and Zoning function as the application

has been modified several times. As proposed, the storm water will filter through several retention type basins and drain into Wethersfield. The State and the DOT will also have a lot to say about this issue. There is concern about who will be maintaining the basins as Wethersfield is downstream from it and a homeowners association is being proposed to be responsible for that issue. Wethersfield has expressed its concerns about how viable that will be in the long term.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the reports were coming from Toll Brothers and will the Town be doing anything independent of the Toll Brothers' report.

Peter Gillespie responded that Wethersfield's Town Engineer has reviewed the drainage plans and calculations and there is a standard methodology to calculate the pre and post site impacts. Ultimately the DOT will be paying close attention to this issue.

Councilor Kotkin asked for the status on the proposed project in the southeast corner of the Berlin Turnpike and Wells Road.

Peter Gillespie responded that it is still in its due diligence phase and there were concerns about having a second means of egress from the property. The number of units has also been reduced, but there has been no commitment to any revised plans.

Councilor Roberts asked at which Lamore's location were site improvements being sought.

Peter Gillespie responded that it is for the Lamore's location across the street from the gas station where the wreckers are located.

Councilor Manousos noted that Peter Gillespie had spoken about Planning & Zoning having administrative oversight and not much flexibility and asked if that helps the situation for the comments made by Wethersfield.

Peter Gillespie responded that it makes it more difficult.

Public Comment

Chairperson Hemmann noted that although it is not on the agenda, the Town Clerk did get a proclamation POW/MIA Recognition Day for October 16.

Chairperson Hemmann announced that are two public hearing items and asked the public to restrict their comments at this time to those items.

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 1000 SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY, WETHERSFIELD, CT DATED JUNE 20, 1011.

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR BERLIN TURNPIKE/NOTT STREET, WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT, DATED AS AMENDED TO AUGUST 30, 2011.

Councilor Hurley asked why the issue of the two hearings is on the agenda as there is no new information to share and asked if the matters can be tabled until additional information is received.

Jeff Bridges responded that the hearings do not have to be done, but suggested that the motions be adopted before the referendum so that residents feel that Council is supportive of the projects. He noted that it would be all right to table the matters tonight and put it on the agenda for October 3.

Councilor Roberts asked for a point of order and asked Town Clerk Sassano if a hearing can be tabled.

Town Clerk Sassano responded that she was not sure if that was possible.

Chairperson Hemmann suggested going forward with the hearing items and leaving them open for the October 3, 2011 meeting.

Councilor Hurley withdrew his objections since the public will be able to continue to discuss the redevelopment plans at the next meeting.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented that the Town is embarking on a project that is going to continue to overload the schools in Wethersfield. He felt the Town did not make a good presentation on the cost of the projects.

No one else from the Public spoke on the hearing items.

Chairperson Hemmann declared the Hearings to be continued to October 3, 2011.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Jim Woodworth 5 River Road, reported that the Nature Center's Great Meadows Conservation Bike Ride this past Saturday was a great success. He also spoke about selling the Wilkus Farm barn/house portion of the property. He thought the Town should further consider

having it run as a farm before selling and seek out interested farmers. Also he would like to know if there is a possibility of having a farm stand to sell the product at that location.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on the economy of the Town, State and country, unemployment statistics and the need to find ways to reduce costs at all levels.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Kotkin reported for the Insurance Committee. The Healthcare account ended with a surplus last year in the neighborhood of approximately \$700,000 to \$800,000. Although there is no final report to date, it is forthcoming. For the current fiscal year, it has started at \$50,000 to \$60,000 in the good. As of last Thursday, the agent of record is not aware of any claims or damages caused by Hurricane Irene that the Town will have to file for any property damage to Town facilities. He also noted that there are two agents of record: one for healthcare and one for property and casualty, and the agent for record for property and casualty is also in charge of workers comp, and noted that there is an increase in workers' comp claims. Both agents would like an opportunity to meet with the Board of Education but have not yet been able to set anything up with them.

Councilor Roberts reported for the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee which met and noted to Jeff Bridges that the meetings never show up on the Town Manager's Report. The Spring Education seminar is being planned and the topic will be "Outliving Your Money." A review has been done with the new Dial-A-Ride program. The new program did not do well in July but is now doing well.

Chairperson Hemmann reported for the Shade Tree Commission and reported that they are keeping a handle on the Town trees. She also reported for the Conservation Commission and reported for the Putnam Bridge project and that there is a possibility of a Putnam Bridge pedestrian walkway. Kathy Bagley and Mike Turner had attended the meeting and DOT will be considering it when the bridge is rehabbed.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Kotkin reported that the Soccer Jamboree was held on September 10 to commemorate 9/11 and the three Wethersfield residents that passed away at the World Trade Center.

Councilor Roberts reported that Friday, September 16, will be the first game under the lights at Cottone field.

Chairperson Hemmann reported that the Picnic of Remembrance was held on Sunday, September 11 at the Broad Street Green. The Roaring Thunder Motorcycle Ride to support Special Olympics was also held on September 11 with a lunch afterwards at Lucky Lou's. The Cornfest

was held on Saturday, September 17, and there was a dedication of a bench carved from an oak tree that fell during the tornado.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges commented that the vendor who was to supply the solar panels has gone bankrupted, and the panels for the six flat roof buildings will not be available, but the panels will be available for the pitch roofed buildings.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO TABLE THE ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 1000 SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

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

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO TABLE THE ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR BERLIN TURNPIKE/NOTT STREET”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

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

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO ACCEPT A MARINE SEWAGE DISPOSAL FACILITY GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$9,450 FOR THE PURCHASE, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ONE CART STYLE PUMP OUT FACILITY LOCATED AT WETHERSFIELD COVE BOAT LAUNCH AREA AND TO AUTHORIZE THE UTILIZATION OF FUNDS FROM THE COVE PRESERVATION FUND FOR THE GRANT MATCH IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,150.”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Jeff Bridges reported that for an investment of 25% of the cost, the Town will receive funds to purchase, operate and maintain a pump out cart for boaters at Wethersfield Cove. The Town will be able to provide boaters with another service at the boat launch area. Also, this pump out facility is required as part of the application process for the Boating Infrastructure Grant submitted to the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for dock replacement and channel dredging at the Cove.

Councilor Drake asked how the pump out facility is stored and the training process.

Kathy Bagley responded that there will be a trained staff member available at the docking system

and will keep the records.

Councilor Drake asked how the system works.

Councilor Roberts asked what is the function of the pump out facility.

Kathy Bagley responded that it is a portable cart that is wheeled down to the dock. The hose from the cart is connected to the boat owner's bathroom facilities to pump it out.

Councilor Manousos asked for the total of the boating infrastructure grant.

Kathy Bagley responded that if Wethersfield receives the grant, it has the potential of \$500,000.

Councilor Manousos noted that the Town would need to spend \$3,150.

Kathy Bagley responded that this was correct in order to be eligible for the grant. The facility needs to have a pump out station to be eligible for the boating infrastructure grant.

Councilor Drake asked if this has to be available seven days a week.

Kathy Bagley responded that the pump out station does not need to be there seven days a week. The grant specifies the hours that it will be open, which will be the weekend hours – Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Councilor Drake asked if a staff member would need to be available at these times.

Kathy Bagley responded that it would be additional duties for the staff member that is working. She noted that there is currently someone there on the weekends during this time.

Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO ADOPT THE GOVERNMENTAL FUND BALANCE POLICY, UPDATED FOR GASB54 FUND BALANCE REPORTING AND GOVERNMENTAL TYPE DEFINITIONS, EFFECTIVE FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2011, AS PRESENTED,”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges reported the governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) issued Statement No. 54, Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions effective for fiscal year ending June 30, 2011. The Town's current policy requires modification for certain elements under the terms of the Standard.

Councilor Manousos reported that this was discussed last month at the Budget and Finance Committee meeting, and is basically a change in the way fund balances are classified.

Councilor Montinieri asked about the fund analysis located in the back of the package.

Sue Smith, Finance Director, responded that she placed the fund analysis in the back because she had to go through the process of learning what each fund does to assign the classification or category fund balance it will go to.

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

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A 60-MONTH LEASE FOR A DIGITAL MAILING SYSTEM WITH NEOPOST NEW ENGLAND TO BE FINANCED THROUGH MAILFINANCE – A NEOPOST USA COMPANY EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2011,”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Jeff Bridges reported the 60-month lease on the current digital mailing system expires on September 30, 2011. The first year cost is discounted according to State contract.

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

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF \$318.89 FROM THE CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT TO VARIOUS ACCOUNTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ATTACHED BUDGET TRANSFER REQUEST AND TO TRANSFER \$6,000 FROM THE TOWN MANAGER’S 2010-2011 BUDGET TO THE TECHNOLOGY RESERVE FUND,”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges reported that departments that have a negative balance at year end have exceeded the budget appropriation and as such, a transfer is required to bring expenditures and appropriations in alignment.

Councilor Drake asked for an explanation of the \$6,000.

RaeAnn Palmer responded the \$6,000 were funds that were left over from the Regional Dispatch study that was budgeted but not needed.

Jeff Bridges noted that several months ago Council created a Technology Reserve Fund and certain dollars was put into it.

Councilor Drake noted that this is an issue that should have been discussed in detail. The \$6,000 should have gone back to the General Fund and then there should have been discussion about putting it into the Technology Fund.

Councilor Kotkin asked if these are the last transfers.

RaeAnn Palmer responded that this is the last transfer.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the auditors are about to start.

RaeAnn Palmer responded that the auditors will start October 1 and the Finance Director will close 2010-2011 this week.

Councilor Kotkin asked if there is an estimate of how the Town finished last year.

RaeAnn Palmer responded that the Town is using less of the fund balance than originally planned. Less was spent and collected \$51,000 less than anticipated.

Councilor Kotkin asked for a summary of how the year ended in terms of revenue and expenses. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN A CONNECTICUT CLEAN FUEL PROGRAM AGREEMENT FOR GRANT FUNDS TO ASSIST IN THE PURCHASE OF ALTERNATIVE/CLEAN FUEL VEHICLES,”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges reported that this is a grant that the Energy Committee had applied for and it provides some grant funds to purchase alternative fuel vehicles in next year’s budget.

Councilor Drake asked if there was a reason why there were no American cars available.

Jeff Bridges responded that this is what the State provided.

Councilor Roberts noted that this is a good way to go and felt the practice of using expired police vehicles was not feasible.

Councilor Montinieri asked if there is any limit in the time.

Jeff Bridges responded that it will need to be expended by next June.

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

CREST STREET BASKETBALL COURT: DRAFT SUBDIVISION PLAN FOR THE CREST STREET OPEN SPACE PARCEL

Chairperson Hemmann reported that Town Council requested the Engineering Division to

prepare a draft subdivision plan to split the Crest Street Open Space parcel, with intent of preserving the existing basketball court.

Jeff Bridges reported that Michael Turner has reviewed the Crest Street park property and concluded that in the event that the basketball court is kept, a building lot can be created which meets current zoning requirements, but the depth of the buildable portion of the lot would make it impractical to construct a home. If the basketball court is not kept, then two building lots could be constructed.

Councilor Kotkin commented that this is designated park land and there was a commitment at one point that this was to remain a park. When this subject was first brought up, it was not to subdivide it for potential housing, but an opportunity for the furthest south piece of property that may not get any use by town residents potentially could be part of the existing property owners to maintain. He commented that neither of these plans is consistent with the direction of where the Council was going when it was discussed earlier.

Councilor Manousos commented that the consensus of the Public Works Committee was to have the Town Engineer come back with a property line so that the back piece could be sold off in order to redo the basketball court.

Councilor Roberts noted that she thought the two options were that the neighbors behind the court had indicated that they would be interested in purchasing the entire parcel or sectioning it off and buy parts of it. It had also been discussed about finding a right of way from Colonel Chester Drive which is not in the present plans.

Councilor Drake commented that neither one of the plans sounds good.

Jeff Bridges commented that the point of the exercise in preserving the basketball court, a sufficient building lot could not be created on the lower level.

Councilor Drake commented if the basketball court is kept and if one of the property owners on Colonel Chester Drive wanted to purchase the lower parcel, what procedure could be presented to maximize the dollars.

Jeff Bridges replied that with the topography of the lot, there isn't much that can be done with that lot. He would go back to Mr. Turner to further discuss Council's review of the information they received and express their questions and concerns that adjoining property owners may be

BIDS

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO ACCEPT THE BID WITHDRAWAL FOR THE OLD ACADEMY DRAINAGE PROJECT FROM GERBER CONSTRUCTION,”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

interested in obtaining parts of the back parcel.

Jeff Bridges reported that the selected bidder informed staff that the scope of work had been reduced to the point that it fell below the contractor’s profit threshold and he asked to have the bid withdrawn. Staff agreed to the withdrawal of the bid.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Clynh, 903 Ridge Road, thanked the Town for the POW Proclamation. He noted his concern about only having one flagpole in front of Town Hall and hoped that when the flag poles are replaced, that at least two poles are installed. He also commented on the parcels of land that the Town is looking to sell.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on the Crest Street basketball court and the possibility of houses being built on the property and the possibility of more children in the schools. He suggested keeping the basketball court and maintaining the property. He also commented that it was a good idea to sell the Wilkus Farm house and barn and there should be a caveat that only one house can be built on the property. He also commented on the alternate clean fuel vehicles.

At 8:50 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION,”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

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

At 9:20 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **“TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION,”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:20 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING,**” seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

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