

Unapproved
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 16, 2009

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, November 16, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

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

Absent: Councilor Drake

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Chairperson Hemmann said that at the end of the meeting there will be an executive session to discuss real estate negotiations and pending litigation/radio system. She said that the Town Council is in consultation with the Town Attorney regarding the Board of Education issue. Due to confidentiality issues these matters will not be discussed publicly but will be given due diligence to maintain the public's confidence in the Town of Wethersfield.

WHITE CANE DAY PROCLAMATION

Chairperson Hemmann presented the Proclamation for White Cane Safety Day.

Barbara Blejewski accepted the proclamation on behalf of the Federation of the Blind. She reminded the public that a guide dog is not a pet and should not be touched. She discussed the pedestrian safety enhancement act of 2009. It requires manufacturers of hybrid, electric and other vehicles to emit a minimum level of sound to alert pedestrians of their presence. She also commended the Independent Transportation Network Central Connecticut whose volunteer drivers provide door to door transportation to residents to places not covered by Dial-A-Ride.

Chairperson Hemmann asked for a moment of silence in memory of Steve Rollins, a 20 year member of the Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department, who died on November 13th.

Councilor Montinieri led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, took attendance.

HEARINGS

none

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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John Ryan, 95 Cider Brook Drive, said that he is speaking about an article he read in the Saturday Hartford Courant. He is shocked that the former Board of Education Chairperson is under fire. He said that he has known Stacey Hodges for five years. She has four children that she is raising in Town. She is intelligent and has integrity, fairness, and honesty. The newspaper said that the Town Council was going to vote tonight on an investigation. He asked that the Town Council give Ms. Hodges a fair hearing and listen to her side of the story.

Gina DeAngelo, 16 Dennison Ridge, congratulated the Town Councilors and said that she trusts that they will do what is right for the Town of Wethersfield.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, congratulated the Town Councilors and said that he hopes they will bring the Town back to order. He distributed a handout and said the Town should replace the sidewalks on Morrison Avenue, spend money more wisely, build economies of scale and community partnerships by incorporating departments with neighboring towns, restore the public portion at the end of Council meetings, adopt a public comment time before each agenda item, change the Town Charter to allow citizens the right to have a referendum on the budget, cancel the electrical work on the proposed lights at Cottone field and all Town fields, redevelop the major corridors in Town and find a solution for vacant properties, and cancel or renegotiate the purchase of the Wilkus property.

Larry Ebner, 152 Ox Yoke Drive, congratulated the Town Councilors and Chairperson Hemmann. He said that the Town does not have a Mayor or Deputy Mayor. The Charter should be changed in order for those titles to be used. He said the party chair and party clerk, who are not at the meeting, are disgraceful. He gave his condolences to the Democrats. He said that this loss is accountable to the disastrous democratic President of the United States.

Matt DeAngelo, 16 Dennison Ridge, congratulated the Town Councilors and said that he agrees with the first speaker, Ms. Hodges deserves a fair hearing. He urged Council to move forward with an investigation. Serious issues were raised and even with the appearance of an impropriety by someone is damning. The concern to the Town is because there are allegations of money being misused. Because of the appearance of impropriety, he would suggest that the Board of Education should not be left to investigate itself. He said that the Town Council should let the facts take it where it leads. He said that there is a new Board of Education Chairperson. It is a tough job under normal circumstances. He hopes the Board of Education, Superintendent, and town staff will cooperate fully in an investigation.

Betty Rosania, Desmond Drive, said that she is the former Mayor and former Chairperson of the Economic Development Improvement Commission. She said "Heavy weighs the head that wears the crown." She said that the Town Councilors will face many challenges. This is a good Town. She urges the Town Councilors to come and reason together. She said that she is distressed by some of the people jumping to conclusions. This is a good Town with good people. Good government comes about by listening to all sides and not a making a mountain out of a mole hill.

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COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Chairperson Hemmann said that she received a letter from Steve Kelly and asked the Town Clerk to read it into the record.

The letter said:

Councilor Roberts said that on November 13th, she attended a promotional ceremony for Sergeant Michael Connolly. It was an impressive ceremony and a long overdue promotion.

Chairperson Hemmann said that:

- Fire Chief Flynn was elected President of the Connecticut Fire Chief's Association.
- She attended the dedication of the AHEPA 58-II on November 14th.
- There will be a Special Olympics fundraiser at Catchers Sports Bar on December 5th.
- The 20th Santa's pancake breakfast will be held on December 5th at the Community Center.
- The carol sing and tree lighting ceremony will be on December 14th.
- She will not be at the next Town Council meeting and Deputy Mayor Console will preside. On that agenda will be a motion to add back the public comment portion at the end of the meeting.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that:

- He has distributed a draft agenda for the December 5th meeting. There will be a portion of the meeting to answer any Councilor questions. He asked that questions be e-mailed to his office prior to the meeting.
- He also distributed a memo from COST on municipal leader training on December 9th. The Town has been given 2 complimentary tickets to the training. If a Councilor is interested in attending, please let him know.
- He is reviewing the possibility of energy grants through stimulus funds. He attended an energy meeting discussing proposals for an energy consortium.
- Councilors can call him and schedule a tour of the Town facilities at their convenience.
- There is a joint project with area communities to build a police training facility in Rocky Hill. There is a hearing before the Rocky Hill Inland Wetlands Committee on December 9th. There is an annual commitment of \$500 from the Town for the facility.
- The Town received a check from CIRMA for \$247,000 for tornado recovery funds. He will have a report at the next meeting concerning the final cost to the Town of the storm.
- He said that there is a hearing on the proposed MDC budget for next year. It shows a 3 percent increase for the Town of Wethersfield.

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COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF SUSAN GRADY FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELATIONS COMMISSION”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Chairperson Hemmann asked that a letter be sent thanking her for her service.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF DAVID DRAKE FROM THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Chairperson Hemmann asked that a letter be sent thanking him for his service.

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

Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO APPOINT PATRICIA TIBERIO TO THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD FOR A TERM FROM 11-16-09 TO 6-30-12”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPOINT DAVID R. EDWARDS, III. TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION FOR A TERM FROM 11-16-09 TO 6-30-12 AS AN ALTERNATE”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AUTHORIZE A TRANSFER OF \$5,000 FROM THE CAPITAL RESERVE ACCOUNT TO THE STANDISH HOUSE PAINTING PROJECT ACCOUNT AND TO INCREASE THE BID AWARD TO NATIONAL SERVICES LLC BY \$5,000 FOR A TOTAL OF \$35,000”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the Town Council authorized the painting of the Standish House. There was additional wood repair needed that required an additional \$5,000.

Councilor Montinieri said that there was some damage to the landscaping and asked if that was resolved.

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Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that he had a meeting with the proprietor this afternoon and he is working out how to address the issue. It goes beyond the painting issue.

Councilor Montinieri asked if he was concerned with raising the amount the painter is paid while these issues of damage linger.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the damages are related to the painter but is an issue of how the project was conducted and not how the painter performed. The painter did what the Town asked him to do. He painted according to the contract. There is still some clean up to do. This issue should be addressed separately.

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

BIDS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AWARD THE BID FOR ASPHALT PAVEMENT CRACK SEALING TO MULCH SEAL, LLC FOR SERVICES NOT TO EXCEED \$35,000”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the 2009-2010 Capital Improvement Pavement Maintenance Budget included \$35,000 for crack sealing of Wolcott Hill Road from Jordan Lane to Nott Street and Middletown Avenue from Alison Lane to Mill Street. The bid is through CRCOG.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the bid price was better or worse than last year.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that he will check and let him know.

Councilor Kotkin said that the sewers are already in on Pawtucket Road. He asked when the project would be completed.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the temporary asphalt will be done now and then the project will be finished in the spring. Residents were sent letters informing them of the schedule.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

none

MINUTES

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2009”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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Councilors Kotkin, Roberts, Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Console and Chairperson Hemmann voted AYE. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2009”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Manousos abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:50 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS REAL ESTATE NEGOTIATIONS AND PENDING LITIGATION/RADIO SYSTEM”** seconded by Councilor McAlister. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0. Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, and John W. Bradley, Jr., Town Attorney were present. No motions were made and no votes were taken during executive session.

At 10:20 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION AND ENTER PUBLIC SESSION”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Chairperson Hemmann read a statement into the record:

“On November 16, 2009, the Wethersfield Town Council met in executive session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 1-200(9)(c); 1-210(b)(4); (b)(6); (b)(10); (b)(11) and (b)(17). Upon advice of legal counsel, the Town Council determined that investigation powers are committed to the Wethersfield Board of Ethics, not to the Town Council.”

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:23 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Manousos. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk