

Unapproved  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**DECEMBER 7, 2009**

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

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

Absent: Chairperson Hemmann

Also present: Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk; Paul Dudley, Data Services Coordinator; Peter Gillespie, Town Planner; RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager; John W. Bradley, Town Attorney; Jeff Bridges, Town Manager

Councilor Manousos led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

#### RECOGNITION OF PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY

Deputy Mayor Console said that a high school history teacher peaked his interest in history. He said that this is a good time to remember all of the service men and women around the world.

There was a presentation recognizing Pearl Harbor day.

Councilor Kotkin said that this observance means a lot to his family. His wife is from Hawaii and her mother was shot at by the Japanese.

Deputy Mayor Console thanked Town staff for their help with the presentation.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, presented the following report:

WELCOME!

- 222 Main Street – Lucky Lou's.
- 734 Silas Deane Highway – Irving Oil.
- 462A Silas Deane Highway – A Nu Sign Company.
- 172 Silas Deane Highway – 2T Discount.
- 1816 Berlin Turnpike – Mirabelli Automotive has expanded into the former space occupied by Munroe Muffler.
- 734 Silas Deane Highway – Platform Salon.

#### RECENT APPROVALS

- 770 Silas Deane Highway - Subway – A Façade Improvement Plan has been approved for this property.
- 840 Silas Deane Highway – Former Manny's Auto – interior improvements are under way for the Centerpoint Community church to renovate and occupy this space.

- 322 Silas Deane Highway – Lifeline Financial – Construction is underway for interior and exterior improvements to convert this building for office use.
- 933 Silas Deane Highway – 180 Nutrition – Sports Supplement and Smoothie Bar. Plans have been submitted for approval.

#### DEVELOPER/PROPERTY OWNER/REALTOR CONTACT

- 1178 Silas Deane Highway – Former Fun Zone – Met with realtor and business owner to discuss potential interest in property.
- Met with developers and engineer interested in developing property on the Berlin Turnpike for a 150 unit apartment complex.
- Discussed possible mixed use renovation of property at 334 Silas Deane Highway.
- Assisted with search for Yoga studio in Old Wethersfield.
- Responded to inquiry for assistance with site information for office building off Berlin Turnpike.
- Consulted with new owner of former Ritz Camera building – 526 Silas Deane Highway

#### OTHER NEWS AND INITIATIVES

##### **Economic Development and Improvement Commission**

- The Commission has been working closely with the Chamber of Commerce on the creation of a more comprehensive business directory and Town Guide. Staff have been soliciting ad space from the business community and updating content for the Guide. Life Publications will be printing and distributing the Guide in mid December.
- A breakfast meeting with the real estate community was held on October 16 at the Country Club. Speakers included Town Manager Bridges, Board of Education and Chamber Board Member Stacey Hodges and EDIC Chair Howard Greenblatt.
- This year's Salute To Business, is scheduled for Tuesday December 8 at 5:30 pm at the Country Club. The EDIC will be recognizing 38 businesses this year.
- 770 Silas Deane Highway - Subway – The EDIC has agreed to partially fund Façade Improvements for this property and site.
- 322 Silas Deane Highway – Lifeline Financial – The EDIC has agreed to partially fund exterior improvements for this project.
- 616-620 Silas Deane Highway – YQY Properties – A closing was held for façade improvements recently made to this small shopping center.
- Staff is working with State DECD on plans to complete the Town Hall streetscape improvements with our recent \$250,000 STEAP grant. Construction would occur this spring.

##### **Tourism/ Preserve America**

- Preliminary design concepts have been submitted and are being reviewed. Final design specifications are on hold pending an upcoming meeting with the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

Councilor Drake asked about the 150 unit apartment building.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, said that plans were submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission last week. He anticipates construction beginning in the spring of 2010 if all of the permits are obtained. There are some zoning and wetlands issues. They will be market rate apartments. The Planning and Zoning Commission has asked for an impact analysis for the school system, traffic, and public safety. He will continue to monitor these issues.

Councilor Kotkin said that he was pleased to see the new windows in the building across the street. He said that the new business list in Town is big. He asked if there is any common theme.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, said that some of the businesses are career changes by people who are taking advantage of programs that are now available. The Town has available spaces that are small that appeal to small business owners.

Councilor Hurley asked if the Town Council could receive a list of business that leave the Town.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, said that he tries to track that, too. There is not always a paper trail when a business leaves town. He can provide a list annually or semi-annually.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, took attendance.

#### HEARINGS

none

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gail Raducha, 38 Schoolhouse Crossing, congratulated Town Councilors on their election. She said that she is here to speak in opposition to the development on Cedar Mountain in Newington. She said that sometimes the people living on the west side of the Berlin Turnpike feel like the forgotten children of Wethersfield. She said that the elected officials need to be the voice of the people to stress the impact this will have on Wethersfield. She said that it was very disconcerting that only one official attended the Newington Planning and Zoning Commission hearing in November on this issue. All of the condominiums have damage from blasting from Balf Quarry to their foundations and the blasting only occurs once every few weeks. If this development passes there will be constant blasting and the property values will go down. There will also be an impact to traffic congestion on Wells Road. She said that Cedar Mountain is one of the last parcels of open space left in the area and should be preserved.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, congratulated the new Councilors. He said that he complained many times before and will continue to complain about Morrison Avenue. He handed out photographs of Morrison Avenue. In 1982, the Town Council questioned Morrison Avenue in a special meeting. 27 years later nothing has been done. The road is a hazard. He would like the engineering department to look into putting up a do not enter sign from Orchard Street to the Silas Deane Highway. He said that he doesn't know if it will work but it is worth looking into. He is disturbed that no one is doing anything about Morrison Avenue.

Lee Sekas, 117 Wells Road, said that snow last week accumulated on the sidewalk and it is important that sidewalks and curbcuts are safe for all to travel on. Residents and commercial property owners need to clean them before they become ice. The Town can collect fines if the sidewalks are not cleaned. He wished the Town Council good luck. He said that there could have been a better turnout at the election. He said that the cost of the election is high and the economy is slow. He suggested saving money by having a three year Town Council term.

Matthew Forrest, 25 Spring Street, said that he was the liaison to the Energy Committee. He said that the Energy Co-op Program is before Council tonight. It will provide residents and commercial businesses with the option to purchase energy at a reduce rate. The Town Council has received the comprehensive energy plan and is reviewing it. There was talk about having the Town Council and Energy Committee meet to bring everyone up to speed on energy issues in January or February. The Green Summit III challenge begins in January with educational seminars. Performance contracting is also being discussed. A firm would come in and perform a very specific energy audit of buildings and then it would guarantee a portion of the Town's savings. The savings would go to updates to Town buildings which would provide both short and long term savings.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, urged the Town Council to help residents in bad times. He would like the Town to go back and renegotiate the Wilkus Farm purchase. He also urged Council to create a financial transparency by putting all financial reports on the Town website. He hoped the Town Council would enforce all regulations and have staff come forward with problems. He also urged that the Town Council establish a Board of Finance that can guide the Town. He also asked that the Town Council elect a strong representative to the MDC board and work to get rid of Mr. DiBella. He also hopes the Town Council will initiate a Town survey about Town services. Taxes have gone up 40 percent in the last 6 years. That is why the Town is in trouble now.

Barbara Mahoney, 78 Schoolhouse Crossing, said that she agrees with the first speaker. She asked that the Town Council please do what it can to see that the development doesn't happen. This will impact Wethersfield.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, said that there have been many comments here tonight about policy. He is pleased to see talk about adding the public comment portion back at the end of the meeting. He said that the Town Council should be more flexible with the time limit. He said that he saw an article about kids walking to school and less parents driving. It is a very positive to see this idea. There is a federal grant to combat drunk driving that is on the agenda. He said that the police should enforce cell phone use while driving too. A study shows it is just as dangerous as driving drunk. There ought to be a stiff penalty. The Town Council should not stall on the purchase of the Wilkus Farm. He is amused by the environmental problems with the property. The Town needs to talk about the level of contamination. He said that he is disappointed that the ethics probe is moving forward.

George Wallace, 22 Chesterfield Road, congratulated the Town Councilors on their election. He thanked the Town Council for starting the meeting with a presentation on Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. He said that men and women in the military don't need to be shot at to be in danger. Military personnel were lost in hurricanes and typhoons, too. He is upset that our children are not being taught this part of our nation's history. There is so much to be learned about this war. He said that the Town Council missed the mark by not having any World War II Veteran's in the 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade.

### COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Councilor Kotkin said that the Insurance Committee met last month and the Town continues to be in reasonably good shape with its self-insurance account. Claims have escalated a little. The Committee needs to look at co-pays and provisions for retiree health care in union negotiations. The Town is looking at long term actuarial liability on retire health insurance of about \$60,000,000. The Town Council really needs to look at containing that number at least.

Councilor Manousos thanked the Town Manager for providing the six year revenue and expense report. He prefaced his comments by saying that he did not coordinate with Mr. Young. He asked for the report to get an understanding of the numbers as the Council moves forward in this difficult budget year. The Town's total spending has increased 40 percent since 2004 while there have been significant reductions in State aid. The Town needs to tighten its belt now, including the Board of Education. He encouraged public feedback and agrees with comments on transparency in government.

Councilor Drake said that one idea the Town Council is looking at is a freer library. It is a broad concept. He would like the Town Manager to look into this and see if legally the Town can do it. If so he would like to establish a committee. He said that he thinks there are a lot of advantages to having a free library. He said that during the goal setting session Councilors discussed getting together with the Planning and Zoning Commission to discuss quality of life issues and have regulations enforced. He suggests meeting a half hour prior to a Town Council meeting with the Commission to discuss its top five issues.

Councilor Roberts asked for some more information on the Library idea.

Councilor Drake said there are a lot of communities that have free, independent libraries. The Town would support the library but it would not be a part of the Town government. There are a lot of pros and some cons. This is a concept that the Town Council needs to look at.

Councilor Roberts said that the Cedar Street development, although in Newington, will impact Wethersfield negatively. The traffic on the Berlin Turnpike will be a nightmare. There will be on-going meetings. Town staff needs to keep an eye on this project. She is also concerned with

the lighting in the parking lot. She said it is horrendous; the middle section is pitch dark. It is a safety issue that needs to be looked into.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that staff is working on it.

Councilor Hurley said that he would like to receive materials relating to the Cedar Street development.

Councilor Roberts said that there was only one meeting. The State is closing Cedar Hospital and that land could possibly be sold to a developer, too. Across from the Healthtrax in Newington there is a proposal for a retail establishment. Going down Russell Road behind the Humane Society is where the proposed condominiums would go.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that he will ask the Newington Town Manager for updates at their next meeting.

Councilor Kotkin said that a few years ago there was a proposal for this area. The Town Planner monitored the situation and it never came to pass. He said that there was a lot of concern with that proposal, especially regarding blasting. He would like continued updates on this proposal.

Deputy Mayor Console said that:

- He attended an energy meeting at Goodwin College that was very informative. He will pass the information on to the Town Manager.
- Senator Fonfara sent a letter concerning boats and cars in residential yards. The Town needs to look into enforcing the violations.

### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that there is a 3 percent cut in aid to municipalities proposed by the Governor. The appropriations committee is meeting on Wednesday. The Town received a \$5,384 grant to replant trees to replace trees that were destroyed during the tornado. He said that there are three items to be added to the agenda: a letter from Chairperson Hemmann to Board Chairperson Rodriguez, an energy proposal, and an executive session to discuss real estate negotiations and personnel issues. Capital Police Chief Michael Fallon passed away last week. His wake and funeral will be held in Wethersfield this week. Town police will assist with traffic.

Deputy Mayor Console said that the Town carol sing and tree lighting will be Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at the Solomon Welles House. The American Red Cross will be holding blood drive in Wethersfield on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Drake asked for some more information on the tree replanting.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that legacy trees will be planted on the Broad Street Green and along Church Street. The trees are about 2 inches in diameter. She can get more information for Council.

### COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF JENNIFER PAQUETTE FROM THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD”** seconded by Councilor Drake.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPOINT KATHLEEN CAREW TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR A TERM FROM 12-7-09 TO 8-31-13”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPOINT LISA WURZER TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION AS AN ALTERNATE FOR A TERM FROM 12-7-09 TO 6-30-12”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### **UPDATE ON PYQUAG VILLAGE**

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that in 2008 Mr. LaCava approached the Town to discuss several parcels that he thought had been deeded to the Town in 1975 or 1976. Council sent the request to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a review. Mr. LaCava request the Town take over the parcels or dispose of them in a different way. All parcels, but one, have been spoken for by adjacent property owners. The Town Attorney has sent the deeds to the abutting property owners for their review. There is one parcel of open space that will remain in Mr. LaCava’s possession. There is no motion necessary. This is just a status report.

### OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO DISBAND THE TOWN COUNCIL RULES AND PROCEDURES SUB-COMMITTEE AND TO AMEND THE TOWN COUNCIL RULES AND PROCEDURES, §A180-11 ORDER OF BUSINESS, TO INCLUDE A PUBLIC**

**COMMENT PERIOD AT THE CONCLUSION OF COUNCIL ACTION AND PRIOR TO ADJOURNMENT, EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 21, 2009**” seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Councilor Kotkin said that he has heard from people about their frustration at not being able to speak at the end of Council meetings on items that have occurred during the meeting. He understands that and will support the motion but would suggest amending to allow speaking only on items discussed at the meeting. It will be a more focused session.

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO AMEND THE MOTION SO THAT THE CONCLUSION OF THE COUNCIL MEETING BE FOCUSED ON ITEMS THAT COME UP DURING THE MEETING”** seconded by Councilor Montinieri.

Councilor McAlister asked how many people usually spoke at the conclusion of the meeting.

Councilor Montinieri said that if he compared it to the Board of Education meeting, it is probably three or four. It is not an enormous amount of people except during budget sessions. This amendment speaks to residents’ complaints while keeping out the repetitiveness of previous comments. He said that the Town Council has to vote to stay in session past 11:00 p.m. now.

Councilor McAlister said that it can be revised later if there is abuse. It doesn’t seem like that many people speak.

Councilor Montinieri said that the Mayor has the discretion to limit the comments to three minutes at any time.

Councilor Roberts said that that she is not going to support the amendment. Most members of the public leave by 10:30 p.m. Few people will speak. Council shouldn’t have gotten rid of it to begin with. Let the people speak.

Councilor Manousos said that if it is that few people, the Town Council should let them speak.

Councilor Hurley said that the Town Council should let people speak on any issue.

A roll call vote was taken on the amendment. Councilors Kotkin and Montinieri voted AYE. Councilors Drake, Hurley, Manousos, McAlister, Deputy Mayor Console voted NAY. The motion failed 2-6-0.

Councilor Montinieri said that he does not disagree with public speaking at the meetings. He is concerned that there will be abuse of the rule and tone and tenor of the meeting and that comments will turn into a testy exchange. He looks forward to the public input.

Councilor Drake said that he understands were Councilors Kotkin and Montinieri are coming from but the motion can be amended in the future if there is abuse.

All Councilors present voted AYE to the original motion. Councilor Montinieri voted NAY. The motion passed 7-1-0.

Councilor McAlister moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPLY FOR AN ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION BLOCK GRANT AND TO ACCEPT THE GRANT IF SO AWARDED”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Councilor Kotkin said that he fully supports replacing the windows at Webb Elementary School. Town employees have a lot to do in Town Hall. He asked how much work would be involved in monitoring the revolving loan program.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that staff resources will have to be available. The funds will be exhausted at some point.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said the Town will be working with the Community Economic Development fund and an engineering firm. The Community Economic Development fund would do the loan work and the Town would collect the funds. The engineering firm will do the energy audit and help monitor construction and savings. The staff time would be supervisory and minimal. A very small fee will be paid to both partners from the grant proceeds.

Councilor Kotkin asked what was the likelihood of the Town getting the grant without the loan program.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the loan component is significant to the potential grant request.

Councilor Montinieri asked if there was a more extensive list of project that apply to this grant if the Town obtains money in excess of what is needed for Webb.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that the priority is Webb and the \$800,000 is a firm estimate. The additional funds will be used for the revolving loan program.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO ACCEPT THE FISCAL YEAR 2010 COMPREHENSIVE DUI ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$15,380”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Councilor Drake asked if the police perform this function if the Town does not receive the grant.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said the police are always performing DUI checks. This enables them to have extra officers during the holiday season.

Councilor Drake said that he is not against this item but is concerned with using \$5,000 in overtime money to meet the 25 percent match.

Councilor McAlister asked what else the Town would do with the \$5,000 and will the Police run out of overtime.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said this will fund extra officers for the holidays. The money was already budgeted for this.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO AUTHORIZE A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$111,024 FROM UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE TO DEPARTMENT 1935, DISASTER RECOVERY”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager said that the \$111,000 reflects expenses in the current fiscal year related to the tornado damage.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor McAlister moved **“TO APPROVE THE SCHEDULE OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR 2010”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Drake moved **“TO DIRECT THE TOWN MANAGER TO DIRECT THE POLICE CHIEF TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE POLICE STAFF AS WELL AS ANY LEGAL RESOURCES NEEDED TO THE ETHICS COMMISSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF AIDING IN THE INVESTIGATION, WITNESS INTERVIEWING AND REPORTING OF THE ISSUES STATED IN THE ETHICS COMPLAINT”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the police can act in an advisory capacity only since there has been no criminal charges filed. This will give support to the Board of Ethics only.

Councilor Drake said that the Town Council should let the Police see how far they can help the Board of Ethics and then the Board of Ethics can come back to Council if it needs additional assistance. He said that he wanted to get this investigation out of the way as soon as possible.

Councilor Kotkin asked for a definition of what is advisory capacity and if an officer would be present during an interview.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that according to Chief Cetran, since there is no criminal complaint, they can only guide and advise the Board of Ethics complaint. An officer would not be present for interviews.

Councilor Drake asked how the Town can get the Police to be involved in the investigation.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that he would ask the Town Attorney.

Councilor Roberts said that having the Police involved sounds good but actually is just confusing apples and oranges. A complaint was filed with the Board of Ethics and her opinion is that this is an administrative investigation based on what information was given to the Board of Ethics. By having the Police involved and effect is being added and it will confuse the issues. The Board of Ethics should do its own investigation and come out with a recommendation. It should be referred to the Police if they find possible criminal activity. She said that she doesn't see how the Police can serve the Board of Ethics now. She said that she fully supports any legal assistance that the Board of Ethics may require. Involving the Police in the investigation sounds good but nobody really thought about the ramifications or how it would affect the investigation.

Deputy Mayor Console said that Councilors have brought up valid points. It might make sense to table this until the next meeting and let the Board of Ethics begin its investigation.

Councilor Drake said the Board of Ethics can decide if it wants to use the Police assistance. They do not have to use them. He said that he would like to see this voted on tonight.

Councilor Roberts said that the motion is specific and directs the Town Manager to direct the Police Chief to provide a detective to the Board of Ethics. The Board hasn't even asked for this assistance. The Town Council is overreaching.

Councilor McAlister said that the intent is to not slow down the process and support the Board of Ethics in its investigation. He asked if the motion should be changed to direct the Town Manager to provide the Board with all appropriate resources whether it be legal, police, etc.

Councilor Hurley said the motion should be left as it stands. A detective would not spend much time with the Board of Ethics just advising members of procedure.

Councilor Drake said that the Police will just aid in the process if the Board of Ethics requires their help. He said that he doesn't want to wait two more weeks to offer this assistance.

Councilor Montinieri said that this motion is directing the Town Manager to direct the Police Chief to provide a detective to the Board of Ethics. From the discussion it sounds like the intent is to provide legal assistance. The problem with the motion is that it may be seen as prejudicial to have the Police present because it implies a criminal issue. There are two investigations underway now, both of which are draining resources from the Town. He said that he doesn't think this additional cost is merited. If the Town Council is going to make a motion it should be to direct the Board of Ethics to act and respond to the complaint and any questions and concerns can be directed to either the Town Council or the Town Attorney and they can provide additional resources. He said that he is concerned that this is prejudicial and he strongly opposes it.

Councilor Drake said that nothing in this motion infers that Police will be present during the meeting. The motion is asking the Town Manager to direct the Police Chief to assist the Board of Ethics as needed. The Board of Education is looking into the complaint now too. People want to know why the Board of Education did do anything about it over the past six months. He said that there are a lot of reputations at stake here and this needs to be investigated. The resources should be available to the Board of Ethics.

Councilor Hurley said that these services will be provided on an as needed basis. It will help to solicit honest responses. It is not prejudicial.

Councilors Drake, Hurley, Manousos, McAlister, and Deputy Mayor Console voted AYE. Councilor Kotkin, Montinieri, and Roberts voted NAY. The motion passed 5-3-0.

Councilor Manousos moved **"TO ADD TO THE AGENDA A LETTER FROM TOWN COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON HEMMANN TO BOARD OF EDUCATION CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ, ENERGY AFFINITY PROGRAM, AND EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS REAL ESTATE AND PERSONNEL MATTERS"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

#### LETTER FROM CHAIRPERSON HEMMANN

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the Mayor has sent a letter to the Board of Education Chairperson requesting that the findings of the Board of Education's investigation be shared with the Town Council. No motion is needed.

## ENERGY AFFINITY PROGRAM

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that back in November the Town solicited requests for proposal for an energy affinity program to offer lower cost energy to resident and small commercial customers with the Town's endorsement. People do not have to participate. The Town will not be paying the company anything but supporting this company in marketing efforts. This will be a two year partnership between the Town and the provider. The initial marketing rate for the power will be \$.0979 kWh. This rate will be offered for four months. Anyone who signs up within the four months will be locked in at the rate for one year. The price will adjust after the first four months. The only concern is if the rate increases significantly after the first four months. For each customer that signs up, the Town will receive \$.0010 kWh during the length of the agreement. These funds would be used for energy programs to be determined by Council.

Councilor Drake asked if the Town Council should delay in putting the Town's name on the endorsement.

Councilor Montinieri said that having sat on the committee one thing the RFP did was provide the Town's endorsement of the program. The rates given are based on that support. He doesn't think a trial period would be something that the firm would be receptive to.

Councilor Drake asked if it was a marketing tool.

Councilor Montinieri said that it is. There are escape clauses set up in case rates are no longer competitive. With direct energy the Town is saying this is the low bidder. The firm has a good reputation and the Town is doing business with it.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that rate locks in for a year. It increases after the initial four months but for residents and business that sign up in those four months they keep the rate for a year. The Town will get notice when the rates increase and individuals can opt out.

Councilor Manousos asked what the revenues would be and if there would be privacy issues with the Town giving lists.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that it is a new program.

Councilor Montinieri said that in similar towns revenue was between \$20,000 and \$30,000. One town purchased solar panels with the funds.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that there would be no privacy issues with providing mailing lists.

Councilor Kotkin said that he wanted to go on record stating that he works for Northeast Utilities and this is not a conflict for him to be in this discussion. Northeast Utilities will not lose or gain money whether or not all residence switched over to direct energy because they do not make any money on this part of the bill. He said that the State Department of Utility Control regulates these firms very closely. They do have the ability to come down hard on a company if it is not acting properly. Both firms have been marketing in the State for years.

Councilor Montinieri moved **”TO DIRECT THE TOWN MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE THE FINAL DETAILS WITH DIRECT ENERGY FOR THE ENERGY AFFINITY PROGRAM AND COMPLETE THE DOCUMENTATION FOR A TWO YEAR PARTNERSHIP AND RETURN TO THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL”** seconded by Councilor Drake.

Matthew Forrest asked for consideration. This is good for residents. Part of the marketing includes a \$5,000 grant given to the Town to provide for the mailing of a letter to all residents. The letter would be going out in the next 10 to 15 days, before Council meets again. It is free marketing to the Town through the Green Summit. The letter will be included in the Green Summit mailing. The letter could be reviewed by the Town Manager or Mayor.

Councilor Montinieri said that he would like to see the letter but doesn't want to hold up the process for it.

Councilor Drake asked what would happen if the cost of the mailing was more than the \$5,000 grant.

Matthew Forrest said that the Green Summit is paying for the mailing. No Town funds will be used.

Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO AMEND THE MOTION TO REMOVE ‘RETURN TO TOWN COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL’”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

All Councilors present voted AYE to the amendment. The motion passed 8-0-0.

All Councilors present voted AYE to the motion as amended. The motion passed 8-0-0.

### BIDS

none

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that this is a resolution set for public hearing at the next meeting. The Town received a grant several years ago and all of the funds were not expended for the project. The Town wants to use the funds for another project so a new resolution needs to be acted on.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR HERITAGE WAY BIKE TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS**

BE IT RESOLVED, that Town Manager, Jeffrey K. Bridges, Jr., is empowered to execute, amend and deliver in the name and on behalf of the Town of Wethersfield a grant in the amount of \$8,800 from the State of Connecticut, Department of Environmental Protection to be used for trail improvements to the Heritage Way Bike Trail.

In furtherance of this resolution, Jeffrey K. Bridges, Jr. the Town Manager is duly authorized to enter into and sign said contracts on behalf of the Town of Wethersfield. The Town Manager is further authorized to provide such additional information and execute such other documents as may be required by the State of Connecticut or Federal government with said contracts and to execute any amendments, rescissions, and revisions thereto.

The Town Clerk of the Town is authorized to impress the seal of the Town of Wethersfield on any such document, amendment, rescission, or revision.

MINUTES

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 16, 2009”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, said that Chairperson Hemmann requested that the first page of the minute include “because the blind cannot hear the engine” to the end of line four of Barbara Blejewski’s comments.

All Councilors present voted AYE. Councilor Drake abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:10 p.m., Councilor Montinieri **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS REAL ESTATE AND PERSONNEL”** seconded by Councilor McAlister. All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0. Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, was present. No motions were made and no votes were taken during executive session.

At 10:23 p.m., Councilor Manousos moved **“TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION”** seconded by Councilor Montinieri. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Unapproved

*December 7, 2009 Notes  
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ADJOURNMENT

At 10:24 p.m., Councilor Montinieri moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor McAlister. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk