

Unapproved
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 6, 2008

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, October 6, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Silas Deane Middle School.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Console, Forrest, Hemmann, Kotkin, Roberts, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Montinieri, and Chairperson Adil.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

All stood for the pledge of allegiance to the flag which was led by Deputy Mayor Montinieri.

PRESENTATION OF MEDALS – GEORGE WALLACE

Representatives Russ Morin and Antonio “Tony” Guerrera presented George Wallace with a Connecticut Wartimes Veterans Medal and Ribbons, established by the Connecticut General Assembly in 2005 for Connecticut residents for their exemplary service and unwavering courage.

Senator John Fonfara presented Mr. Wallace with a Citation from the Connecticut General Assembly.

Chairperson Adil said that it was a great day when the World War II Veteran’s were honored by Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz. He said that Mr. Wallace is a modest man and he thanked him for his service.

George Wallace said that in a couple of weeks he will be in Oregon for the last reunion of this squadron. He said that he is accepting this award for himself but also on behalf of the members of his Air Force squadron. He said that Connecticut was well represented in the War. He thanked the officials for the presentation and citations.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, presented the following report:

MONTHLY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS/NEW BUSINESSES

31 Town Line Road – KFC/Hines Sudden Service

The PZC has approved plans for the demolition and reconstruction of buildings on this site to accommodate 2 new buildings, a new restaurant and larger office building. Construction is now complete for the restaurant.

280 Main Street – Massage Therapy and Wellness Center

Interior renovations are complete to renovate this space.

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54 Beaver Road – Dog Grooming Business

Interior improvements are complete.

1303 Silas Deane Highway – Goff Brook Shops

Spirit Halloween stores has opened a temporary store in this space.

APPROVED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS/UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Former Fire House Grill – 1151 Silas Deane Highway – Humphrey's Restaurant

An interior demolition permit has been issued to conduct some interior work to this building. An application has been approved by Design Review and a building permit application has been approved. Construction is now underway.

Nathan Hale Apartments, AHEPA, Inc. – Elderly Housing Project – 1532 Berlin Turnpike

An application was approved by the ZBA and the PZC to permit the construction of an addition to the existing building to accommodate 42 additional units. A building permit has been approved. The project was delayed as additional State funds were pursued to cover budget overruns. A CO is anticipated shortly.

Former Amici's Restaurant – Pal's Pub – 672 Silas Deane Highway

Approval has been granted for the renovation of this building and for the use of an outdoor patio for a new restaurant/café in this building. Construction is now underway.

Lot 4 Progress Drive – Office Building

A PZC application and plans have been submitted for site plan approval for the construction of a 2 story medical office building at this site, the building is roughly 20,000 s.f. and will be known as the Connecticut Center For Cosmetic Enhancement and Young Pharmaceuticals.

Progress Drive – CREC – Soundbridge School

On April 1 the PZC approved plans for an expansion to the school which would double the size of the building. Construction is underway.

1380 Berlin Turnpike – Jordan Lane Shopping Center

Interior renovations are underway for a Little Caesar's Pizza restaurant in this space.

1770 Berlin Turnpike – Carmen Anthony's Restaurant

A building permit has been issued for interior renovations for a banquet room.

UNDER PERMIT REVIEW

Cottone Field – Sports Lighting

At their August 5 PZC meeting plans were approved to install sports lighting at Cottone Field.

1260 Silas Deane Highway – Hartford Hospital

At the August 5 PZC meeting revise plans that include an expansion of 13,000 s.f. to the existing building and parking lots to accommodate the growing needs of this medical facility were approved.

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322 - 334 Silas Deane Highway – Zone Change

A zone change has been approved to rezone various properties located north of Nott Street on the east side of the Highway as recommended in the Silas Deane Highway Master Plan.

295 Ridge Road – Church Homes – Assisted Living

A CO has been issued for the renovation of this building to accommodate 13 condominium units. A preliminary plan has been submitted for the second phase of this project which would change the approved plans and include an assisted living facility. At the August 5 PZC meeting a zoning regulation amendment application was approved that would permit assisted living in this zone. A public hearing is scheduled for October 7.

411 Hartford Avenue – Buck Arts Academy

Plans have been submitted to HDC for demolition and renovation to the barns on this property to accommodate an arts academy.

DEVELOPER/PROPERTY OWNER/REALTOR CONTACT

- Comstock Ferre and Co. – Main Street We have been approached by a new interested party working on plans for this property, negotiations are underway and no plans have been submitted yet.
- Discussed conceptual plans and site improvements with engineer representative Silas Deane Highway shopping center for a small office building.
- Discussed possible purchase of Silas Deane Highway Shopping Center property.
- Met with architect and engineer working on plans for a mid sized multi family housing project.
- Pursuing possible interest in new restaurant construction on Silas Deane Highway.

SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

- Work is nearly completed on the Church Street streetscape project as paver sidewalks, ornamental walls and stairs are constructed. Street lights have now also been installed.
- Met with CRCOG representative to discuss possible options and locations for new bus shelters at key locations on the Silas Deane Highway and in other locations in Town.

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

- Continue to meet with property owners interested in the façade program. Have committed funds to 10 business/property owners to date totaling \$256,212. One closing was held in July and 2 additional closings are planned in the next few weeks.
- Town Manager has signed STEAP contract for an additional \$200,000 to be used for properties in Old Wethersfield and the Berlin Turnpike. We will be sending out a mailing to property owners to promote the program.

OTHER NEWS AND INITIATIVES

Economic Development and Improvement Commission

- The Commission has initiated a process to review and revise the 2001 Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- Several members are working with the Tourism Commission to organize for a Farmers Market.

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- The Commission has identified a series of priorities for the upcoming year which include: increased business visitations, development of a shop local program, better use of Town website for marketing and promoting the Town for development, improved communication with the business community and support for development projects particularly the Redevelopment Agency Initiatives.
- Wethersfield Life has graciously agreed to provide some monthly space for an update on economic development and EDIC initiatives. EDIC member Doug Sacks will be providing a summary of monthly activities to improve communications with residents and businesses.
- An updated available property list is being distributed.
- The Salute To Business event will be held on Wednesday December 3 at the Country Club.
- Staff and the EDIC Chair attended a breakfast meeting at Rocky Hill Town Hall to discuss ways to attract retail projects to the community.
- The EDIC welcomes several new members including Dorcas McHugh, Rick Willard and Ben Bare.

Tourism

- We continue to work with Allegra Farms from East Haddam to operate the Horse and Carriage rides in Old Wethersfield through our recent State grant. The effort has been very successful and we intend to continue to operate this program throughout the rest of the year on select weekends. Rides are scheduled through the end of October on Saturdays and Sundays from 12-4 pm
- The Commission has signed up with both the Connecticut and Massachusetts versions of the Staycation programs to encourage local residents to visit attractions closer to home this summer and Fall. We will be tallying web site hits in response to this new initiative.
- The Commission has recently coordinated a discount coupon program with local merchants and is making it available through the Staycation program.
- Coordinated meeting with Old Wethersfield Stakeholders to communicate ongoing efforts amongst all groups. Will continue with regular schedule of meetings into the future.
- The Tourism Commission welcomes several new members: Dorcas McHugh as the EDIC rep and Shireen Aforismo as the Chamber rep.
- Working with Paul Mayer from the Central Tourism District on a promotional video of the Town. Filming is planned for October 9 and 10.

Redevelopment Agency

- The Agency continues to meet with property owners to discuss potential for redevelopment opportunities and partnerships.
- The Agency is working on plans for the second community forum to be held on October 15 at 7pm at the Silas Deane Middle School. Guest Speakers include a local commercial real estate broker and representatives from the State's office of Responsible Growth.
- A draft mixed use zoning regulation is presently being reviewed by a subcommittee consisting of representatives from Design Review, PZC and the Redevelopment Agency. A public hearing is scheduled for November 5.

Preserve America

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- We have heard that we have been awarded \$90,000 to be used for a wayfinding signage program. Official notification has not yet been received. We will shortly begin a process to review and detail the final design and locations with the various stakeholders.
- We are working with the State on the awarding of \$115,000 towards the gateway project at Marsh Street. We are working on plans in anticipation of putting the project out to bid in the near future.

Councilor Kotkin asked about the 20,000 square foot office building on the report.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that it was under Developer/Property Owner/Realtor Contact listed as conceptual plans for a small office building on the north end of the Silas Deane Highway shopping center.

Councilor Kotkin asked that he highlight the new projects in the report.

Councilor Roberts asked for items to be highlighted that are new from the last report.

Councilor Console said that a Town resident Mr. Johnson, business Sunshine Laundry burned down in Hartford. He asked if there was a way for the Town to reach out to his business.

Peter Gillespie said that he would certainly reach out and see if there is an interest in Town.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, took attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, said that he asked for a stop sign at the intersection of Morrison Avenue and Orchard Street. The answer was that there was not enough traffic on the street. He said that he has lived here since 1973 and has never seen such problems on the street. Last year after the street was repaved the water problems started on the sidewalk. He said there is no apron between the sidewalk and the street to put the leaves on it for pick up. He asked what he should do.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Town will work with the residents on Morrison Avenue to take care of that problem.

Chairperson Adil asked that the Town Manager also look into the issue of water.

Holly Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, said that she wanted to bring to the Town Council's attention the problems on Morrison Avenue. As a result of the paving problem last summer the street was left in a condition that compromises the safety of anyone who uses the sidewalks. This is the only street in Town with sidewalks that doesn't have a snow shelf. The paving project was the opportunity for the Town to address the long standing problem of a lack of a snow shelf. The Town Manager and Town Engineer met with residents and said that a contractor would mill out

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the existing curbing which was not part of the original paving project. The milling of the curbing would help with the drainage problem on the sidewalks. They did the milling but in the process they broke and cracked numerous slabs. There was also no consistency with the overlay of the street which makes curbing impossible. Morrison Avenue is a connector between the Silas Deane Highway and Wolcott Hill Road and sees higher speed traffic. She said that there are no snow shelves for the leaves for collection. On Wednesday, trash pick up day, the barrels are on the sidewalks and people have to walk in the road. It is not safe. The residents are not going to give up until the problems are remedied.

George Ruhe, 936 Cloverdale Circle, said that he has a friend who used to sit in the front row of the old Council Chambers. His name is George Wallace, a friend and fellow co-patriot of World War II. He is pleased to see the honor that was given to Mr. Wallace. He said giving respect to Veterans and doing things for Veterans has to go beyond a ceremony giving out a medal. He suggested that the Town Council reassess the philosophy that has crept into the picture of shutting off Veterans at the meetings. Participatory government was one of the things that World War II was about.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, congratulated Mr. Wallace on his service to the Country. He attended the earlier meeting and was impressed with the Energy Consultant. He said that the Town needs to crunch down the size in order to be in line with State reimbursements. The projects are going to cost a lot of money and the financial markets have hit a real low. Unemployment is up. He said that he has talked to the Town Council, State Representatives and the Governor's office regarding this situation on a regular basis. These are tough times. Renovations of this magnitude are above and beyond what people of Wethersfield are able to afford. There is a great opportunity on November 4th. He is pleased to see the signs up to vote yes on the Constitutional Convention. He said if it passes then people can ask for initiatives and referendums and that is very important.

Taikang Ning, 24 Westledge Drive, said that he lives on Westwood Drive and the road condition is very bad. He hopes the Town will fix it.

COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Councilor Forrest said that:

- Conservation Commission – Another phase of the Heritage Trail has been completed. The continuation of the trail will flow from Cove Park and on through the Meadows. A new map has been created by the Park and Recreation Department.
- Green Summit II is progressing nicely due to the hard work of the Steering Committee. A website is up and running at www.greensummitii.org. There will be many speakers at the summit to empower citizens and businesses to become cleaner and greener. There will be raffles, too. The Green Summit II will be November 8th at the Wethersfield High School.

Councilor Walsh reminded people to turn out for the Redevelopment Agency's forum next Wednesday at the Middle School Auditorium.

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Councilor Roberts said that the Retired Connecticut Police Chiefs' Association had their quarterly meeting and presented their first Police Officer Medal of Valor. It was awarded to three officers in Wethersfield – Officers Anthony Demonte, Ronald Floyd and Michael Wren having them at a Council meeting as well.

Councilor Console said that he received a few calls from residents about the status of Goff Road and Middletown Avenue/Route 3 intersection. He asked that the Town Manager look into the issues. He said that he didn't receive a response to his questions about Fire Truck Engine 21 and asked where it stands.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the insurance representative that is going over that had an emergency and delayed the meeting. She will get that report to him as well as a report on Goff Road. Typically, the Town does about 12 roads in the fall. This year the Town has done 4. The price of asphalt is out of sight.

Chairperson Adil said that:

- He attended the World War II Veteran's Ceremony. He said that the response for the event was very positive. He said the Mayor of Griswoldville recommended that the Town Council have a reception for volunteers in Town and honor them for their years of service to the Town.
- The MDC clean up was held last weekend and was well attended.
- The Historical Society Craft Fair was this weekend. There were 2400 people in attendance.
- The 1st Annual Statewide Italian American Celebration will be October 10th-12th in Hartford.
- Three businesses in Old Wethersfield are working together on a wine and cheese festival fundraiser for the Wethersfield Fuel Bank on October 16th at the Bean and Grape
- Mikey's Place 5K will take place on October 19th at 11:00 a.m.
- The Central Connecticut Health District is presenting a six part program entitled Diabetes Take Charge at no cost.
- Governor Rell and the Office of Policy Management are notifying Tax Assessors about the change that the Federal Government has made in the process for filing Veterans' tax.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that there was a mistake in the newspaper. The applications are due in December 1st. The Town has been receiving applications all along. If there are questions, residents can call the Assessor's Office.

Chairperson Adil said that Fire Chief Chuck Flynn has announced that the Fire Department has been selected by the Volunteer Commendation Section of the International Fire Chief's Association and Volunteer Insurance Services to receive the second annual 2008 vehicle safe operations achievement award.

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COUNCIL ACTION

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Roberts moved **“TO WAIVE FIFTY PERCENT OF THE POLICE SERVICES FEE FOR THE NOVEMBER 1, 2008 TEAM TOWANDA FOUNDATION FUND RAISER AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER”** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Team Towanda Foundation is an organization that provides funds for mammograms for uninsured women. They are having a fundraiser at the Community Center in Wethersfield. They need to hire police officers. The cost would be \$286. If Council wishes to waive half as it has in the past, it would be \$143.

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

Councilor Roberts moved **“TO TRANSFER \$4000 FROM THE CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT 1910-59250 TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT ACCOUNT 1210-52275 FOR BOILER REPAIRS”** seconded by Councilor Walsh.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that it was discovered recently that one of the two boilers in the Police Department has developed a leak. The warranties cover the actual boilers but not the labor. The Town has gotten three quotes. Perry Mechanical is the lowest quote at \$3,500.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked if this was the replacement of the entire boiler.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that it is only a section.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked how the Town determined that the other boiler does not have the same problem.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that Town Staff checked it as well as the boiler company. The warranty is seven years on the boilers.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked if there was a way to document that the other boiler was inspected in case something comes up when the warranty expires.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she would be glad to do that.

Councilor Console said that this is the second issue that came up. He asked if it is the same company that did the sprinklers.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that it is a different company.

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Councilor Console suggested that the Town hire an outside building inspector to look at the entire building.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she could get an estimate having an outside building inspector come in but that it will be costly.

Chairperson Adil asked if the Town has inspections on its buildings on a regular basis.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that inspections are done when granting a certificate of occupancy.

Councilor Roberts asked if insurance coverage would pay for this.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the insurance deductible is \$5,000 per incident.

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

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SELL THE UNUSED TOWN FURNITURE FROM TOWN HALL OFFICES EITHER THROUGH ADVERTISED BID OR NEGOTIATION WITH PERSPECTIVE BUYERS”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Montinieri.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Town has a few pieces of furniture that are not needed anymore because they have been replaced by donations from the Board of Education. By Charter, the Town Council has to authorize her to get rid of the furniture.

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

BIDS

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO AWARD THE QUARRY AND BITUMINOUS MATERIALS BID TO THE LOWEST RESPONSIBLE BIDDER, TILCON CT, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$16,352”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO AMEND THE MOTION TO CHANGE THE AMOUNT FROM \$16,352 TO \$16,350”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Physical Services Department budget has that amount of money in it for this year for the maintenance of pot holes. The Town went out to bid and Tilcon is the low bidder. The Town has worked with them before and they have done a good job.

Councilor Kotkin asked about the Charter terminology for lowest responsible bidder. He asked how the Town comes up with the bottom line number of \$16,350.

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Mike Turner, Director of Physical Services, said that typically the Town does a comparison of the bids based on the material the Town uses. He uses cubic yards for a mathematical equivalent to look at the bids. The Town is appropriating a given amount of money and will spend up to that amount.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked how much material this would supply to the Town.

Mike Turner, Director of Physical Services said that it is a price for any material needed to get the job done.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked if there was a priority list of projects.

Mike Turner, Director of Physical Services said that this is ongoing maintenance of pot holes that come in with complaints.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

RESOLUTION FOR A STATE GRANT FOR THE GATEWAY ENTRANCE PROJECT

MINUTES

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2008 AS AMENDED”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:41 p.m., Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS REAL ESTATE NEGOTIATIONS, PENDING LITIGATION, AND UNION NEGOTIATIONS”** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0. Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, was present during the Executive Session as were invitees: Chief Engineer Mike Turner, Town Attorney John Bradley and Attorney Tom Gerarde from Howd Ludorf.

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Attorney Gerarde, from Howd Ludorf, left the meeting at 9:08 pm.

Attorney Bradley and Chief Engineer Turner left the meeting at 9:22 pm.

Councilor Roberts left the meeting at 9:23 pm but returned at 9:25 pm

No motions were made and no votes were taken in executive session.

At 9:25 p.m., Councilor Walsh moved **“TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION TO REJOIN PUBLIC SESSION”** seconded by Councilor Console. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“to accept the recommendation of the Town and Insurance Attorneys to have the Insurance Attorney only represent the Town and Officer Miguel Vargas on the Bernice Grant-Nails, Administrator of the Estate of Bianca Madley, against the Town of Wethersfield”**, seconded by Councilor Walsh.

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

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“to authorize the settlement of the Crest Mechanical lawsuit, as recommended by the Town Attorney”**, seconded by Councilor Roberts.

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

Councilor Forrest moved **“to refer to the Planning and Zoning Commission for an 8-24 Review, the sale of a Town owned lot on Goodwin Road”**, seconded by Councilor Walsh.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:29 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