

## **REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 20, 2007**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Tuesday, February 20, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Silas Deane Middle School.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Drake, Forrest, Kirsche, Kotkin, Montinieri, Walsh, and Chairperson Adil

Absent: Councilor Walsh and Deputy Mayor Fortunato

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 Councilor Montinieri.

Chairperson Adil welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked Boy Scout Troop 50 for coming to the Silas Deane Middle School before the meeting to discuss Town government.

### **REPORT FROM PAUL HUTCHEON - COMMUNITY HEALTH SURVEY**

Paul Hutcheon, Director of the Central Connecticut Health District, highlighted the Community Health Survey. He said that the Central Connecticut Health District covers the Towns of Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill, and Wethersfield. There are 94,000 residents in the four Towns. The Center for Research and Public Policy conducted a telephone field survey of 400 residents. The highlights of the survey can be seen on the website - [ccthd.org](http://ccthd.org). The survey highlights were:

- Residents were aware of many programs the Health District offers and were satisfied with the services.
- Radon levels were low. Of those with problems, 83 percent took corrective action.
- Residents received flu shots. 11 percent received them from the Health District.
- Cholesterol is a big concern for residents. The Health District is currently running a cholesterol program.
- Enough residents are not taking precautions against mosquito and tick borne diseases.
- 88 percent of respondents had a physical in the last year. 5.5 percent do not have health insurance and 14 percent had no dental services in the past year.
- 13 percent of respondents smoke and 50 percent said they use alcohol. 17 percent said that they drink and drive.
- The number of people that exercise should be higher.
- Respondents did poorly in nutrition; not eating enough fruits, vegetables and dairy.
- 99 percent of children appear to be excellent or good in regards to health. Only 44 percent of children were tested for lead. 12 percent have a health problem that effects their walking, running, and playing.

Councilor Forrest asked if the Health District website was linked to the Town's website.

Paul Hutcheon, Director of the Central Connecticut Health District said that the Central Connecticut Health District's website is linked to the Town of Wethersfield's webpage. If someone clicks on *services and info* and then *health*, it will bring the user to the District's webpage: [ccthd.org](http://ccthd.org).

Councilor Kotkin asked what the Health District would do with the results of the survey.

Paul Hutcheon, Director of the Central Connecticut Health District said that the results will show staff what areas it should focus on. The survey showed that nutrition and obesity are problems. The Health District can then seek grants and target resources for these programs. This information is necessary for the grant process.

Councilor Cascio asked if the survey information was shared with the schools. He also asked if the data represents Wethersfield residents or all of the residents in the district.

Paul Hutcheon, Director of the Central Connecticut Health District said that the school nurses were represented on the committee that compiled the survey questions. The survey results were also shared with the schools. The survey results represent residents of all four Towns in the District. Individual Town results are also available but the results will not be statistically reliable for the Towns individually because the number of people surveyed from each Town is too small.

Councilor Montinieri said that he was surprised by two facts: that only 13 percent of the people surveyed used the internet and only 38 percent of them had access to the internet.

Paul Hutcheon, Director of the Central Connecticut Health District said that the demographics of the community and the residents taking part in the survey are realistic. He said that many residents completing the survey were over 65 years old and may not have or use the internet.

Chairperson Adil thanked Paul Hutcheon for his presentation and said that he actually took part in the survey.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### HEARING

#### **ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 122 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE REGULATIONS OF THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT**

No one wished to speak for or against the Ordinance.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the amendment will change the following:

- Allow Town staff to issue citations prior to the Town Council adding the property to the blighted property list.
- Allow Town staff to write citations without the assistance of the Town Attorney.
- Eliminate the need for blight concerns to be in writing.
- Alter the seasonal mowing requirement so that lawns must always be no more than 8 inches.

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Lee Sekas, 117 Wells Road, said that he has issues with the snow removal. He said that some businesses in Town have not cleared their sidewalks from the storm six days ago. He complained to the Police Department and wants to know if the Town has followed up and issued fines for businesses that have not complied. The Town needs to prioritize public safety issues. He suggested that the Town publish a list of businesses that do not comply with the snow removal policy.

Chairperson Adil said that the ice made snow removal difficult. He received a memo from Lieutenant Poisson stating that the police have been out dealing with businesses that have not removed snow from the sidewalks. He said the State is using a new salt mix to melt the ice. He doesn't feel it has done a very good job removing the snow and ice on the State roads in Town. Businesses did shovel but the State plowed the snow back on the sidewalks after shoveling.

Patrick Adams, 95 Colonel Chester Drive, said that he was in New Haven today and saw a man in a motorized scooter that wasn't able to get onto the sidewalk after crossing the road because the sidewalk entrance was full of snow. Had a police officer not been in the area, the person would have been in a perilous situation.

### COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Councilor Kirsche said that he received a memo from Nancy Stilwell, Director of Social and Youth Services, saying that the Prom Dress Sale date was changed. The sale will take place in the lecture hall of the High School on March

6th, 7th, and 8th.

Chairperson Adil said that:

- The Keane Foundation is holding its annual Snow Ball on March 3rd at the Pitkin Community Center. Tickets are still available.
- The Wethersfield High School drama club will be presenting "Honk" on March 2nd, 3rd, and 4th and March 9th, 10th, and 11th. Tickets are available.
- State Representative Russ Morin and Speaker of the House James Amman are holding an energy seminar with CL &P representatives at the Police Department on March 19th. He hopes Councilors and the public will attend.
- EDIC will be holding its quarterly breakfast with the top 25 businesses in Wethersfield on March 29th at 8:00a.m. at the Wethersfield Country Club.

## **COUNCIL ACTION**

Councilor Montinieri moved **"TO AMEND THE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ORDINANCE"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that this is an important ordinance for the Town. Town staff has worked hard to have property owners clean up their properties. These amendments would expedite the clean-up process.

Councilor Drake asked if there was an ordinance limiting the number of cars parked on a piece of property.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the last Council chose not to address this issue. Other communities try to address the issue by requiring black top to park cars. She cautioned that it is hard to enforce.

Chairperson Adil said that the Town Council should look at the issue. He said that initially the Property Maintenance Code was established to focus on blighted business properties.

Councilor Cascio said that the Town has an ordinance focused on unregistered vehicles. He feels it is difficult to tell residents the number of vehicles they are allowed to park on their own property. The Town has addressed vehicles parked on the snow shelf.

Chairperson Adil said that the amendments to this ordinance are beneficial to the Town since they speed up the process and eliminate the need for the Town Attorney.

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

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### RFQ - ARCHITECT - COMMUNITY CENTER/KEANE FOUNDATION

Councilor Drake moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO AWARD A CONTRACT TO FRIAR ASSOCIATES FOR THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES FOR THE RENOVATION OF THE EAST WING OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$39,600"** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Community Center/Keane Foundation Building Committee received 10 proposals and interviewed 5 architectural firms. The committee recommends Friar Associates. They best met the criteria and presented the lowest bid at \$39,600.

Charles Viani, Vice Chairperson of the Community Center/Keane Foundation Building Committee said that the Town should move forward on the unanimous recommendation of the building committee for Friar Associates. He said that Friar Associates has made a pro bono offer to do some of the work, making them the low bidder.

Councilor Forrest said that he is excited to see the low cost. He asked for a clarification of the funding for this project.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation said that the Town has \$90,000 in the CIP account. This money can be used for architectural fees or State grant money can be used. Money for this project will be handled the same way funding was handled for the Nature Center. As bills come in, the Town pays them with Town funds and is then reimbursed with the State grant money. When State grant money runs out, the Town will use its \$90,000. When that money is used, the Town will present bills to the Keane Foundation. The Keane Foundation will give the money to the Town so that the Town can pay the bills.

Councilor Kotkin asked what was the timetable for completion of the project.

Charles Viani, Vice Chairperson of the Community Center/Keane Foundation Building Committee, said that the design process would take about four months. Work would start in September and be completed in January 2008. The timeline will be dependent on interview processes and how quickly the project moves through Town committees.

Councilor Drake said he took part in the interview process of the five architectural firms. He said that Friar Associates really wanted the job and had a good sense of this project.

Chairperson Adil said that at some point the Town Council should meet with members of the Keane Foundation to discuss programming for the athletic complex.

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

#### BLIGHTED PROPERTY LIST - NOTT STREET CONVENIENCE STORE

Councilor Forrest moved "**TO APPROVE THE ADDITION OF THE COUNTRY STORE AT 539 NOTT STREET TO THE BLIGHTED PROPERTY LIST**" seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the property at 539 Nott Street has been a blight problem for awhile. The former owner was in India and was impossible to contact. She said that the property has been sold in foreclosure. Brian O'Conner, Chief Building Official, has been working with the Town Attorney on this property for some time. In response to Councilors' questions, she said that:

- The Town received \$500,000 for taxes owed for 18 years.
- The property transfer on 539 Nott Street occurred on Friday, February 16th. The new owner is local. He did have an interest in the property previously. Brian O'Connor, Chief Building Official, has already been in contact with the new owner's Attorney.
- Staff will continue to bring blighted properties to the attention of the Town Council to add to the blighted property list since it adds clout to have the Town Council endorse the properties.

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

#### DIAL-A-RIDE EXPANSION GRANT

Councilor Kotkin moved "**TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT A GRANT FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE EXPANSION OF DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICES AND TO NEGOTIATE AND SIGN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE TOWNS OF NEWINGTON AND ROCKY HILL TO PROVIDE A TRI-TOWN MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICE**" seconded by Councilor Kirsche.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that this is a State grant renewal. It will allow the Town to add an additional 2,100 Dial-A-Ride trips to expand the medical transport service.

Councilor Forrest asked if this program would cost the Town anything.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the only cost to the Town will be in staff time. Dispatch services are not provided by the Town. Town staff will follow up on complaints and issues that arise. She said that this is a very worthwhile program for seniors.

Councilor Cascio asked how the Town will communicate the expansion of the Dial-A-Ride program.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the expansion would be advertised via AARP, the senior newsletter, Dial-A-Ride renewals, and at the senior center.

Councilor Cascio said that it is important that Town staff let the seniors know that their complaints were heard and took action to address them. He supported using the channel 14 and 16 scrollers, too.

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

### CHANGE OF DATE/TIME - MARCH 19TH COUNCIL MEETING

Councilor Kotkin moved "**TO CANCEL THE MARCH 19, 2007 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Montinieri. .

Chairperson Adil said that if the Town Council needs to take action on bids for Town Hall work or other items, a Special Meeting can be held.

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

### **ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION**

#### **ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 123**

BE IT ORDAINED THAT Part II General Legislation of the Municipal Code of the Town of Wethersfield, Connecticut is hereby amended by adding Chapter 123 as follows:

#### Section 1. Statement of Purpose.

The purpose of this Chapter is to preserve and protect public, health, safety and welfare of the Town by regulating outdoor advertising on public property. It is also intended to reduce visual distractions which may cause traffic accidents and to eliminate unsightly conditions on public property.

#### Section 2. Enforcement.

The Chief Building Official and Police Chief and their designees are hereby authorized and directed to enforce all provisions of this Chapter.

#### Section 3. Prohibited Signs.

All signs posted or erected in the public right-of-way or on Town owned property, unless permitted by Wethersfield Zoning Regulations, Chapter 167A, Subsection 6.3, are prohibited.

#### Section 4. Removal of Signs.

The Chief Building Official and Police Chief and their designees are authorized to remove and dispose of signs installed in violation of this Chapter. Reasonable notice of such removal and proposed disposal, which may be satisfied by a telephone call to the owner or responsible party if listed on the offending sign, shall be afforded when

practicable. Any such signs not retrieved by the owner will be discarded after 30 days.

#### Section 5. Penalties.

In addition to any other remedies allowed by law, any person who violates the provisions of this Chapter shall be issued a citation in the amount of \$100 for each violation. Each day that such violation continues shall be deemed a separate offense.

#### Section 6. Appeals.

Any person aggrieved by the provisions of this Chapter may appeal in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 168.

### **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SOLICITATION OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY SERVICES**

Resolved that Town Manager Bonnie L. Therrien is authorize to participate in the solicitation of electricity supply services with the Connecticut Consortium for Cooperative Purchasing for Electricity and enter into a contractual agreement presented and recommended by the Connecticut Consortium for Cooperative Purchasing for Electricity supply services on behalf of The Town of Wethersfield.

#### **MINUTES**

Councilor Forrest moved "**TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 29, 2007**" seconded by Councilor Cascio.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Kirsche ABSTAINED. The motion passed 6-0-1.

Councilor Kirsche moved "**TO WITHDRAW THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 5, 2007**" seconded by Councilor Forrest.

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

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:00 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Kirsche. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

*APPROVED BY VOTE OF COUNCIL AS AMENDED ON MARCH 5, 2007*