

[NOTE: These minutes are made available to the public prior to Town Council acceptance.]

JANUARY 4, 2005 REGULAR MEETING

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on January 4, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

Present: Councilors Adil, Czernicki, Forrest, Fortunato, Hemmann, Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Karangekis and Chairperson Morin.

Absent: Councilor Cascio.

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 Morin announced that there will be an Executive Session following the regular meeting to discuss real estate negotiations.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis requested that all in attendance observe a moment of silence for Newington Police Officer Peter Lavery who was killed in the line of duty.

Councilor Czernicki requested that all in attendance observe a moment of silence for the victims of the Tsunami tragedy in Asia and to also reflect on and appreciate the lives that we have.

Economic Development Report

Town Planner Peter Gillespie gave a presentation of the December, 2004 Economic Development Report. The report included the following changes for December:

- New completions include Ascot Catering, D'Esopo Merchandising Center, Wethersfield United Methodist Church, and small businesses that have opened
- Goff Brook Shops - Office Depot has begun construction of a new façade as well as interior work. The Plaza sold for \$10.3 million at the end of November
- Jordan Lane Shopping Center - Friendly Fitness Facility has begun interior work and A.J. Wright has leased an additional 10,000 square feet
- 1160 Silas Deane Highway - Prospect Enterprises office renovation
- 804 Silas Deane Highway - Bella Napoli Pizzeria
- 1855 Berlin Turnpike - Cumberland Farms, Inc. - construction to begin soon
- 1055 Silas Deane Highway - Sleepy's Mattress
- 1532 Berlin Turnpike - AHEPA, Inc. - Elderly Housing Project is going through the permit process with the Zoning Board of Appeals
- Old Reservoir Road/Back Lane - Harris Property - Age Restricted Housing plans submitted by a developer are being reviewed

Mr. Gillespie announced that the first meeting of the Design Review Advisory Committee is scheduled for Thursday, January 13, 2005. At this meeting the Committee will establish the policies and procedures for the operations of the Committee. Mr. Gillespie reported that the Silas Deane Highway Revitalization Committee held a public forum on December 9, 2004 at which several property owners and business persons expressed an interest in being appointed to the Committee. Mr. Gillespie said that Wethersfield continues to work with Rocky Hill to work out the details of the STEAP Grant. He said that the Wethersfield Salute to Business was held on December 8, 2004 and was well attended.

Mr. Gillespie reported on the preliminary stages of work on the Façade Improvement Program. He also reported that the EDIC sponsored an ad promoting Wethersfield as a place to do business in the 2005 Metro Hartford Market Guide.

Councilor Czernicki asked Mr. Gillespie again for a report on the net gains to the Grand List. Mr. Gillespie said that he is still working on this with the Assessor and that he will have information within a few weeks. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien clarified that the Grand List will not be completed until the end of January.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HEARING

None.

GENERAL COMMENTS

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, spoke as Vice-President of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. Mr. Ruhe commented on the status of the settlement reached in November, 2004 between the Town and the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc regarding the lighting at Cottone Field. He said that some Town Officials have spoken to the press regarding information for a press release. Mr. Ruhe reviewed the details of the mutual agreement which include the formulation of both a question and an ordinance, the agreement of ten polling places, and the agreement of a joint press release. Mr. Ruhe said that the minor changes in language agreed to grandfather the existing lighting venues in Wethersfield and he feels that this may be an area subject to distortion. Mr. Ruhe read from a letter sent to Ms. Judy Emmick from the Town Manager regarding the press release. Mr. Ruhe submitted for inclusion in the record, a letter from the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc.'s attorney regarding the press release issue.

Ron Rodd, 88 Westway, commented that every resident in Wethersfield owes a debt of gratitude to a group of concerned citizens who invested a great deal of time and money to challenge the administration in denying the will of the people by rejecting their petition. He said that the group protected the rights of all citizens in Wethersfield to have their voice heard. He urged all citizens to vote on the referendum in May to show that the voices of Wethersfield residents cannot be silenced. Mr. Rodd commented on the circumstances pertaining to the resignation of Wethersfield's Assistant Town Attorney John O'Brien. Mr. Rodd recommended that, since Mr. O'Brien was hired under false pretense, the Town should seek a full refund of funds paid to him as a retainer and any other compensation. Mr. Rodd stated that he was very disappointed by the comments made by Chairperson Morin to the Hartford Courant regarding the situation. Mr. Rodd said that he finds to be outrageous Chairperson Morin's comment that Mr. O'Brien is a "guy of integrity". He said that this comments sends a disturbing message to the residents of Wethersfield at a time when the State has declared a no tolerance policy on unethical conduct. Mr. Rodd said that Wethersfield deserves better.

Walter Swindell, 46 Oldham Road, commented on the need for a grocery store in Old Wethersfield and also for increased bus service due to the relocation of the Stop & Shop.

No one else wished to speak and the Chairperson declared the General Comments segment closed.

COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Councilor Fortunato reported that the Facilities Committee meeting held on December 30 did not have a quorum. She said that the status of the Olsen House was discussed and it was reported that there are no additional problems other than the roof. She said that staff continues to look for alternative locations for WCTV. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien commented that WCTV will probably relocate to the Pitkin Community Center and that the exact location is still to be determined.

Councilor Czernicki asked if the MDC has contacted the Town Manager indicating when they will address the Council again. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she has not heard from the MDC and she believes that their report is still in the final draft form. Chairperson Morin said that the Public Works Committee will meet on January 14 to act on what the Commissioners have brought forth. Councilor Czernicki asked when the work at 100 Woodside Drive was started and completed. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the work commenced a few days following the

Council's December 6 meeting to approve the concept of the repairs. Councilor Czernicki asked Chairperson Morin if he would share information on the funds generated from the Mayor's Cup and the disbursement of the funds. Chairperson Morin said that there is presently approximately \$5,700 available and the intended use of this is to fund at least twenty Wethersfield campers for the summer.

Chairperson Morin announced that the Mayor's Cup Golf Tournament will be held on June 27 this year. He announced other upcoming Wethersfield events as well including the commencement of Christmas tree curbside pickup beginning January 10.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien gave an update of the Nott Street right-of-way agreement with Mr. Milano. She said that she has yet to hear back as to who pays for any additional work; the Town or the State. She said that there is no action required by the Council until she hears from the State DOT.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Adil moved "**TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF ANN F. EISENMAN FROM THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS AND PATRICIA M. WARNER FROM THE TOURISM COMMITTEE**", seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Transfer of \$2,000 - Printer - Finance Department

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the main printer in the Finance Department unexpectedly failed and is not repairable. She said that the replacement printer will offer money saving options that the current printer did not.

Councilor Forrest moved "**TO TRANSFER \$2,000 FROM THE CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT T1910900-5250 TO THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT ACCOUNT T10615420-330 FOR THE PURCHASE OF A NEW PRINTER AND MEMORY CARD**", seconded by Councilor Adil.

Councilor Hemmann asked the Town Manager for the current balance of the Contingency Account. The Town Manager said that it is approximately \$295,000 and that she will report the exact amount in her next Weekly Report.

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

Computers - Library

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that due to a recent upgrade in the CONNECT computer system; nine of the sixteen computers are no longer fully functional. She said the Library Board approved the purchase of nine new computers with Library Trust funds; however, they are requesting that the Town cover the cost of the purchase so that the Trust funds can be utilized for additional items identified during the renovation. She said that the total cost is \$11,500, of which \$2,800 is available in the current Library budget. Of the remaining \$8,750 the Town Manager recommends that the Town share the cost equally with the Library Board.

Councilor Fortunato moved "**TO TRANSFER \$4,375 FROM THE CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT T1910900 5250 TO THE LIBRARY ACCOUNT T17105420 FOR THE PURCHASE OF NEW COMPUTERS**", seconded by Deputy Mayor Karangekis. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

BIDS

Police Vehicles

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the State Contract has come out and Wethersfield can now finish the order for the 2004-2005 Police Cruisers.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis moved **"TO AWARD THE BID FOR TWO POLICE CRUISERS TO WARNOCK AUTOMOTIVE, INC. D/B/A WARNOCK FORD AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$48,656"**, seconded by Councilor Montinieri.

Councilor Forrest asked the Town Manager how this falls into the range of the amount budgeted for these items. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that this bid represents a savings of approximately \$2,000-\$3,000. She said that she will provide an exact amount in the Management Report.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

QUESTION FOR THE MAY REFERENDUM REQUIRED BY A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Shall Section 101 of the Municipal Code of Wethersfield, be amended to include the following ordinance:

Section 101-1.1. The Town of Wethersfield shall not install, construct or cause to be installed or constructed any permanent or temporary floodlight, spotlight or other reflector-type lighting for illumination of sporting events or other activities on any municipally owned property.

MINUTES

Councilor Forrest moved **"TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF DECEMBER 20, 2004"**, seconded by Councilor Hemmann. All Councilors present voted AYE. Chairperson Morin ABSTAINED. The motion passed 7-0-1.

Councilor Fortunato moved **"TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 20, 2004"**, seconded by Councilor Adil.

Councilor Montinieri referred to page 19518 regarding the answer to Councilor Cascio's question of whether "it will be the Town's responsibility from this point on to take care of construction problems that occur with future projects." Councilor Montinieri spoke to the Town Manager about this because she does not think that the minutes reflect the entire conversation at the meeting. Councilor Montinieri said that she thought that issues like this would be decided on a case-by-case basis. She said that she would like this clarified.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien stated that at the December 20, 2004 meeting she was making comments with reference to the Nott Street project only. She said that the State takes care of anything having to do with the road expansion itself, and anything beyond that is the responsibility of the Town. She reiterated that these comments refer to the Nott Street project only.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO TABLE THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 20, 2004 PENDING CLARIFICATION"**, seconded by Councilor Montinieri. All Councilors present voted AYE. Chairperson Morin ABSTAINED. The motion passed 7-0-1.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:40 p.m., Councilor Adil moved **"TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION"** seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 7:48 p.m., Councilor Adil moved **"TO ENTER BACK INTO THE REGULAR MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 7:48 p.m., Councilor Adil moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk