

**WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 24, 2004**

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a special public meeting on Tuesday, August 24, 2004 at 7:00 p.m., in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Members present:

Philip Knecht, Acting Chairman
Richard Roberts, Clerk Pro Tem
George Oickle
David R. Edwards
Scott Murphy

Members absent:

Joseph L. Hammer
Theresa A. Forsdick
Earle R. Munroe
Robert P. Jurasin
John Hallisey
John Adamian
Peter Leombruni

Also present:

Bonnie L. Therrien, Town Manager
Joseph Coombs, Chairman, Town Hall Renovation Committee

Chairman Knecht determined that there were at least five members present representing a quorum, therefore, the Commission could proceed with the meeting.

Clerk Pro Tem Roberts then read the agenda into the record:

MANDATORY REFERRAL under Connecticut General Statutes § 8-24 from the Wethersfield Town Council requesting recommendations regarding bonding resolutions for referendum.

Clerk Pro Tem Roberts then read two letters dated August 23, 2004 from Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk to Joseph Hammer, Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission (on file). The first letter stated that at the Town Council meeting on August 18, 2004 in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §8-24, the Town Council voted to refer to the Planning and Zoning Commission an ordinance appropriating \$2,920,000 for road and sidewalk improvements and authorizing the issue of \$2,920,000 in bonds and notes to finance the appropriation. The second letter stated that at the Town Council meeting on August 18, 2004 in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §8-24, the Town Council voted to refer to the Planning and Zoning Commission an ordinance appropriating \$5,200,000 for Phase II of the Town Hall and Library renovations and authorizing the issue of \$5,200,000 in bonds and notes to finance the appropriation.

Chairman Knecht announced that Ms. Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager was present to answer questions. Chairman Knecht then opened the meeting to questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Oickle asked how it was determined which sidewalks needed repair. Ms. Therrien replied that the sidewalks were chosen based upon their proximity to the schools. These sidewalks were missing slabs requiring the children to take the bus, and it was decided that if the sidewalks were repaired, the children could walk, which would cut down on bus transportation. Commissioner Oickle asked if this meets the town sidewalk policy of schools as priority number one. Ms. Therrien replied that it did. Commissioner Oickle further questioned the Two Rod Highway

area, asking if this was for the same reason. Ms. Therrien said that it was for the schools and that it had been an area of chief concern for some of the neighbors and has been requested by some of them. Ms. Therrien also said that the town council wanted to be sure that the policy of the homeowner paying for 50% of the sidewalk would be followed. Commissioner Oickle was pleased to see that it would be, as a precedent had already been set.

Commissioner Oickle asked where the money would go when it comes back to the town. Ms. Therrien said that it would be used to pay off the debt from the bond. Commissioner Oickle asked why the parking lots were eliminated. Ms. Therrien said that the council felt that the priority should be the roads, and that if progress can be made on the five-year capital plan, then the parking lots could be paid for out of the general fund. Ms. Therrien also explained that a software program was used to determine how the roads were prioritized.

Commissioner Oickle then asked if collector or arterials receive a higher priority point value than a short street or cul-de-sac in terms of getting done faster. Ms. Therrien said that there is no policy on that, however, those lesser roads will be brought up before the Capitol Region Council of Governments in the request for grant money. Also, she mentioned that the town still has the pool of LOSIP money and other local money to use for those smaller roads.

Commissioner Edwards asked if this project would only be bid through one contractor. Ms. Therrien said that it would not be, in fact the council just awarded work to three different contractors for the jobs using local money. Otherwise, the town typically goes with the State low-bid procedure. Ms. Therrien also said that this was a lot of work, probably over a three-year period, which may be too much for one contractor. Commissioner Oickle asked if the town could use a consultant or private staff to do some of the work. Ms. Therrien said that they would try to use staff where possible.

Commissioner Oickle then said that the Town Hall portion looked like two phases, but is not. Ms. Therrien said that there would be an informational video shown on Channel 16 to show what is planned. She also said that when the police station and health department moved, it was a complete retrofit, not a renovation.

The Commissioners then asked Joe Coombs, Chairman of the Town Hall Renovation Committee to speak. He said that the Town Manager is correct, that the retrofit was to move the agencies downstairs only, not to renovate those spaces. Ms. Therrien said that if the referendum doesn't pass, then the town would just have to retrofit.

Mr. Coombs also said that this is an opportunity to upgrade the wiring and achieve continuity of design in both the upstairs and downstairs of the town hall. He explained that the whole other side of the building would be new and opened up, giving that opportunity. Commissioner Oickle asked about the sprinklers proposed for the project. Mr. Coombs said that the existing sprinkler system would get a retrofit. Mr. Coombs also discussed more specifics of the proposed construction with the commissioners.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the list of roads that was provided. The last road on the list is only two years old and he was surprised that was on the list. Ms. Therrien said that she thought that was the final list. Commissioner Oickle said that he also realized that some new roads were on the list. Commissioner Roberts said that he would like to see some money put into sidewalk maintenance. Ms. Therrien agreed that this should be done.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the proposed technology expenses for the Town Hall renovation. Mr. Coombs said that this would include an upgrade to both the phone and computer systems, including the wiring in the ceilings. Mr. Coombs described some of the specifics about the old wiring in the town hall ceilings, and the danger that may be there. He also described that the new wiring would come into a hub closet, which would then be used throughout the building. This would also free up some space upstairs, which would be an advantage to the town. Ms. Therrien added that the Information Technology Citizen's Committee is working closely with the Renovation Committee to determine what will be needed in the future. Ms. Therrien said that the council gave money to the town last year for a new server and computers.

Mr. Coombs then discussed some other specifics with the commissioners, such as new windows, new roof and new insulation, which are all proposed as part of the renovation. Commissioner Oickle also asked about furniture for the new building. Mr. Coombs said that there is a furniture allowance, but it is not a lot to replace everything.

Commissioner Roberts said that it struck him as the most expensive way to get money. Ms. Therrien said that there

were three figures that the council was talking about -- \$1.8 million, which covered the roof, boiler, and a few other major items. Then there was a \$3.3 million figure that was more of the priorities but not the whole thing, and now the \$5.2, which is the whole thing. Mr. Coombs said that if the town were to undertake this work in a piecemeal manner, rather than all at once as proposed, there would be a lot of staff and service disruptions. Commissioner Roberts wanted to be sure that this renovation would cover the Town Hall for say fifteen years out, or at least farther into the future so it would be worth it. Mr. Coombs said that is what is planned.

Commissioner Oickle asked how this proposal was different than the proposal for a new town hall ten years ago. Mr. Coombs said that the renovation was planned for \$200/ square foot and that this is a renovation, not building a new town hall. There would be no land expenses to deal with, also the masonry in the existing town hall is in good shape and is an asset to the town.

ACTION TAKEN

Commissioner Murphy introduced the following resolution, which was seconded by Commissioner Oickle.

RESOLVED, that the Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Wethersfield approves the following project pursuant to Section 8-24 of the General Statutes of Connecticut:

Design and construction of various renovations and improvements to Town Hall and the Library. The project will include replacement of the roof on Town Hall, the Town Hall lobby and the Library; improvements to the heating and cooling systems in Town Hall and the Library; hazardous material abatement in the first and second floor of Town Hall, the Town Hall stair towers and the main and mezzanine floors of the Library; replacement of flooring in the first and second floors and the stair towers in Town Hall and in the Town Council chambers; reconstruction of the podium in the Town Council chambers; replacement of lighting in the first and second floor corridors of Town Hall; replacement of ceiling tiles on the first and second floors, corridors and stair towers in Town Hall; accessibility improvements to the Town Clerk's vault; installation of water filtration systems at all drinking fountains in the first and second floors of the Town Hall and the main and mezzanine floors of the Library; replacement of windows in Town Hall, the Town Hall lobby and the Library; installation of fire sprinkler system on the lobby ground, main and second floors of Town Hall and on the ground, main and mezzanine floors of the Library where needed; construction of new telephone and data equipment rooms and data administration offices on the ground floors of Town Hall and the Library; improvements to the telecommunications and computer systems in Town Hall and the Library; replacement of plumbing fixtures in the main and mezzanine level bathrooms in the Library; installation of self check out system and security system in the Library; replacement of existing stairway from the main floor to the mezzanine floor in the Library; installation of new fixtures and furnishings on the main and mezzanine floors in the Library; improvements to existing masonry on the exterior of Town Hall and the Library; and various site improvements including relocation of signage and installation of exterior lighting and landscaping.

The resolution was approved by five (5) votes in favor and zero (0) votes opposed.

Commissioner Murphy introduced the following resolution, which was seconded by Commissioner Oickle.

RESOLVED, that the Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Wethersfield approves the following project pursuant to Section 8-24 of the General Statutes of Connecticut:

Design and construction of improvements to various Town roads and sidewalks. The project will include milling and repaving of roads and replacement of catch basin tops and curbing where necessary on such Town roads as shall be determined by the Town Manager upon the recommendation of the Director of Public Works/Town Engineer, based on the list of roads attached as an exhibit to these minutes; and installation of concrete sidewalks where needed on the west side of Mapleside Drive from Wells Road to Dale Road, the east side parking lot of Emerson Williams School, the west side of Willow Street, and both sides of Two Rod Highway from Old Reservoir Road to Highland Street.

The resolution was approved by five (5) votes in favor and zero (0) votes opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Knecht asked if there was any other correspondence or other business. Seeing none, Chairman Knecht asked if there was motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Murphy made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Oickle. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Richard Roberts, Clerk Pro Tem