

**Minutes**  
**Redevelopment Agency**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Wednesday, July 25, 2007**  
**5:00 pm - Town Hall**  
**Town Manager's Conference Room**

1. **Call to Order** - Chairman Lee Kuckro called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm, and noted that the meeting was called as a special meeting.
2. **Roll Call/Attendance** - Members in attendance: Lee Kuckro - Chair, Daniel Camilliere - Vice Chair, Paul Thompson and Michael Zaleski. Also in attendance: Town Council Liaison, Martin Walsh; Economic Development and Improvement Commission Chair, Betty Rosania; Town Manager, Bonnie Therrien; and Town Planner/Economic Development Manager, Peter Gillespie.

Members absent: Joseph Soja.

3. **Public Comments** - No one from the public was present.
4. **Approval of Minutes - [July 6, 2007](#)** - Mr. Kuckro asked if there were corrections needed for the draft minutes, and none were requested. Mr. Camilliere motioned to approve the minutes, Mr. Zaleski seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.
5. **Election of Officers 2007/2008** - Mr. Zaleski made a motion to re-elect the Agency Chair, Lee Kuckro, and Vice-Chair, Daniel Camilliere, for the 2007/2008 term. Mr. Camilliere seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor of re-election.
6. **Referendum Status** - Ms. Therrien said that the public hearing on the referendum question was set for the August 6, 2007 regular meeting of the Town Council at 7:30 p.m.. Because of renovation work to the town hall building, the August 6th Town Council meeting will be held at the Pitkin Community Center in the banquet room. Mr. Gillespie asked if a presentation should be made. Ms. Therrien said she thought a presentation would be a good idea, and should be made by an Agency member.
7. **Public Information Strategies** - Ms. Rosania asked if more publicity was planned for before the August 6th public hearing. Mr. Kuckro said that so far, he had written a letter to the editor of the Wethersfield Life, and it had been published. An article also recently ran in the Wethersfield Post. Mr. Walsh volunteered to contact the Hartford Courant. Mr. Thompson said he would place an entry on the cable television public access channel (Channel 14) community events "scroller". Mr. Zaleski suggested a press release, and Mr. Thompson volunteered to draft it. Mr. Zaleski said that the town's consultant, Keiler Associates, should review the draft and follow-up on getting it distributed and published by area media outlets. Mr. Thompson said he envisioned the press release as being a simple announcement about the public hearing and its time and location, along with the "talking points" the Agency has been discussing for the public information strategy.

Mr. Kuckro said that he is concerned about citizens misunderstanding the purpose and limitations of the referendum. Mr. Kuckro said he understands some people think that the bond money is intended to be used for the development on Old Wethersfield, even the controversial proposal for the Comstock property. Mr. Walsh suggested that the talking points be written to address such misunderstandings. He recommended that the talking points clarify that the bond money is not targeted for Old Wethersfield.

Ms. Therrien said that the town planned to mail out an informational flyer on the referendum to all residents in October, so voters have the information fresh in their minds on Election Day. Mr. Kuckro said that since the flyer will be mailed after the close of the public hearing period, the town can consider the opportunity to add information to the flyer to address concerns that were raised during the public hearing process. Ms. Therrien said that otherwise, the flyer would be patterned after the one mailed last year prior to the open space

referendum.

Mr. Kuckro said that the list of talking points needed to be reduced to a few sentences designed to attract voter interest, and provide substantive information the voters need. Mr. Thompson volunteered to draft the shorter version of the talking points overnight and get the draft back to the Agency members for their review the next day. Mr. Kuckro asked Mr. Zaleski if he would review the draft because of his experience with the Hartford Business Improvement Plan, and Mr. Zaleski agreed.

Mr. Kuckro asked if the members knew of any groups or individuals that had emerged as opposing or supporting the referendum, or any that would be good conduits for getting information out to the public. Mr. Kuckro said it is important to stay in contact with such groups or individuals so the town gets feedback from a full cross section of its citizens and all demographic groups, geographical areas, political party affiliations, etc. are heard. Ms. Rosania mentioned a number of citizens that are often active on issues in town. However, the members said that they were not aware of anyone that had come forward with a viewpoint. The members had only heard comments and questions from their friends and neighbors, which were generally very supportive. Mr. Camilliere noted that issues and viewpoints can be addressed as they emerge from the public hearing process.

Mr. Kuckro said he could make presentations to various groups in town. Mr. Gillespie said that he would put together a list of groups (e.g. Chamber of Commerce) which Mr. Kuckro could use for contact purposes. Mr. Kuckro said that an important point he wants to convey along with all that has been discussed to date, is that redevelopment timelines are generally long - usually several years. He said it takes time to do things like draft a redevelopment plan, openly and properly involve the public in the adoption process, select properties based on the plan, work with developers, etc. Mr. Gillespie added that Windsor recently passed a referendum targeted for one property that had already been identified, and the project still took 2 years to complete. Mr. Gillespie distributed copies of the flyer mailed out last year for the open space referendum.

8. **Additional Information Requests and Topics for Future Meetings** - Mr. Kuckro said that the August 1st meeting would be a good time to review its list of upcoming tasks and timelines. Mr. Gillespie volunteered to draft the list for the meeting. Mr. Kuckro said that a task to add to the list is for the Agency to meet soon with the Planning and Zoning Commission to encourage them to adopt the Silas Deane zoning overlay.

Mr. Kuckro asked Mr. Gillespie if there is information available on how much a town typically gains for the expenditure it makes on redevelopment. Mr. Gillespie said that there is no good data available that makes a comprehensive review and evaluation. He said that there are case studies on how much money was spent on certain types of redevelopment and what was the outcome. However, the efforts vary too widely to allow meaningful comparison. Redevelopment efforts can include any or all of options such as traffic improvements, tax abatements, property purchase, etc. Mr. Gillespie noted that the Agency's previous presentation to the Town Council included reasonable projections, but that is the best one can provide. He also said that he will check with other Connecticut towns for more examples.

Mr. Thompson said that he believes most voters will recognize the value of the basic premise - that the cost of encouraging redevelopment is offset over the long term by reduced taxes. He said he also believes people will understand that the town needs to act quickly to take advantage of the new opportunity presented by the State redevelopment legislation. While acting quickly, Mr. Thompson said the town must be careful not to put all of its funding into one, big project that citizens may perceive, or may actually become, a "sweetheart deal" for a developer, in addition to the increased risk associated with spending on one project.

Mr. Gillespie distributed copies of the Silas Deane Master Plan. Mr. Kuckro suggested that pages 30 and 31 from the Silas Deane Master Plan could be made part of the presentation at the August 6th public hearing. Doing so would tie their current efforts back to the good work done previously by the EDIC, and raise awareness of the need for adoption of the overlay zone.

9. **Next Meeting Date** - August 1, 2007 at 5:00 pm. (regularly scheduled meeting).

10. **Correspondence** - none.

11. **Call to Adjourn** - Mr. Camilliere motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m., Mr. Thompson seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan  
Agency Recording Secretary