

Minutes
Redevelopment Agency
Wednesday, September 19, 2007
5:00 pm - Town Hall
Town Manager's Conference Room

1. **Call to Order** - Chairman Lee Kuckro called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.
2. **Roll Call/Attendance** - Members in attendance: Lee Kuckro - Chair, Daniel Camilliere - Vice Chair, Joseph Soja, and Michael Zaleski. Also in attendance: Town Planner/Economic Development Manager, Peter Gillespie.

Members absent: Paul Thompson

3. **Public Comments** - Tony Homicki, 201 Cumberland Avenue. Mr. Homicki said that he is a founding member of a political action committee that called Wethersfield Investment Now, or "WIN". There are two other founding members, Tom Grotke and Tom Dean. He said that WIN has been formed with a short term, focused agenda to support passage of the upcoming redevelopment referendum question. Mr. Homicki said that WIN will have a checking account open soon and will be accepting donations. He said that WIN plans to place signage around town and may also create a website.
4. **Approval of Minutes** - The minutes from the last meeting (September 5, 2007) were not available.
5. **Referendum Status** - Mr. Gillespie distributed copies of the explanatory text approved by the State Elections Enforcement Commission. The same text had been submitted to the Town Council this past Monday. The Town Council approved the text without any changes. Mr. Gillespie said that the State Elections Commission deleted from the text the comparison of commercial tax revenues in Wethersfield and other towns. Mr. Soja said that he did not understand why it was removed, because it is factual information that Wethersfield has a low percentage of commercial tax revenue compared to other towns.

Mr. Gillespie said that standard procedure for explanatory text is to mail a copy to each household in town. He said the cost would be about \$10,000 and come out of the Redevelopment Agency's budget. He said a less expensive alternative would be to place an insert in a publication like Wethersfield Life, but coverage would be less comprehensive. Mr. Camilliere said that he believes many people in town are not aware of the upcoming referendum, and recommended that the explanatory text be accompanied by a cover letter from the Agency Chair, Mr. Kuckro. Mr. Gillespie said that the only information that can be sent is the explanatory text approved by the State Elections Commission.

6. **Public Information Strategies** - Mr. Soja said that Julie Montinieri expressed interest to him in having a presentation about the referendum made to the PTO's. Mr. Kuckro asked Mr. Gillespie to look into putting onto the Town's website the Agency's Powerpoint presentation to the made Town Council. Mr. Gillespie said he would check whether it is allowable or if it is prohibited as an expenditure of public finds on advocacy for the referendum.

Mr. Kuckro asked if any of the members were planning to attend school parent group meetings such as PTOs to make presentations on the referendum. Mr. Zaleski and Mr. Soja both volunteered to contact these groups about making presentations. Mr. Kuckro said that he plans to attend the October 4th meeting of the Chamber of Commerce to make a presentation. He said that the Town cannot make copies of any materials for any of these presentations, as it would be an expenditure of public funds. The host group must make its own copies, or Agency members can make copies at their own expense or other arrangement. Several other upcoming meetings were discussed as possible venues for presentations. Mr. Kuckro will be attending the September 26th meeting of the Town Land Use Boards and Commissions; Mr. Soja and Mr. Camilliere will attend the October 18th meeting of the Senior Citizens Advocacy Group; and Mr. Thompson will attend the next

monthly meeting of the volunteer firefighters.

Mr. Gillespie said that a request had been made to the Town under the Freedom of Information Act for a map of the area encompassed by the referendum question. He said the request was made by Mr. Ken Sokolowski, and included that the map be in a reproducible form, and include enough detail to show property boundaries. Mr. Gillespie said that the Town does not have a map, so the Town is not obligated to produce one. He said the Town is leaning toward providing one anyway, because the Town has sometimes in the past produced such maps on request. Mr. Kuckro expressed his concern that such information could be used to increase the fears of property owners about what the Town would do if the referendum passed. Mr. Kuckro said the fact is that referendum leaves property owners in control of their own property, and only sets up a process for the Town to consider spending money to redevelop commercial property in a certain area.

Mr. Kuckro said he is meeting next week with the editor of Wethersfield Life, and has also written to Tom Condon of the Hartford Courant. He said Mr. Condon may be interested in the referendum since he is an advocate of smart growth. Mr. Gillespie said that Mr. Condon may also be interested because Wethersfield's referendum comes at a time when fewer towns are pursuing redevelopment this way.

7. **Additional Information Requests and Topics for Future Meetings** - Mr. Gillespie reported that a subcommittee has been formed to discuss the next steps to take with the Town's Silas Deane Master planning process. He said the subcommittee consists of members from the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Design Review Advisory Committee, the Economic Development and Improvement Commission, and the Redevelopment Agency. Mr. Gillespie said that the subcommittee has met twice so far, and will meet next on October 9th. The subcommittee believes it will have its recommendations ready around the time of the referendum.
8. **Next Meeting Date** - October 3, 2007 (agenda said Oct. 2?) at 5:00 pm. (regularly scheduled meeting).
9. **Correspondence** - Mr. Gillespie said that he had received a letter from Robert Polaner, the ombudsman from the State. Mr. Polaner is the former first selectman of Durham, and is interested in meeting with the Agency about regional redevelopment issues. Mr. Kuckro said that he did not see a need for a meeting soon, and the Agency could consider doing so after the referendum.
10. **Call to Adjourn** - Mr. Camilliere motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 p.m., Mr. Zaleski seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan
Agency Recording Secretary