

**Minutes**  
**Redevelopment Agency**  
**Wednesday, October 17, 2007**  
**5:00 pm - Town Hall**  
**Town Manager's Conference Room**

1. **Call to Order** - Chairman Lee Kuckro called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.
2. **Roll Call/Attendance** - Members in attendance: Lee Kuckro - Chair, Daniel Camilliere - Vice Chair, Joseph Soja, Paul Thompson and Michael Zaleski. Also in attendance: Town Council Liaison, Martin Walsh; Town Manager, Bonnie Therrien; and Town Planner/Economic Development Manager, Peter Gillespie.

Members absent: none.

3. **Public Comments** - Tony Homicki, 201 Cumberland Avenue. Mr. Homicki said that he is a member of the political action committee "Wethersfield Investment Now". WIN has placed around town some signs supporting passage of the referendum question. He said he felt redevelopment is important given the loss of Northeast Utilities, and the long-time vacancies at the former Fun Zone, the Weight Watcher's building, and other properties. He said his conservative estimate of lost tax revenue from these and other properties is in the range of \$300,000 to \$400,000 per year.
4. **Approval of Minutes** - [October 3, 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. **Referendum Status** - Ms. Therrien said that the Pitkin Community Center will be the voting location on Election Day for people that normally go to the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center. The change was the result of the recent fire at the Keeney Center.
6. **Public Information Strategies** - The members discussed a number of instances of incorrect information circulating about the referendum. A recent article in the Wethersfield Life incorrectly noted that the cost to a typical homeowner would be about \$1,000 per year. The cost will not be more than \$66 per year according to the latest figures from the Town Finance Director.

Some homeowners living near Silas Deane Highway have been approached by people going door-to-door with warnings that their home will be taken because it is within 1000 feet of the Highway. This is not correct because there are town ordinances and state laws in place now that prohibit the Town from taking residential property, and the referendum cannot change that.

The members discussed ways to get correct information out to the public, including mailing the explanatory text earlier than planned. The consensus was that it should be mailed as soon as possible, instead of timing it to arrive about one week before Election Day.

The members also discussed holding a public meeting before Election Day, and tentatively settled on October 30th, at the Pitkin Community Center at 7:00 PM. Mr. Zaleski volunteered to draft a press release, because there would be no cost to worry about, and Ms. Therrien said that she would clarify with the State Elections Enforcement Commission whether the Town can spend money on a mailing. The members discussed ideas to ensure a meeting format that would comply with the State law and allow equal time for opposing opinions. The members agreed that they would make a short, summary presentation at the beginning, and leave the rest of the time open for the public.

Ms. Therrien said that one of the issues raised at the last Town Council meeting was whether the Town would create too much debt because bonding will be needed soon for renovation projects at Hanmer Elementary and Wethersfield High Schools. Ms. Therrien said that she has a debt analysis that shows the Town is at the low

end of the range of typical town debt, and can afford more bonding for redevelopment and school projects.

The members also recounted complaints that they have heard over the years about too many "dollar stores" in Town, and their negative affect on home values. Mr. Zaleski said that having a redevelopment planning process and funding in place would finally give the Town some control over what types of businesses located here. Mr. Kuckro said that redeveloping vacant properties is important to keeping home values up.

7. **Additional Information Requests and Topics for Future Meetings** - None.

8. **Next Meeting Dates:**

- **Special Meeting** (tentative): Referendum Public Information Meeting - October 30th, Pitkin Community Center, 7:00 PM
- **Regular Meeting:** November 7, 2007 at 5:00 PM

9. **Correspondence** - none.

10. **Call to Adjourn** - Mr. Soja motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 p.m., Mr. Zaleski seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan  
Agency Recording Secretary