

WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

WINDHAM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

Tuesday, October 1, 2013 - 7:00 P.M



1. Call to Order

Mayor Eldridge called the Town of Windham Town Council meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Town Council members present: Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge, Charles Krich, Tony Fantoli, Tom DeVivo, Lorraine McDevitt, N. Joseph Underwood, Kevin Donohue, Mark Doyle, Dawn Niles and Christel Donahue.

Arnaldo Rivera was absent.

Matt Vertefeuille was also in attendance in the absence of Town Manager Neal Beets.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Eldridge led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment

Pam Viens, Willimantic taxpayer/Agent for WALA, asked the Council several questions regarding the rules surrounding the Housing Code and she provided them with a copy of her questions. She also questioned the process for filing a complaint and noted she was unable to locate any forms to do so. In addition Mrs. Viens asked why someone was permitted to sit on multiple Commissions.

Bernie D'Auteuil, 168 Walnut Street, Willimantic, noted there were several streetlights out and feels it is a Public Safety issue. He stated he has spoken to Matt Vertefeuille on the matter. He also shared his concerns with the parking problems in Town and would like the Traffic Authority to hold meetings when they are more convenient for people to attend.

Joel Meyers, Willimantic resident and landlord, noted the Town had only met once with the landlords regarding the Housing Code issues. He doesn't think the Town administration is working in the best interest of the Town. He is looking forward to a new administration coming in and hopes they will sit down with the landlords to come up with a solution that works for everyone.

Jeff Viens, Willimantic taxpayer, spoke about the housing market in Windham and surrounding areas. He gave a few statistics and noted he was glad to see the information out there.



James Flores, Willimantic, questioned what the chain of command was and how the person was chosen to take the place of the Town Manager in his absence. Mr. Flores also stated he would like an office in Town Hall so he could hold office hours to meet with residents if he was elected to the Town Council.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, stated he would like tenants to have input in the Housing Code Ordinance when it is drafted. He believes tenants are afraid to voice their concerns.

Kevin Hoxie, Willimantic, spoke about the parking problems in Town and believes it is a safety issue when emergency vehicles cannot get through the streets.

Charles Kratt, Monticello Street, Willimantic, noted the earlier comments from Mr. Viens as well as the parking issues in Town. He believes ECSU provides an economic opportunity for the Town. He would also like the Town to work with the landlords and think of them as an ally not an enemy.

Mark Doyle, spoke as the Chairman of The Bottom Line Party. He congratulated and thanked Patty Spruance, Town Clerk, for her leadership and ethical stand to keep The Bottom Line Party on the ballot. He also stated nobody on The Bottom Line believes anyone locally had any involvement and this snafu is at the Secretary of the States level. He also thanked his fellow Chairmen, Dennis and Mike, who stated they are looking forward to a fair and open election, per tonight's newspaper.

Lorraine McDevitt, noted Judge Gaucher wanted to speak on the naming of Caisse Park and she asked for the time and place of the meeting that would be addressing this.

4. Town Council Comment

Dawn Niles stated the WCFD was having their annual Memorial Service Sunday at 2:00 PM to honor past and present fire fighters. She also stated WFD was having their Memorial Service at noontime on Sunday.

Niles also mentioned to Mayor Eldridge, Matt Vertefeuille and Charles Krich that she had been approached by John Powell about putting speed limit signs at Windham Center School and North Windham School. Niles noted the emails between Mr. Powell and the Town Manager were not very helpful and stated she had spoken to DOT herself. She stated the DOT told her the signs that were there were non-conforming and gave her the current sign regulations. She explained the process to get the signs and urged someone to take care of this for the safety of the children.

In addition, Niles provided the Council with notes from the FOI workshop she attended and gave them a brief overview of the session. She also noted Mr. Hennick was willing to consider giving a presentation in Windham and there is no cost for a municipality.

Lorraine McDevitt addressed Henry Crane's question regarding tenant involvement in the Housing Code Ordinance and stated she was told landlords are very happy to have tenants involved.

Kevin Donohue noted the list of questions from Pam Viens is very helpful and stated it would be addressed in the Administration and Finance Committee. He also believes the

parking issue is a Service District issue that has been going on for some time and should be dealt with. Mr. Donohue also noted there will be a Public Hearing tomorrow night at 7:00 PM to discuss the naming of the Park followed by a meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee.

Mayor Eldridge stated for years the parking issue has been looked at with several ideas being suggested. He noted it was a tough issue and impacts many people who want to park in front of their house.

Tom DeVivo stated the Willimantic Service District Council will have the parking issue on their October agenda. He agrees we need a solution however he does not believe it is only a Willimantic but a Windham problem.

Dawn Niles agrees the parking issue is a Town of Windham issue and noted the Public Safety Committee tried to address it for two years ago. She explained the Traffic Authority was also involved in the discussions and parking on opposite sides of the street had been suggested.

Mayor Eldridge thanked Dawn Niles for attending the FOI workshop and providing noted for the Council. He noted the Town had had an FOI workshop approximately six years ago and thought it would be helpful to have another. He asked Dawn for a contact name at FOI.

5. Adoption of Minutes

a. Discuss and possibly move to adopt the minutes for the September 17, 2013, Town Council Meeting.

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to adopt the minutes for the September 17, 2013, Town Council Meeting. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Resignations.

None

7. Appointments.

None

8. Presentations & Special Reports.

None

9. Mayor's Report

Mayor Eldridge reported he had attended the following events: Eastern Center to meet the new President of the college system, the opening of the new salon on High Street and the DAR celebration at the Windham Green for the planting of the sapling of the Charter Oak. Mayor Eldridge noted Dawn, Christel, Arnaldo, Kevin as well as Murphy Sewall had attended some of the events as well.

Dawn Niles added to the Mayor's Report the event by WAIM at the Community Garden and the event at the Julio de Burgos Park which she had attended. Krich also attended the Community Garden event.

10. Town Manager's Report

Matt Vertefeuille, Acting Town Manager, reported that OSHA had visited Town Hall, the Water Department, Sewer Department, Public Works, Recreation Department, Public Library and Animal Control last week and found very few violations. He noted a report would be available from OSHA within 6 to 8 weeks.

Vertefeuille also reported he had attended the Medical Marijuana workshop and stated he would be happy to give a full report at the Committee meetings if requested.

11. Discussion and Review of Communications

None

12. Resolutions and Ordinances.

None

13. Reports of Committees, Boards and Commissions

a. Administration, Finance, Health, and Human Services Committee

K. Donohue reported the Committee will meet tomorrow after the Public Hearing. He noted the Housing Code changes and Textile and History Museum lease were the major issues in front of the Committee.

b. Public Safety, Public Works, Culture, and Recreation Committee

Krich reported the Committee was very busy and had a full agenda. He noted they had discussed a number of issues including creating a new ordinance for a permanent building committee, the operation of the EOC during storms, revising the local bidder's preference from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000, and sidewalks from Rte 195 from Ash Street to Lauter Park.

Krich also reported the Committee has asked the Town Manager to bring to the Council a lease for a portion of the Public Works property that can be used by a company doing work there to store equipment in its garage for \$2,000 a month.

In addition, Krich reported the Committee discussed the decorative lighting on Main Street, a recommendation to purchase a wreath for the holiday season for approximately \$500 which he would like added to tonight's agenda, the idea of a dog park, and the truck traffic. Krich also noted at the Community Garden event he was informed of the lack of a port o potty at the skate park.

c. Capital Planning Action Group

Doyle reported the Committee had met a week ago and was disappointed with the information brought forth. He noted department heads gave more of a wish list than actual plans for capital improvement items. Doyle stated the Committee would like more definitive plans including the cost and time frame of each project so they can prioritize and evaluate each project. He reported the Committee will meet on the 28th and Webster Bank will be there to give a presentation on how capital improvement plans can be funded

d. Magnet School & Natchaug Roof Building Committee

DeVivo reported the Magnet School dedication ceremony is scheduled for October 11th at 10:00 AM however in light of the government shutdown the

person scheduled to speak at the dedication may not be available. He noted there will be no public tours at that ceremony because of school being in session.

DeVivo also reported the Committee is on Day 2 projects and is still on budget. He noted no huge expenditures or unanticipated cost.

DeVivo also reported the Natchaug School Roof project was moving along better than anticipated. He noted there has been review of the resolution that created the authority to work on the Natchaug roof and the Town Meeting and bond to perhaps assist if there is any funding let over with the ceiling repairs done by the damage from the roof. He reported there has been discussion to look into our general liability insurance coverage. He stated if the Council desires the Committee did agree to be an Interim Standing Committee to get started on the High School Roof. He noted the Committee had also discussed the permanent building committee which a couple of members are interested in serving on.

In addition, DeVivo reported there will be a Willimantic Service District meeting on October 8th at 7:00 PM.

14. Old Business:

None

MOTION: Niles MOVED, Krich seconded, to add to the agenda 15d, Discussion and possible action to purchase a new wreath for the Town Hall at a cost of no more than \$500. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED.

MOTION: DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to take Items 15a, 15b & 15d as one Item. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

15. New Business

- a. **Discuss and possibly move to approve the award of a contract for window replacement in the Public Safety Complex to New England Glass and Mirror for \$28,492, as recommended by the Public Safety, Public Works, Culture, and Recreation Committee.**
- b. **Discuss and possibly move to approve the conversion of the Lauter Park baseball field to a soccer field, and to rest the soccer field at Shetucket Plains Park for one season, as recommended by the Public Safety, Public Works, Culture, and Recreation Committee.**
- c. **Discuss and possible move to approve the development of areas for cremains in the Windham Center and New Willimantic Cemeteries, with no permanent flowers or statues, as recommended by the Public Safety, Public Works, Culture, and Recreation Committee.**
- d. **Discussion and possible action to purchase a new wreath for the Town Hall at a cost of no more than \$500.**

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to approve the following:

15a. the award of a contract for window replacement in the Public Safety Complex to New England Glass and Mirror for \$28,492, as recommended by the Public Safety, Public Works, Culture, and Recreation Committee.

15b. the conversion of the Lauter Park baseball field to a soccer field, and to rest the soccer field at Shetucket Plains Park for one season, as recommended by the Public Safety, Public Works, Culture, and Recreation Committee.

15d. to purchase of a new wreath for the Town Hall at a cost of no more than \$500.

All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- c. Discuss and possible move to approve the development of areas for cremains in the Windham Center and New Willimantic Cemeteries, with no permanent flowers or statues, as recommended by the Public Safety, Public Works, Culture, and Recreation Committee.**

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to approve the development of areas for cremains in the Windham Center and New Willimantic Cemeteries, with no permanent flowers or statues, as recommended by the Public Safety, Public Works, Culture, and Recreation Committee. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

16. Future Agenda Items

None

17. Adjournment

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to adjourn the Town of Windham Regular Town Council meeting to order at 8:09 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Barbara J. McKinney
Clerk of the Town Council