

WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Windham Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium, 2nd Floor
Tuesday, September 2, 2014 - 7:00 P.M.



1. Call to Order.

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

Town Council members present: Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge, Charles Krich, Tony Fantoli, Tom DeVivo, Lorraine McDevitt, Joseph Underwood, Mark Doyle (arrived at 7:28 PM), Michael Lessard, James Flores and Charlotte Patros

Christel Donahue was excused.

Town Manager Neal Beets was also in attendance.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Eldridge led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment.

Dawn Niles, North Windham, Windham Democratic Town Committee Chair, spoke in support of the appointment of James Wright as a regular member of the Board of Assessment Appeals and of the appointment of Jose Cruz as a regular member of the Zoning Board of Appeals. She also noted the Democratic Town Committee had voted unanimously for both appointments. Ms. Niles also spoke about HeartSafe, regarding holding AED/CPR classes both in English & Spanish and noted quotes were submitted to the Town Manager and Councilmember Krich for the cost of an AED.

Joe Comeau, Windham resident and owner of 798 Main Street spoke about the Path Academy and the recent shooting involving one of their students. He also noted his concerns with parking and security on Main Street. Mr. Comeau's son Craig was also present during his comments.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, commended the Police Department for their work in handling the shooting. He also spoke about Housing Code and is anxious to share his story on one former landlord entering his apartment and the need for chain locks on the door.

Cheryl Preston, owner of A Cupcake for Later, spoke of the recent shooting and shared her concerns regarding the incident. She also spoke about parking problems and the safety of people on Main Street.

Pam Viens, Columbia resident and Windham taxpayer, noted WALA had pulled the lawsuit that had been filed against the Town regarding the Housing Code and asked the Town Council to listen to the landlords. She believes the Code Enforcement Officers are



overzealous and stated there were never any problems when the Access Agency did the inspections.

Jim Preston, firefighter for 18 years and resident of South Windham, shared his concerns with the cleanliness of Main Street and believes it has been deteriorating for the last 10 years. He also believes there is a need for foot patrol on Main Street and that the Police shouldn't only be seen on the street when there is a problem.

Jeff Viens, Columbia resident and Windham taxpayer, agreed with the comments made by his wife and stated WALA is prepared to move forward with another lawsuit if necessary.

Lorraine McDevitt, commented on the students being back and the parties going on again. She stated she will be keeping the Police very busy if the parties continue and noted the many messages she has received from her neighbors.

4. Town Council Comment.

James Flores noted on September 16th the CEO of the Path Academy will be at the Town Council meeting to address the community.

Tom DeVivo reminded everyone that the Willimantic Service District Council will be holding a Public Forum on September 9th to hear comments and ideas regarding parking problems. He stated the WSD was working hard with the Town to find solutions, whether it's parking kiosks, meters or some other means to address the parking problems and noted positions had been cut from the budget for parking. DeVivo also noted parking is a problem Town wide and not just in the Service District.

5. Adoption of Minutes. Discuss and possibly move to adopt the minutes for:

- a. the August 5, 2014, regular Town Council meeting.**
- b. the August 19, 2014, special Town Council meeting regarding the Town Charter.**

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to adopt the minutes for the August 5, 2014, regular Town Council meeting. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to adopt the minutes for the August 19, 2014, special Town Council meeting regarding the Town Charter. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Resignations.

- a. Robert Woolf as a regular member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.**
- b. James Oliver, IV, as a regular member of the Board of Assessment Appeals.**
- c. Jose Cruz as an alternate member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.**

Mayor Eldridge noted Robin Dixon-Rouse had resigned from the Windham Historic District Commission.

Noted

MOTION: DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to add under appointments, Item j, Robin Dixon-Rouse as a regular member of the Ethics Commission. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Appointments.

- a. Appointing Donald E. White as an alternate member of the Senior Center Advisory Board with a term to expire on October 1, 2016.
- b. Reappointing Victor Rayhall as a regular member of the Senior Center Advisory Board with a term to expire on October 1, 2016.
- c. Reappointing Eugene Light, Sr., as a regular member of the Senior Center Advisory Board with a term to expire on October 1, 2016.
- d. Reappointing Robert Greenleaf as a regular member of the Senior Center Advisory Board with a term to expire on October 1, 2016.
- e. Appointing Mary Lou DeVivo as regular member of the Willimantic Library Board with a term to expire on December 2, 2014.
- f. Appointing Delia Berlin as regular member of the Willimantic Library Board with a term to expire on December 2, 2014.
- g. Appointing James Wright as a regular member of the Board of Assessment Appeals with a term to expire on November 3, 2015.
- h. Appointing Jose Cruz as a regular member of the Zoning Board of Appeals with a term to expire on November 3, 2015.
- i. James Boyle as a regular member of the Conservation, Open Space, and Agriculture Commission with a term to expire on January 1, 2016.
- j. Robin Dixon-Rouse as a regular member of the Ethics Commission.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to appoint/reappoint 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 7f, 7g, 7h, 7i and 7j. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Underwood MOVED, Krich seconded, to appoint 7e. All were in favor except DeVivo who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

8. Presentations & Special Reports.

None

9. Mayor's Report.

Mayor Eldridge thanked James Flores and the Recreation Department for their efforts with the backpack program in which 280 children received backpacks.

Mayor Eldridge also reported the Farmers Market at Jillson Square was a great event.

He also noted a Professor from China had stopped to visit him and stated the Professor was very surprised he was able to just walk in and talk to the Mayor. The Professor explained that in his country this could not be done.

Mayor Eldridge also reported that he, Neida and Neal had met with Chris Leone from the Path Academy and explained they are all working very hard to address the parking issues.

In addition, Mayor Eldridge addressed the recent shooting incident and noted he disagrees with Mr. Preston regarding the comments he made about Main Street and believes Main Street looks great.

10. Town Manager's Report.

No report

11. Discussion and Review of Communications.

None

12. Resolutions and Ordinances.

None

13. Reports of Committees, Boards and Commissions.

a. Administration, Finance, Economic Development, Health, and Human Service Committee. (Councilmember DeVivo)

DeVivo reported the Committee will be meeting on September 15th. He also noted prior to the meeting there will be a Public Hearing at 6:00 PM to discuss the Housing Code.

b. Magnet School Building Committee and/or the Windham High School Roof Building Committee. (Councilmember DeVivo)

DeVivo reported the next meeting is on September 10th at 6:30 PM at the Barrows School. He stated the Committee will be discussing the drainage issues and the installation of the canopy. He also stated a presentation will be given on the Solar System being used.

DeVivo also reported the trailers at Windham High School parking lots will be cleared out before Mr. Haddad's event.

In addition, DeVivo reported the punch list at Natchaug School is nearly completed and the ED49F is being prepared. He also noted he had attended the School Building, Planning and Design meeting and they are discussing ways to enhance the educational opportunities at the High School and are looking for solutions for the parking issues at the Kramer Building.

c. Downtown Parking Garage Urban Act Grant Request. (Councilmember DeVivo)

No report

d. Public Works, Public Safety, Environment, Recreation, and Culture Committee. (Councilmember Krich)

Krich reported the Committee had met and as a result Item 15a was placed on tonight's agenda.

Krich also reported the Town had foreclosed on property at 378 Jackson Street and 9 Bolivia Street due to code violations and he explained how the Committee would like to proceed with regards to both properties.

In addition, Krich reported Neida had given the Committee a tour of the Town Hall showing the recent renovations that were made. He also noted they had looked at the 3rd floor to see what the possibilities were for renovations.

Krich also answered questions from the Council.

- e. **Long-Range Capital Improvement Tri-Board. (Councilmember Doyle)**
Doyle reported the Capital Improvement Tri-Board has completed their work and submitted their recommendations to the Town Council. He noted the School Board has revoked their long range plan for the High School and are now revisiting it. Doyle stated he would like the Town Council to take some formal action on what has already been voted on.

MOTION: DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to move Item 15a up on the agenda to follow Item 13e. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

15. New Business.

- a. **Discuss and possibly move to approve a contract for \$43,796 to purchase and install new lights at the Recreation Park tennis courts, to purchase and install new double-lamp lights near the Garden on the Bridge, and to relocate the existing single-lamp lights from the Garden on the Bridge to Memorial Park, as recommended by the Public Works Committee.**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to approve a contract for \$43,796 to purchase and install new lights at the Recreation Park tennis courts, to purchase and install new double-lamp lights near the Garden on the Bridge, and to relocate the existing single-lamp lights from the Garden on the Bridge to Memorial Park, as recommended by the Public Works Committee. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

14. Old Business.

- a. **Discuss and possibly move to convene an executive session:**
 - i. **with the Town Attorney, Town Manager, and Human Services Director regarding the acquisition and sale of property connected to the Senior Center Project;**
 - ii. **with the Town Attorney, Town Manager, and Code Compliance Director regarding the lawsuit brought by the Windham Area Landlord Association.**
 - iii. **with the Town Attorney regarding the Town Manager's evaluation.**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to convene executive session at 7:49 PM for Items 14ai, 14aii and 14aiii. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to come out of executive session at 9:03 PM. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to add to the agenda Item 15b, a motion to postpone the September 16th Town Meeting on the Senior

Center indefinitely. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to postpone indefinitely a Town Meeting at Town Hall on the purchase and sale agreement for the Senior Center. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

No Action was taken on 14aaii or 14aiii.

15. New Business.

- a. Discuss and possibly move to approve a contract for \$43,796 to purchase and install new lights at the Recreation Park tennis courts, to purchase and install new double-lamp lights near the Garden on the Bridge, and to relocate the existing single-lamp lights from the Garden on the Bridge to Memorial Park, as recommended by the Public Works Committee.**

Item 15a was moved up on the agenda to follow Item 13e.

- b. Motion to postpone the September 16th Town Meeting on the Senior Center indefinitely.**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to postpone indefinitely the September 16th Town Meeting on the Senior Center. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

16. Future Agenda Items

None

17. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, spoke about the need for chain locks on doors and his experience with a former landlord. He also noted he was very happy with the service by our current Housing Code Enforcement Officers.

Jeff Viens, Columbia resident and Windham taxpayer, stated he would like to see the Town Council at the Public Hearing on Monday, September 15th.

James Flores, spoke about prejudice and racism regarding the school budget and latino voters. He also gave statistics for the recent referenda regarding the number of people who voted.

DeVivo asked for clarification on the Board of Finance meeting dates.

18. Adjournment

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to adjourn the Town of Windham Town Council regular meeting at 9:13 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Barbara J. McKinney
Clerk of the Town Council