

WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

WINDHAM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

Tuesday, September 20, 2011 - 7:00 P.M.



1. Call to Order

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

Town Council members present: Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge, Mike Lessard N. Joseph Underwood, Kevin Donohue, Teresa Santucci, Lorraine McDevitt, Arnaldo Rivera and Erika Haynes.

Town Council members excused: Charles Krich, Christel Donahue and Jerry Iazzetta

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

Lori Jeffers, Willimantic, believes the Silverback's are the perfect role model for our youth. She also believes we should sell Kramer and use the proceeds to build a sound and useful building. In addition Ms. Jeffers asked that Tom DeVivo be removed immediately from the Magnet School Building Committee. She feels his email regarding the ground breaking ceremony to her was inappropriate and his grammar was not proper. She also stated she is not happy with the library hours and saluted the Willimantic Police Department for a fine job with the incident on Mansfield Avenue.

Peter DeCarli, 417 Prospect Street, Willimantic, thanked the Town Council for putting up with them and especially thanked the Tri-Board for their support. He stated the initial proposal was for a teen center however because there were so many different activities using the space the proposal was scaled back. He feels it is very important for our kids to have space because they have no Boys/Girls Club or YMCA. He also noted through in kind donations and fund raiser the Club has about \$53,000. He also noted Windham Tech is looking into doing all the electrical work.

Juan Perez, 45 Main Street, Willimantic, thanked Mayor Ernie, Arnaldo and the Rec Department for supporting the Julio Burgos Park. He also stated he was the President of the Boxing Club for 11 yrs of which 5 of those years were at Kramer. He stated there were 100+ kids in the program and they used the space at Kramer at no cost. He feels we should support the Wrestling Club and anything else that helps the youth of our Town. He suggested that we ask a police officer to volunteer to be a mentor in the Silverback Club which in turn may lead to a future police officer from one of our youth. In addition, Mr. Perez stated he and a few other State Commissioners went to different communities

where there is a large Latino population and as a result would be holding a meeting tomorrow at ECSU at 5:30 PM in the Johnson Room where they would be unveiling 5 stamps from the Post Office honoring several figures from the Latino population. He noted several dignitaries would be there and invited all to attend.

Jean deSmet, Willimantic, invited everyone to the Eastern CT Arts Fiesta which was beginning this Saturday and would be running through October. She noted several different galleries would be opening including the Willi Brew Crew, Juried Arts Gallery, Art Attack, Peace Projects, Quiet Corner Candle Club and a few others. Ms. deSmet was also disappointed that the Town was cancelling Trick or Treat on Main Street this year. She feels she and Lynn Duval were working on expanding it and are good at finding inexpensive ways to do things. She wondered why they hadn't been notified of the cancellation and would like to discuss this further and come to a resolution. Ms. deSmet believes it is important to support our local businesses.

Shirley Mustard, 266 Walnut Street, thanked the Council for passing the proposal to name the Auditorium for Bruce Bellingham. She stated an event would be taking place Sunday from 3:00 – 5:00 with music and refreshments and invited all to attend. She noted several local restaurants were donating food and our custodian was volunteering his time to work the event. She did ask anyone who would be attending to notify Lynn Duval at 428-7573 who was doing the catering so they have a proper count for food. She noted she was also asked that people attending use the back entrance of the building. Ms. Mustard also noted her children's great grandfather was 1st Selectman in 1896 as well as Chairman of the Building Committee for the Town Hall.

Peter Quercia, 300 Walnut Street, Willimantic, stated there was an informational meeting the day before the referendum. He also stated he has become fearful of the police department who are continually harassing him. He stated he had been to court for 9 counts regarding animals and the \$855 fine was reduced to \$45. He stated he was appealing this because more tickets were issued. Mr. Quercia said he had been told nobody had ever been cited or arrested for having a loose dog at the High School. He also noted because he was standing in front of Town Hall and pushing the walk button he was told he could be arrested so now he pushes the walk button and walks back and forth across the street. He blames the Town Council, Town Manager and the Mayor.

Andrew Gibson, Windham Center stated he was away during the hurricane and a tree had come down knocking down his fence. He explained the Silverback's came in and cleaned up the mess making it possible for Jazz in the Garden to take place. He noted as a result the Silverbacks were asked to be waiters at the event where they did a terrific job. Mr. Gibson encouraged everyone to support the Silverbacks.

Josh Niles, South Windham, stated he was just told the light parade had been cancelled and was told to speak to the Town Council about it. He noted it is about \$1000 for Police and Public Works to shut down the road however he stated only 2 police officers are there at each end of the road and Public Works have never been called. He feels it is a good event that has built up the tree lighting ceremony and it brings people out on Black

Friday. He noted invitations are ready to be sent and would like to know where they are going with the event.

Joe Underwood, read an email on behalf of Dawn Niles regarding cancelling Trick or Treat on Main Street. Ms. Niles is upset with this and thinks handing out candy from trunks of cars is crazy. She questioned the control factor and feels we are doing away with what make Windham a Town who cares.

Charlie Kratt, Monticello Street, Willimantic, supports the Silverbacks and thinks it teaches our kids not only sportsmanship but it teaches them a sense of community. Mr. Kratt is also sorry to hear that Trick or Treat on Main Street has been cancelled.

4. Adoption of Minutes

a. Discussion and possible action to adopt the September 6, 2011 Town Council meeting minutes.

Underwood MOVED, K. Donohue seconded, to adopt the September 6, 2011 Town Council meeting minutes. All were in favor except Rivera and McDevitt who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

5. Resignations

The following resignation was received:

Ken Folan-Board of Education

NOTED

6. Appointments

NONE

7. Presentations & Special Reports

a. Update on Trunk or Treat at Jillson Square

Tara Risley, Recreation Director, explained the reasons for moving away from Trick or Treat on Main Street and the decision to offer a safe alternative called Trunk or Treat. Ms. Risley noted after speaking with local businesses only 7 were interested in the event and only 4 of the 7 had committed to handing out candy. She stated after contacting other recreation departments she found Trunk or Treat was a safe and successful alternative. Ms. Risley explained the way the event worked and noted money would be saved by not incurring overtime costs for Police and Public Works to close Main Street. She also noted the Trick or Treat Flashlight Egg Hunt would still take place. Ms. Risley answered questions from the Council.

8. Mayor's Report

Mayor Eldridge reported he had attended the fire fighters annual banquet where recognition was given to our fire fighters for the Clark Street fire. He thanked Acting Chief Marc Scriviner for inviting him.

Mayor Eldridge also reported the ground breaking ceremony for the Magnet School took place and thanked his wife, Anita, for attending and speaking for him in his absence.

He also thanked Representative Susan Johnson, Senator Don Williams and CL&P for holding a quorum on Storm Irene.

In addition, Mayor Eldridge reported a movie was being filmed in Town Hall, a photo exhibit was being set up in the Town Hall Auditorium showing what Main Street was like and former Mayors were being contacted to speak as part of the Arts Fiesta, and he also thanked the Silverbacks for the wonderful job they did at the Jazz in the Garden event.

9. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Beets gave special recognition to Jesse Collins from WILI radio for the excellent media coverage he gave to the Town over the years. Mr. Beets noted Mr. Collins was moving on to a career in the healthcare industry with Caremark out of Rhode Island who operates the CVS chain of pharmacies. He also thanked Mr. Collins and wished him well.

10. Discussion and Review of Communications

NONE

11. Resolutions and Ordinances

NONE

12. Reports of Committees, Boards and Commissions

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

Mr. K. Donohue reported the Sub Committee had met and was moving forward with some smaller items before them. He also asked that Charter Revision be placed on the agenda for the next Town Council meeting. He noted the Sub Committee had voted unanimously to move that forward to Town Council. Mr. K. Donohue stated they had suggestions regarding membership and topic recommendations. He also reported the Sub Committee would like to recommend to the Council on how to create a vision of a path to our future. He noted they feel large decisions regarding our Towns future, are best made with proper planning.

b. Public Safety, Recreation and Public Works Sub Committee

Mrs. McDevitt reported there was a tentative meeting scheduled for next week.

c. Tri-Board

Mr. Carey, Chairman of the Tri-Board reported the Tri-Board had met last week and with regards to the Silverbacks voted 6-1 to send to the Council a proposal for consideration. Mr. Carey stated he hopes the Council has the courtesy to open discussion on the proposal and vote on the proposal. He stated the proposal charges them \$1.00 a year and it takes the security deposit down from \$5000 to \$500. He noted the Tri-Board was put in place by a Resolution from this Council and hopes they get some cooperation from them.

13. Old Business

a. Discussion and to consider interim use permit for Silverbacks Wrestling Club for Kramer cafeteria area.

Santucci MOVED, Underwood seconded, to accept the Tri-Boards recommendation as presented. All were in favor except K. Donohue and Eldridge who abstained and Haynes who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

14. New Business

a. Discussion regarding strategic plan for Kramer building.

K. Donohue MOVED, Haynes seconded, that the Town Manager will put together at his discretion a task force to study the future use of town space focusing on Kramer but not limited to Kramer. This task force will report to the Town Council and will deliver a report with recommended use of and funding for these spaces. All were in favor except McDevitt, Santucci and Underwood who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

15. Future Agenda Items

Charter Revision

16. Citizens and Delegations

Teri Santucci, Windham Street, stated the Council created the Tri-Board and gave them specific things to do. She noted they had referred the issue of the Silverbacks and the use of Kramer to them and they had come back with a recommendation. She also feels out of respect to the Chair of the Tri-Board he should have been informed of the proposal changes and given a copy before he had to speak. She would like to keep the communication open.

Peter DeCarli, 417 Prospect Street, thanked everyone and stated through this whole process if he insulted anyone he apologizes. He felt he was doing what was best for the kids and stated the Council wouldn't be sorry for their decision. He also thanked Lorraine for her donation in her daughter's memory.

Lori Jeffers, Willimantic, questioned the fire money that the Board of Selectmen gave to the Board of Education for Kramer and what it was used for. She also asked that during Citizens and Delegations if a member of the Council is speaking they go to the microphone especially when reading a letter from someone. Ms. Jeffers also questioned the garbage contract and stated there is garbage all over the streets. She also suggested when the next Council is seated they eliminate the sub committees completely and that the Town should speak to ECSU about the Kramer building. Ms. Jeffers also questioned the status of Natchaug School.

Nick Poulin, South Ridge Drive, Willimantic, thanked the Council and stated he had been wrestling since he was 8 yrs old and it was a great club.

17. Adjournment

K. Donohue MOVED, Santucci seconded, to adjourn the Town of Windham Town Council meeting at 8:22 P.M. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

**Barbara J. McKinney
Clerk of the Council**