



John L. Salomone
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR STEPHEN WOODS

MINUTES

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Conference Room L-101 Lower Level – Town Hall
7:00 P.M.

April 23, 2013

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Woods at 7:00 p.m.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ROLL CALL

Councilor Borjeson
Councilor Bottalico
Councilor Castelle - absent
Councilor Cohen
Councilor DelBuono
Councilor Klett
Councilor McBride
Councilor Nagel
Mayor Woods

Staff Attendees:

John Salomone, Town Manager
Craig Minor, Town Planner
Dianne Stone, Director Senior Center
Linda Irish-Simpson, Clerk of the Council

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Harry Bolles, 28 (inaudible) Lane: He requested the Town Council give support for the hiring of a land use attorney to defend the Newington Conservation Commission vote of February 28, 2013 to deny the permit of the Newington Walk development. He felt it was very important to have an attorney to defend the Conservation Commission position since Toll Bros. would have experts. He asked the Council to read the minutes of the February 28, 2013 meeting where the commissioners gave their reasons for the denial of the permit. Not hiring an attorney, he felt, would be a disservice and an insult to the Conservation Commission and their efforts to preserve the environment.

Gail Budrejko, 21 Isabelle Terrace: She wanted to encourage the Town to obtain the services of an attorney versed in land use and environmental law to represent Newington against the Toll Bros. appeal.

She indicated the appeal by Toll Bros. was just routine business for them and they had attorneys on staff who were well versed in the issues. The Town needed someone versed in a wide range of litigation in the specialized area of land use and environmental law. Mrs. Budrejko indicated the hiring of additional staff was in the hands of the Mayor and the Town Manager and quoted the Mayor as saying, "he will do what is in the best interests of the Town." She felt the Conservation Commission had determined what was in the best interest of the Town and should now do everything possible to uphold it.

John Bachand, 56 Maple Hill Avenue: He supported the arguments of the other two before him to hire an attorney to defend the Toll Bros. appeal. He had done research on the mountain and found that in 1909 there was a reservoir on the mountain, which gave evidence to the fact that a substantial amount of ground water would exist on the property. Mr. Bachand found a document that stated a 20 x 20 tank was there and would equate to 3,000 gallons per each foot of height and the height was estimated to be between 12' and 16' high. He intended to do further research.

Madeline Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive: She indicated that at the last meeting there was a private meeting between a Councilor and a department head and could not form an opinion on the reporting accuracy. Mrs. Kenny stated she felt when a Councilor took the time to talk to a department head it might be important for the department head attend a Council meeting and discuss the conversation for all to hear.

IV. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor Bottalico thanked Ann Harter for all the information she provided to him on the Police Department. He went through the figures on breakage, which he had been told was \$16k. After reviewing the figures given to him, he found a total breakage of \$238,457. Salaries were \$181,055 different and benefits were \$57,402. Councilor Bottalico was sorry he had not been given the information prior to the budget being finalized and wanted to know if this amount could be taken from the Police Department and put into reserve at this time. He felt the taxpayers were paying for taxes they should not be. Councilor Bottalico asked this item be put on the next Council agenda to be discussed. He expressed concern about members attempting to quiet his requests.

Councilor Klett stated that what Councilor Bottalico referred to was a conversation at the Democrat Town Committee about limiting the amount of time that a department head would spend on a request made by a Council member. Councilor DelBuono explained the essence of the conversation was how much time some requests took and whether or not they were realistic. The agreement was made that if a request was too much for a department head to handle in a timely manner, a conversation would be held with the Councilor to change or modify the request. Councilor Borjeson agreed with Councilor DelBuono's explanation.

Mayor Woods stated he believed that requests from Councilors should go through the Town Manager. The Town Manager would then assign staff to get the information requested.

Councilor DelBuono asked what the status of Churchill Pool was since residents had contacted her about it. John Salomone indicated they were testing to determine where the leak(s) were.

Councilor Nagel asked about the construction going on on Church Street and the signs posted that it would either be closed or difficult to use since it was a major alternate route for people. John Salomone stated it was an MDC project that had to go down quite far to make it a gravity sewer line to relieve back up issues in the area. It was an involved project and traffic control would be needed. MDC would be contacting either by phone or mail all residents in the area to notify them of the work. Councilor Nagel asked Mr. Salomone about the reseeding of grass destroyed around Grandview and the Newington Rehabilitation Center. Mr. Salomone indicated the union had contacted his office and intended to reseed the area from the sidewalk to the street.

V. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS (Action May be Taken)
A. Fair Housing Policy

Councilor Cohen moved the following:

WHEREAS, all American citizens are afforded a right to full and equal housing opportunities in the neighborhood of their choice; and

WHEREAS, State and Federal Fair Housing laws require that all individuals, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, lawful source of income, sexual orientation, or familial status, be given equal access to rental and homeownership opportunities and be allowed to make free choices regarding housing location; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Newington is committed to upholding these laws and realizes that these laws must be supplemented by an Affirmative Statement publicly endorsing the right of all people to full and equal housing opportunities in the neighborhood of their choice;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Newington Town Council hereby endorses a Fair Housing Policy to ensure equal opportunity for all persons to rent, purchase and obtain financing for adequate housing of their choice on a non-discriminatory basis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Manager of the Town of Newington or his/her designated representative is responsible for responding to and assisting any person who alleges to be the victim of any illegal discriminatory housing practices in the Town of Newington.

The motion was seconded by Councilor DelBuono. The motion passed 8 – 0 (Councilor Castelle-absent)

B. Job Description Update: Information Technology Director

John Salomone explained the need for the change from IT Director to Chief Information Officer and a reclassification from A-11 to A-12. The last update to the job description was about 15 years ago. The previous description no longer accurately described the job of the IT Director and felt the new one more accurately described the current and future occupants of the position. Councilor Bottalico asked for the actual salary of the current occupant which was \$101,897. The new range of the salary would be approximately \$10k higher.

Councilor Klett indicated the IT Director was not at the top of his range and questioned why the need to bump him up to another grade. The Town Manager indicated the Town Engineer was an A-12 and the Director of Finance was an A-13. He indicated the proposal before the Council concerned the job description and what the experience needed was and how the job evolved. Councilor Klett was concerned about revising one description and leaving the other department head descriptions alone. Councilor Klett felt in fairness to all department heads the Council should look at all job classifications across the board.

Councilor DelBuono stated the concern was not the current salary but extending the range and the potential of the salary to get to the higher mark. She leaned to leaving the range where it was and just update the job description at present.

Councilor Nagel asked about including as part of the job description the department head being called upon to act as Town Manager when requested. In the past, it had been an informal arrangement and Mr. Salomone wrote it into the description to make it more formal but was not included in other department head job descriptions. In response to a question from Councilor Klett regarding updating of all job descriptions, he indicated they were gradually updated when there was a vacancy or a major change.

Councilor Bottalico asked Mr. Salomone about the need for another HR person and wanted to know if this department head would help in HR or would the need still be there. Mr. Salomone stated this job description had nothing to do with HR.

Councilor Borjeson had an issue with the additional job function as acting Town Manager when other department heads with the same ability were not listed and thought it should be deleted. Mr. Salomone said he had no problem with deleting the wording from the job description. The resolution would be voted on with the final job description deleting the wording regarding acting Town Manager.

Councilor McBride moved the following:

RESOLVED:

The Newington Town Council hereby approves of amendments to the “Classification and Pay Plan” by approving a revised job/position description for the Information Technology Director (A-11) position, to be renamed Chief Information Officer and reclassified to A-12 as recommended by the Town Manager in his capacity as Personnel Director in his memorandum dated April 9, 2013, as amended by the Town Council this day, April 23, 2013.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Cohen. The motion passed 7 – 1 on a roll call vote:
Yes: Councilors Borjeson, Bottalico, Cohen, DelBuono, McBride, Nagel and Mayor Woods
No: Councilor Klett

VI. CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

A. Award Bid: STEM Academy Architect

John Salomone stated the recommendation was attached to the meeting packet and action could wait until the next meeting in May.

B. Municipal Affordable Housing Regulation Technical Assistance Grant

John Salomone, Dianne Stone and Craig Minor reviewed the grant for the Council. Mr. Salomone explained it was a technical grant to help with how the Town would overlay zones for senior affordable housing. Mr. Minor indicated that CCROG had money available to apply for a grant to hire a consultant to do research into and drafting of regulations to promote affordable housing. He indicated if given the grant the Town could hire the consultant and start the process of determining the need for senior affordable housing and if there would be a demand for the housing. Regulations would be drafted to provide overlay zones which allowed for residential zones and only zones that met certain characteristics (access to transportation/services, etc.). The developer could plan an area where 80% of the housing would be market value and 20% would be affordable to those of low/moderate income.

Councilor Klett expressed concern that all verbiage in any of the grant or other material be consistent using the term senior affordable housing and not just senior housing. Mr. Minor explained senior housing would be a unit a senior would live in regardless of income and affordable housing meant spending no more than 30% of the seniors' income to persons of 80% median income or lower. He stated the grant said the units developed would be affordable by a person who was at 50% of median income, which would include the truly needy in Town.

Councilor Borjeson felt Newington needed to create this type of housing and felt there was a moral obligation to create senior affordable housing. He stated there were 132 people on the senior waiting list at this time. Councilor Klett expressed her concern that Newington residents be given priority in any new senior housing built but Mrs. Stone stated that in the private market preference could not be given.

Mayor Woods stated that if the grant was received and found that if the housing were built, seniors would not want to take advantage of it, the project would not continue. The TPZ Chairman had a ten year plan to examine senior needs and the information gained from the grant would aid him in his gathering of information.

Councilor Cohen asked Mr. Minor about the amount of control the Town Council would have over the project, and he explained the same amount of control over a project that was run by a department or land use commission currently. She wanted to be able to restrict the housing to Newington residents, however, the Mayor explained that would not be possible especially due to the recent resolution passed by the Council but did recognize the Council's intent regarding the housing.

Council McBride felt it was important to state that area towns had built affordable housing for their seniors and stated Newington residents would take advantage of the senior housing if provided in Town. He urged the Council to keep an open mind on the housing.

Dianne Stone mentioned two State bills being considered: 1. Livable Community Bill, which provide guidance and best practices for communities and 2. Aging in Place, which made recommendations for municipal zoning laws.

Councilor DelBuono asked why the Council was playing catch up on the grant and it was explained that CCROG notified them late of it and the application was a place holder until the Council could discuss and vote on it.

Councilor McBride felt the Council was trying to be proactive, that the grant would be scrutinized, the wording reviewed and thanked Mr. Minor for his efforts. Councilor Klett asked to see the changes to be made to the grant and Mr. Minor indicated he would send the changes to the Council.

VII. RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS (None)

VIII. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Action Requested)

A. April 9, 2013 Regular Meeting

A motion to accept the meeting minutes of April 9, 2013, was made by Councilor DelBuono and seconded by Councilor Borjeson. The motion passed 7 – 0 (Councilor Castelle, absent; Mayor Woods, abstained)

IX. WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER, OTHER TOWN AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS, OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC

None

X. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Borjeson attended a recent Fastrak meeting with another scheduled in May. The issues to be addressed will be 1. Security and public safety, which will be coordinated between local police, Amtrak police, and State Police. 2. Working with hospitals, businesses like Travelers, and marketing plans with the areas Chamber of Commerce. Marketing plans will be presented at Central Connecticut by marketing students.

Council Nagel attended a meeting for the Senior Disabled Roof Replacement Committee meeting and said the initial phase had been started and hoped to have the roof and overhang replaced by the end of next fall.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: Made comments on 1. Conversations between Councilors were not always clear to the listeners. She indicated that “he said/she said” made it difficult to follow discussions. 2. Senior housing: She had tried to get information on Newington Senior Housing, which was very difficult. She had been told no information was available until she was 62 and when she was 62, was told they would not send her the application. Mrs. Lyons said she never saw an ad for New Samaritan for applications being accepted and had to pursue New Samaritan as to when applications were being accepted. 4. Veteran housing: she never saw an ad for applications at Victory Gardens. The Senior Center was not knowledgeable on it. She felt that after living in Newington for 65 years she would have to go to Berlin, Farmington or other towns to live.

XII. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor Cohen said a resident presented a video to the Conservation Commission regarding wetlands located on the property Toll Bros was looking at. A suggestion was made to inventory vernal pools in Newington. She stated if someone years ago wanted copies of a particular meeting, a person could go into Town Hall to review the tape of the meeting. She was recently was told the Town did not have the facilities to copy tapes of meetings. There was a discussion about the quality of the tapes, old technology and the inability to clearly hear comments on the tape. John Salomone indicated they were attempting to move to DVD's and did not know if separate copies were made in the past.

Councilor Klett asked about how the tapes were safe guarded so that in 10 years a record could still be listened to. Mr. Salomone explained the Town Clerk kept all the tapes and there had never been an issue in the past but he would check on the process. Mayor Woods stated all the Councilors and people on various committees had to make a better effort to talk into the mikes provided so conservations were clearly picked up.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION RE: PERSONNEL/PENDING LEGAL ACTION/COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Councilor Bottalico moved to adjourn the regular meeting to go into executive session at 9:15 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor DelBuono.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn from executive session was made by Councilor Borjeson at 10:45 p.m. and the motion was seconded by Councilor Bottalico.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Irish-Simpson
Clerk of the Council