



Keith Chapman
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

200 GARFIELD STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR BETH DELBUONO

**NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, September 8, 2020

This meeting was presented as a Zoom Webinar/Meeting.

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Town Clerk

Mayor DelBuono called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ROLL CALL

Councilor Anest
Councilor Braverman (arrived at 8:40 p.m.)
Councilor Budrejko
Councilor Camillo
Councilor Donahue
Councilor Manke
Councilor Miner
Councilor Nagel
Mayor DelBuono

Also present:

Keith Chapman, Town Manager
Andrew Armstrong, ZEO/Blight Officer
James Krupienski, Town Clerk
Susan Gibbon, Council Clerk

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Councilor Manke to approve the agenda as published. Seconded by Councilor Anest.
Motion passed 8-0. (Councilor Braverman absent)

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/AWARDS

A. Retirement – Fire Chief Chris Schroeder

Motion by Councilor Manke

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Chris R. Schroeder joined the Fire Department as a firefighter April 1, 1974; and

WHEREAS, Chris Schroeder served as Deputy Chief from 1991-2005; and

WHEREAS, Chris Schroeder was appointed to Fire Chief in 2005, his official retirement date was August 21, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Chief Schroeder served a total of 46.5 years in the Fire Department; and

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WHEREAS, Chief Schroeder served as Fire Marshal from 1995 until his retirement on December 31, 2019; and

WHEREAS, Chief Schroeder also served as Emergency Management Director from December 30, 1990-August 21, 2020, originally appointed by Mr. Keith Chapman; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Newington Town Council hereby recognizes and extends its sincere appreciation to Fire Chief Schroeder for his professional service and dedication to the Town and wishes him the best in his retirement.

Dated in Newington, Connecticut, this 8th day of September, 2020

Seconded by Councilor Nagel. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Braverman absent)

- Councilor Budrejko stated that he wanted to publicly thank Chief Schroeder for his years of service. For over 46 years, he served the fire department as their leader and the community with his dedication, service and pride. Both groups benefited greatly from his involvement.
- Councilor Manke stated that he also wanted to thank Chief Schroeder for his service over these past 46 years. His knowledge of procedure and equipment has made our fire department much more knowledgeable. Also want to thank him for caring enough about this town to go out on cold winter nights, early mornings, and to be away from his family to answer calls and to make our volunteer fire department one of the best in the state. Wish him luck in his retirement.
- Councilor Miner stated that he wanted to thank Chief Schroeder for his time as service to the department over the past 46 years. Have had the privilege of working with him over the past 12 ½ years. The true inspiration to me is his desire to keep the history alive and that is something I hope to see continue in the future, our history does not get forgotten and with Chief Schroeder being involved with the old firehouse I'm sure that won't happen. Would also like to extend my best wishes for his retirement and to thank his wife and girls for sharing him with the townsfolk.
- Councilor Nagel stated that he also wanted to extend his best wishes to Chief Schroeder. I've know him for the past 14-15 years in his capacity at the fire department and he has always been helpful to me and to others. He will be missed and hope that he enjoys his retirement. Hope he knows how much we appreciate the time and commitment he has put in over the past 46 years.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she wanted to express her gratitude to Chief Schroeder. In the years that I've known him, he has always been courteous and the upmost professional in all of my dealings with him. He has served this town endlessly for over 46 years and I know how much energy that takes. Going out in all types of weather, no matter what time and what is going on with your family and making those sacrifices. Wish him all the best in his retirement. Thank you so very much.
- Susan Mazzoccoli, 149 Harris Drive stated that she wanted to thank Chief Schroeder for all of his years of service and thanks to his family members too. I needed the fire department to come to my house many years ago; had a kitchen fire, it was frightening to get that call and was pleased when I got home everything was safe and want to thank the fire department for doing that.

B. Proclamation – Constitution Week

Motion by Councilor Anest

PROCLAMATION - CONSTITUTION WEEK

WHEREAS: The Constitution of the United States of America, the guardian of our liberties, embodies the principles of limited government in a Republic dedicated to rule by law; and

WHEREAS: September 17, 2020, marks the two hundred and thirty-third anniversary of the framing of the Constitution of the United States of America by the Constitutional Convention; and

WHEREAS: It is fitting and proper to accord official recognition to this magnificent document and its memorable anniversary, and to the patriotic celebrations which will commemorate it; and

WHEREAS: Public Law 915 guarantees the issuing of a proclamation each year by the President of the United States of America designating September 17 through 23 as Constitution Week,

NOW, THEREFORE I, Beth DelBuono, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the Town of Newington, do hereby proclaim the week of September 17 through 23 as CONSTITUTION WEEK and ask our citizens to reaffirm the ideals the Framers of the Constitution had in 1787 by vigilantly protecting the freedoms guaranteed to us through this guardian of our liberties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Town to be affixed this 8th day of September of the year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty.

Seconded by Councilor Camillo. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Braverman absent)

- Mary Wood stated that two delegates from Connecticut, Oliver Ellsworth and Roger Sherman were instrumental in creating the CT Compromise, which gives us our two houses in congress of the legislative branch, which is the House of Representatives, which is based on population, and the senate where two member of each state serve. There was a dispute as to how the gentlemen wanted their states represented because there were some states larger than others and that was the compromise that was created. Roger Sherman is the only person in history of the United States to sign the four primary documents of the United States, which brought our country into existence. On behalf of the Daughters of the American Revolution, I appreciate you issuing this proclamation for our chapter.
- Councilor Anest stated that she was honored to be on the 200th Anniversary Committee celebrating the Constitution and wanted to let everyone know that is why Constitution Square is so named; we dedicated that in honor of the 200th Anniversary of the Constitution.
- Sue Mazzocoli, 149 Harris Drive stated that when she was growing up, she heard President Kennedy was going to make September 17th Constitution Day and make it a national holiday, unfortunately he was assassinated before that happened. September 17th also happens to be my birthday. Happy Constitution week.

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (Via Zoom Application or Phone)
(4 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)**

A. Public Comments

- Patty Foley, 51 Crown Ridge stated that she comes tonight as Chair of the Environmental Quality Commission and the Sustainable Team for the Town of Newington. On December 10, 2019, the council voted to make the EQC the Sustainable Team for the Town of Newington, the EQC was in transition and had their first meeting in February and are required to provide the council with a quarterly report, so I apologize for the tardiness of this report. We had four programs scheduled before the COVID shutdown was ordered and they were all centered around the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day on April 22nd. There was a seminar planned with DEEP in coordination with the Library and Sanitation Department. We were planning a shredding day for citizens in order to reduce garbage, an annual litter pickup and student poster contest. All but one of the events were cancelled. We were able to have the earth day poster contest as an online event and were able to embrace new technologies and hold the contest. Three commissioners attended the equity seminar hosted by Sustainable Connecticut. It's enlightening to see how to embrace today's world. As of today, there were 110 out of 169 municipalities registered for Sustainable Connecticut and of the 110, 48 have been designated as

bronze or silver status. There are nine action categories. On the 20th the website was updated to list the names of the commission but there is no way to contact the commission directly except through the two town council liaisons. At the July EQC meeting, we voted to have our submission date for sustainability approval for August 2021. In order to receive points, much of the work has to be completed within one year of the submission. Certain past actions outside of this time frame will qualify. Currently we have a monthly litter pickup that was organized by a citizen, she had 20 people show up a couple weeks ago and there is another planned for later this month. We are coordinating with a member of the Conservation Commission on invasive plant education; we will be meeting with them to discuss how their work can count for points. I have two requests - on our commissions page, is there a way for someone to communicate directly with the commission and also to update to let people know that the commission has been charged with being the Sustainable team. Also, on the town website we would like a page that people can link to too see the work that has now been completed. Thank you for your time, I look forward to giving you my next report on time in December.

B. Email Correspondence

- None

VI. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Councilor Nagel thanked Ms. Foley for her detailed report. Suggested that when she is presenting her next report, make it an agenda item.

VII. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

A. Health Update – COVID-19

- Town Manager Chapman stated that there was a minor scare in town hall last week where an individual tested positive and while visiting town hall exposed a couple of our employees to COVID-19, it's not a pleasant experience sitting home and waiting for results and even though we all tested negative, it takes a lot out of your worrying about whether you tested positive. We know how this happened and will not allow that to happen again.
- Charles Brown, Central Connecticut Health District stated that as of September 7th, the total number of cases in Newington was 445, total number of deaths is 51. Have noticed a slight uptick in the number of cases each week. Not majorly concerned right now, overall CT is at a 1% transmission rate.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that she was wondering about the case at the high school. Can you comment on that and how it was handled.
- Mr. Brown stated he cannot comment on the individual case itself, but can say that the protocols and procedures that were put in place before the reopening of the schools were very successful in this instance. Have to give a lot of credit to Nurse Supervisor Mercy Hetherington for doing an outstanding job of contract tracing. Were able to identify who was in contact and determine whether it was significant contact and require someone to be quarantined or whether it was just incidental contact. The thing that was most successful in this process was wearing a mask and social distancing within the school setting, allowed us to deal with those infected and not have to take the drastic measure of shutting down the school. It was a success tory. The communication between the school, district medical advisor and us couldn't have worked better.
- Councilor Manke asked Mr. Brown to explain significant contact and incidental contact.

- Mr. Brown stated that significant contact is when you are within 6-feet of someone who is a confirmed case for more than 10-15 minutes. Incidental contact is like when you pass somebody in the hall. The only ones we are concerned about are those confirmed contacts and we actually follow up with them and would place those folks in quarantine. For people who test positive, they have a different quarantine period, it is 10 days and as long as they are getting better and don't have a fever, they can come out of isolation. For people who have come in contact with someone, they are under isolation for 14 days; and that 14 day time period is set to allow incubation of the virus over that 14 day period. So, after 14 days, if they don't have any symptoms, they can come out of quarantine.
- Councilor Miner asked if there is any way to allow for more in person activities. Parks & rec is offering more programming inside, is the library opening anytime soon - can we go in and check out a book, activities at the senior center. My concern is that with the isolation of a lot of people it is wreaking havoc on their mental state. Never going to completely mitigate COVID, and with a positivity rate of less than one percent, know instinct is stay put until vaccine or treatment is in place, don't know when that will occur.
- Mr. Brown stated that without a vaccine or treatment we have to look at personal interaction very closely because it does carry an inherent risk. Mr. Chapman started off this segment that at an in person meeting there was someone who tested positive and there exposures that resulted from that is a good case in point. We have to look at the risk and benefit of each interaction - is there a way to safely do this activity. Many people want to throw caution to the wind and get back to normal with the case rate being so low and the only reason the case rate is as low as it is because we have taken the necessary precautions. If there is a way to get something done without personal interaction and still fulfill the mission, that is the safest option and that is the way we should be looking at this at this point. We have been in conversation with the library and the senior center to discuss how to safely provide services and what protocols need to be in place. It is very challenging. As people realize, the asymptomatic, the spreading of the disease without any symptoms whatsoever, is what causes me and many health professionals worry and letting caution down is what is going to cause this disease to spread. This virus is very opportunistic. Starting to see spread in colleges and schools as well. Trying to open up facilities safely.
- Councilor Miner asked if the positivity rate is based on population or on test given.
- Mr. Brown stated it is based on different metrics. The metric the governor uses is based on population. The one the schools are using is based on confirmed tests.
- Councilor Miner stated the reason he is asking is because testing positive or theoretical positive, you are going to for an immediate test, if that comes back positive you for another test and then you can go for another test - you can test two or three times. Wondering if that is skewed data.
- Mr. Brown stated no. Each test is tied to an individual surveillance number in the states database and they take great pains to de-duplicate that to make sure of the number of cases. Many more tests than people who have been tested.
- Councilor Anest asked when you stated a 14 day quarantine for someone who has been in contact with someone who tested positive. Does that apply even though you tested negative?
- Mr. Brown stated yes. Even though you tested negative, a negative test is only a snapshot in time. For example, if someone was in contact with a confirmed case and went out the next day and got tested they may not have a high enough viral load within their body even though they may be infected to have a positive test. That is why, regardless of the test results, they recommend 14 days in quarantine to give your body time to incubate the virus or not. After 14 days, if you don't develop any symptoms, you are in the clear.

- Councilor Anest stated that is what she thought. A lot of people think once they get tested they are good and can go about their business - back to normal. Do you have what the other towns in your district are doing for meetings, their library, and their park activities?
- Mr. Brown stated it is pretty consistent among most towns. Some towns have allowed appointments for some of their departments; believe most are still meeting remotely, everyone has been pretty consistent. Have been in discussion with all of the libraries together to address individual concerns as well as talk with them as a group so they can learn from each other on how to get through this and support each other as well.
- Councilor Anest stated that she has noticed that more and more towns are opening with social distancing and requiring of mask; just curious what our towns are doing. Would it be possible to get a survey done to see what each of the towns are doing?
- Mr. Brown stated yes, he can compile that information and get it to the town manager.
- Councilor Anest stated that would be appreciated; know that some board members and council members in some towns are meeting live and being broadcast on local access.
- Mr. Brown stated that he will find out what is going on. Unless there is a really compelling reason to meet in person, the safest way to do public meetings at this point is virtually. I would even say it is the responsible way to conduct meetings at this time, without have a vaccine or treatment available at this time.
- Councilor Nagel stated that both the library and the senior center are actively trying to figure out what they can do to serve the public, not only remotely and virtually, but in some fashion of using the facilities. Also have to consider materials (glass partitions) that are needed in both circumstances since in the senior center you have a vulnerable population and also the library because of the high density of contact and the vast amount of print materials there and open up without putting our citizens in harms way.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that six employees, volunteers, elected officials were at a meeting last Tuesday, and one of the people that was there notified us on Wednesday morning that they tested positive. All of the individuals in the meeting have gone on to test, I tested Friday, got results back today, I tested negative, others have gone for the rapid test and tested negative. All of us have tested negative - are you saying we should all remain isolated for the full 14 days?
- Mr. Brown stated that once again, it is the proximity and mitigation efforts you had in place. If you were within 6 feet of that individual for more than 10-15 minutes, regardless of whether you were wearing a mask, you should quarantine for 14 days. Even if you did test negative, 14 days is the recommendation. If someone was wearing a mask, and beyond the 6 feet distance, they do not need to quarantine.

B. Town Hall Project Update

- Town Manager Chapman stated that town hall continues to be finished. A majority of the main building is complete. The major work still to be completed is in the gymnasium area. We received a report today from the State Fire Marshal's office that entire bleacher system cannot be used simultaneously due to egress restrictions. So therefore, at this time, the entire bleacher system cannot be utilized and depending on which sporting event goes on there is a system that has been developed to allow for a majority of the bleachers to be used. However, the whole use of the bleaches would not be allowed. This is a problem that was just recognized recently. Have requested the state building officials come in a look at the situation, because they have a different set of standards that they are working with and I have also requested that our insurance agency come in an look at the situation. I am very concerned that this has a potential

to be very negative and want to make sure whatever is done we protect those that enter that building and have an enjoyable experience. That report will be compiled as we move forward.

- Councilor Manke asked if there were still boxes in the council room to be stored.
- Town Manager Chapman stated yes, they are. The last time I was in the basement, there were still water problems in the basement. All of the boxes in the council chambers will either be placed in the vault in the Town Clerk's office or in the basement once we are assured that it is dry and it remains dry.
- Councilor Manke asked if it was still wet from the floods months ago.
- Town Manager Chapman stated he doesn't know. I was down there last Monday and found water that wasn't going to the sump hole over where the piping is located for circulating water throughout the building. Not sure if it's a pipe leak or external water coming in; not sure if that has been resolved. Don't want to put materials in that area if water problems aren't completely fixed.
- Councilor Miner asked the town manager if the gymnasium meets current building codes.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that the gymnasium itself meets fire codes, except the bleachers either need to be redesigned or there has to be some type of management plan that will exist forever and be used whenever the bleachers are being used. The state fire marshal indicated a new design should take place or a management plan be in place and it won't be easy to manage in all situations. Don't want a potential problem.
- Councilor Miner asked if there were to be a concert or show, the floor would also be utilized, for sitting or standing, is that correct?
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he would assume there was a vision that all of the bleachers would be utilized as well as floor seating as well.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she is very disappointed to hear about the bleachers, remember discussing it during the meetings and I don't ever recall that there would be a restriction in the bleachers being used and in fact we talked about the number of people being around 1100. We talked about the ability to park that many but nothing about the bleachers not being able to be fully opened from my recollection. Really disappointing to hear that is an issue now.
- Councilor Nagel assumed that the building has been given a seating capacity. Are there definite numbers of how many seats can be put on the floor? Are there defined numbers and it would be interesting to know how those numbers would be limited if we have to limit the use of the bleachers and the section that can't be used during various events.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that this issue came up during a discussion and presentation with the state fire marshal when he was visiting the site. There was a design drawing with a note stating that at no time could all of the bleachers be used simultaneously because of egress restrictions. That was never brought to my attention until we met with the state about a month ago. Again, there is a lack of understanding and communication in this whole issue and I don't claim to know what happened, but as the public safety director I need to make sure it is safe moving forward.
- Councilor Miner stated that the largest number capacity, meeting code, is just under 1000 seats. That would be premium seating for a premier event with one large court or if you were to go to lecture or concert type venue then you could go to additional seating on the floor which is I believe 7 square feet per person is the way they calculate occupancy.
- Councilor Nagel stated that he would like definite figures for when this opens.
- Councilor Miner stated that when a final certificate of occupancy is issued, an occupancy load will be issued for this space.

- Councilor Manke stated that has driven by the town hall a couple of times and that the gymnasium roof is fairly accessible from ground level. Is anything being done to prevent someone from jumping on the roof?
- Town Manger Chapman stated that there plans that will be inserted into the wall of that potion of the gymnasium entrance that will prevent anyone from getting onto the roof. That is a safety issue that I am concerned about, as well as the stairwell.
- Councilor Manke asked why no one noticed that ahead of time. It seems like a no brainer.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that occurred due to changes in the design. The original design had the exit way in the southeast corner being level with the exits out of the other parts of the gymnasium and the multi-purpose room and at some point there was a staircase added which changed the whole configuration of how you get in and out of the building. It is a problem.
- Councilor Miner stated that originally that was a straight walk out with a retaining wall, so that was a non-issue. Unfortunately, with value engineering that was a cost that was deducted early on in the project and the stair system was put in its place. In regards to being able to jump up on there, that was brought to the committees attention that was vetted by the architect, it is a plastic type system that goes on to the roof and it make it uncomfortable to reach up and grab hold of the roof. That is something the construction manager is costing out now and the committee will take action on it at our next meeting.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that Councilor Miner discussed what she was going to say. Want to reassure people that when it was talked about at the last meeting the safety of people trying go get on the roof, it will be uncomfortable but not hazardous.
- Councilor Camillo asked Councilor Miner, who was the chair at the beginning of the project, and have been involved on and off, you have all this information, how did you let this happen, why didn't you speak up beforehand.
- Councilor Miner asked in relationship to what?
- Councilor Camillo stated anything that is wrong with this project. We're talking about a wet basements, generators, roof, why the building is electric and not gas heat, why there is no solar on it and now the stairs. I'm not throwing you under the bus, but it's pretty frustrating that the job is not complete and it is supposed to be and we keep finding more and more problems.
- Councilor Miner stated that he thinks that a majority of the issues you brought up, one being the generator, we still don't know if that meets load or not; a majority of these decisions were handled in-house by staff not handled by a committee level. You can go back and review all the committee comments and meetings all the way back and a vast majority of these were not dealt with on a committee level. In terms of the staircase, that something was value engineered out. It wasn't anything that the committee said, and it was done before the project got underway to try and control the costs. Everything we have dealt with have been cost driven with having a budget that was very aggressive. Everyone did their best to get a building that would be a 50-year legacy building with the budget that was set.
- Councilor Camillo stated right and at the same time, we knocked down a 100-year-old building.
- Councilor Miner sated that the 100-year-old building is 70 years old.
- Councilor Camillo stated that there were problems right from the get go. Even though it was done behind the scenes, it should have been brought to the public, especially being on the building committee.
- Councilor Miner stated that he was on the building committee at the beginning for a short period, I was not on the committee during my first term on the council, and I only took the position back over in November.

- Councilor Camillo stated that you were there everyday and you could have pointed it out to the powers to be or whoever needed to know that they were making a mistake. I am not directing this directly at you, but I am because you were there every single day.

C. Authorize Sale of Town Owned Property-Former Barbour Road

Motion by Councilor Manke

RESOLVED:

The Newington Town Council hereby authorizes Keith Chapman, Town Manager to execute any and all documents necessary to complete the sale of a Portion of Former Barbour Road to A Walk-in Medical Center, LLC for a purchase price of \$65,000.

Seconded by Councilor Donahue. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Braverman absent)

- Councilor Manke asked about the piece of property, we can't access the property.
- Town Manager Chapman stated it is strange piece of property and of no use to the town; very confusion ownership over the years, after a lot of due diligence by town clerk; best interest of the town to get rid of the piece of property.
- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that about 110 feet south of Ella Grasso Blvd is this parcel of property and it will allow them to expand their parking. Barbour Road in Newington no longer exists.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that this piece of land has no value to the town. The money is an unanticipated piece of change. Hopeful that the sale amount of \$65,000 can be put into the Land Acquisition Fund for the purchase of open space.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he supports the concept.
- Councilor Anest stated that she supports placing the money into the Land Acquisition Fund and moving forward we should put money into this fund as well.
- Councilor Manke stated that she thinks that is a great idea.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he will talk with Janet Murphy; doesn't think additional action required.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Blighted Premises Update

- Andrew Armstrong stated that he is here tonight to provide an update on blighted premises. Last update was June 2019. January 2020 to present, have been very proactive. We have 3 open blight complaints in the citation stage; one on the blight list which has been on the blight list for many years, the owner of the property has not requested a re-inspection as part of a previous law suit and that property remains on the blight list today. We have zero complaints waiting inspection and since June 2019, the town has remediated six properties. That does not include human services where they often assist people and help out with volunteer services.
- Councilor Manke asked from June 2019 to present we had 373, are those the same as the 301 from January 2020 to present?
- Mr. Armstrong stated yes, it is confusing, trying to give a snapshot of what we have done.
- Councilor Manke asked if there are still 86 open cases.
- Mr. Armstrong stated that is correct, we have 86 open cases.
- Councilor Manke asked if future reports could be done by fiscal year or calendar year, the report as is very confusing. Can you go through the process of reporting blight?
- Mr. Armstrong stated that we take blight complaints from anonymous people or you can leave your information if you prefer. When we receive a complaint, I inspect, I knock on the door

and let them know they may not be in compliance, what the code is and what they need to do. I work with them on a plan for compliance, something reasonable, but the goal is to get them to comply. People who have extenuating circumstances can be referred to human services who have resources to help people. Always looking to help people, always looking to work with people, but the goal is to get the town clean. I also do proactive blight runs through the town as I've been instructed to put more time into blight and have made that a priority.

- Town Manager Chapman stated that when he arrived in January of this year, the conditions in the field, looking street by street as I did, I found an excessive amount of blight and I asked Andrew to step it up and get these blight issues cleaned up. Some of those that he is working with are very challenging. He has done well with a portion of those that I submitted for complaint as well as what's come in from others. We need to continue to beef this up and be more proactive, it really adversely affects our economic development efforts and with residential if one home is a mess, the whole neighborhood gets brought down. I don't believe the efforts made in the past were as significant as they are now; it was not part of Andrew's direction from the previous administration to be proactive, he was more reactive and it has come back to bite us a bit. We will continue to address blight issues, recognizing that Andre's job is made more difficult because of owner's resistance. Things that were allowed to occur over many years in certain areas should not have been allowed. It's a new focus for our administration.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that she too is confused by the chart. Is the number of new complaints 63?
- Mr. Armstrong stated yes. Again, I apologize for the confusion of the chart, just wanted to gibe a full picture.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that there has been a significant number of complains this year due to more comprehensive activity on your part?
- Mr. Armstrong stated that is correct.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that from June 2016 June 2019, there were only 242 complaint received, compared to the significant complaints now. Why?
- Mr. Armstrong stated that as Keith said, there wasn't as much focus on that. My job consists of other duties, blight is a very time consuming job on its own.
- Councilor Donahue stated that the current open complaints are different from the 86 is that correct.
- Mr. Armstrong stated that they are open because they have not been resolved; either they are in progress, need a re-inspection, those al cold be the case for the 86 open and include the citation stage. The blight list, is a term used for when we remediate a property, you need to request to be removed from the list. This is a list of complaints.
- Councilor Donahue stated you only go onto the blight list if a property owner refuses to clean up?
- Mr. Armstrong stated that they go on to the blight list after the full process and the property has not been remediated. It is a technical term.
- Councilor Donahue stated that is would be helpful to break that own further. It seems like a lot of stages.
- Mr. Armstrong stated that the entire process is run by state statute and regulations and the entire process can take over 30 days. There is a lot involved.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he had not seen the report before tonight, and the next time it is presented, it will be more readable. I'm having trouble reading it myself.
- Mr. Armstrong apologized for the report, only had a few short hours between tasks to get it down. I did my best and apologize for the confusion.

- Councilor Nagel asked how the whole process of blight and the kinds of blight and how COVID has effected that.
- Mr. Armstrong stated that despite COVID, I am going door to door, wearing a mask and using all the social distancing protocols. Work with the people to solve the problem. If they are not home, I leave my card to have them contact me to discuss the issue and a lot of things get worked out that way. There are people who don't follow through and clean up and I have to send a letter and continue to come up with a plan of compliance. In the most serious cases, after they have had notice, and they've been given a time frame and a chance to appeal, is when they get to a citation. They can appeal the citation, they have 10 days after that and then the property gets on to the blight list and gets remediated. We used to be reactive, simply for the volume of work that is involved and it is extremely time consuming, but this year we have been proactive. I drive through street by street, talk to people and try to be more proactive with it, along with my zoning enforcement.
- Councilor Nagel stated that there is a Blight Committee that he is currently on. Are there any changes that need to be addressed that can make the process more understandable as opposed to what you have to go through? I realize that there are a lot of state restriction that you have to follow.
- Mr. Armstrong stated that is a great question, can't think if anything in particular at this time, but will give it some thought and if there is anything that I can improve I will reach out to you and make that recommendation.
- Councilor Nagel asked the town manager if he thinks the Blight Committee should meet.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he believes the blight committee has a role to play here, not sure what their direction to Andrew was in the past, or what involvement he has had with the committee, but from what I understand, he's been limited and restricted in the past on what he could do with blight and I have given him new direction to make this a high priority. I would support having a Zoom meeting with the blight committee if you feel they could help us. I don't want the blight committee to feel they don't have a role here.
- Councilor Nagel stated that he doesn't think there needs to be a meeting unless you feel that there is something that needs to be discussed to bring before the council.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he may be asking for the blight committee to have a meeting to review new procedures they are instituting and to stream line the process because it shouldn't be that cumbersome, it should work smoothly, but it hasn't. I think the committee should come together and I will work with you to schedule that.
- Councilor Manke stated that one of the biggest offenders are people who leave stuff on the curb and don't call for pickup. Is that considered blight?
- Mr. Armstrong stated that after a certain amount of time, yes, that is blight if it is not picked up by bulk pickup. Difficult for me to know how long things have been on the curb. You can report blight online.
- Councilor Budrejko asked what the top blight conditions are in town.
- Mr. Armstrong stated that it is mostly debris and some abandoned vehicles. In the past, overgrown grass was a problem and that can consume days of my time, but this year it's been really been a lot less, the grass isn't growing, people are taking care of the lawns, or the banks are taking better care of foreclosed properties. We aren't getting as many calls as we used to. Seeing a lot of debris and abandoned vehicles.

IX. RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS (Action May Be Taken)

A. Appointments – Shared Services Committee (BOE Appts.)

Motion by Councilor Manke

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby appoints the following members to the Joint Shared Services Subcommittee:

Joint Shared Services Subcommittee

5 members,
3 NTC, 2 BOE

Name	Address	Party	Term
Cindy Stamm BOE Rep:	35 Judge Lane Newington, CT 06111	D	BOE TERM
Steven Silvia BOE Rep:	45 Basswood Street Newington, CT 06111	R	BOE TERM

Seconded by Councilor Camillo. Motion passed 9-0

B. Resignation – Environmental Quality Commission (M. Siems)

Motion by Councilor Manke

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby accepts the resignation of Mark Siems from the Environmental Quality Commission, as an Industry Member, in accordance with email correspondence received by the Town Clerk, dated August 31, 2020.

Seconded by Councilor Donahue. Motion passed 9-0

C. Resignation – Economic Development Commission (M. Siems)

Motion by Councilor Manke

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby accepts the resignation of Mark Siems from the Economic Development Commission, as a Member, in accordance with email correspondence received by the Town Clerk, dated August 31, 2020.

Seconded by Councilor Braverman. Motion passed 9-0

D. Resignation – Newington Housing Authority (K. Langille)

Motion by Councilor Manke

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby accepts the resignation of Kenneth Langille from the Newington Housing Authority, as a Member, in accordance with email correspondence received by the Town Clerk, dated September 3, 2020.

Seconded by Councilor Anest. Motion passed 9-0

X. TAX REFUNDS (Action Requested)

A. Approval of September 8, 2020 Refunds for an Overpayment of Taxes

Motion by Councilor Budrejko

RESOLVED:

That property tax refunds in the amount of \$13,679.94 are hereby approved in the individual amounts and for those named on the “Requests for Refund of an Overpayment of Taxes,” certified by the Revenue Collector, a list of which is attached to this resolution.

Seconded by Councilor Braverman. Motion passed 9-0

XI. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A. August 25, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to accept the minutes from the August 25, 2020 Meeting by Councilor Manke. Seconded by Councilor Camillo. Motion passed 8 yes, 1 abstention.

B. August 27, 2020 Public Hearing Minutes

C. August 27, 2020 Special Meeting minutes

Motion to accept the minutes from the August 27, 2020 Public Hearing and Special meeting by Councilor Manke. Seconded by Councilor Camillo. Motion passed 9-0.

XII. WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

- Town Manager Chapman wanted to remind the council they have a special meeting tomorrow night at 5 p.m.; Senior & Disabled Center driveway and sidewalks replaced by highway staff; paving completed for this year; more coming next year. Chris Schroeder will be missed and his shoes will be tough to fill.
- Councilor Budrejko thanked Mr. Chapman for his monthly report and asked if he has had a chance to visit historical buildings in town, do you have any comments and were they included in the facilities study./
- Town Manager Chapman stated that those have been included in the facilities study and many of the buildings that I have visited are in need of work. We need a better system in place, not only for historical buildings, but all of our buildings. Hopefully, through our new CIP process we can maintain our buildings in a more timely manner. Just looking at one of the buildings there is a lot of work that needs to be done.
- Councilor Donahue asked when the report is going to be finished.
- Town Manager Chapman stated November. They were delayed because of COVID-19, but they have been moving right along and am optimistic that we will get a draft sometime in November that we can use for budgetary purposes going forward.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she wanted to thank the town manager for his detailed monthly report.

XIII. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Councilor Donahue stated that the Mill Pond Park Public Building Committee meeting is on Monday, September 14th at 7:00 p.m. If you have anything you want me to bring up, send me an email, I will make sure it gets discussed.
- Councilor Nagel stated that the Aging and Disabled Center had their meeting, they continue their virtual programs, robocalls and bringing food to individuals through dial-a-ride, working virtually as much as they can and also determining on how to best open the senior center in a safe way which will make it a place for seniors to use as a center for resources.

**XIV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (Via Zoom Application or Phone)
(3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)**

- Sue Mazzocoli, 149 Harris Drive stated that Mayor DelBuono stated that there would be signs outside of the schools regarding election day so people will know where to go vote, but it seems to be up in the air where that will happen at the town hall. Hoping you will be able to share with us exactly where we are going to vote at the town hall.

XV. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

- Mayor DelBuono asked the town manager if he knew where voting will be taking place in the town hall or is that still to be determined.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that last he heard, it was going to be held in part of the gymnasium and the multi-purpose room. I will confirm that for you later this week and let you know.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that after the primary we did comment on the need for more signage for both safety precaution when voting in person and on where to vote so we are working on that with the registrar of voters.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilor Camillo to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Manke.
Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Gibbon
Council Clerk