

TOWN COUNCIL
Town of Trumbull
CONNECTICUT
www.trumbull-ct.gov

TOWN HALL
Trumbull



MINUTES
APRIL 7, 2015

TELEPHONE
203 452-5005
2015 APR 13 P 3:03
TRUMBULL LAND RECORDS
TOWN CLERK
VOLUME _____ PAGE _____

RECEIVED FOR RECORD

CALLED TO ORDER: The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:01 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. The Chair asked all those present to remember Joan Mantone, a Town of Trumbull employee who worked in Finance Department for five years recently passed away and Antonio Scinto father of Town Council Member Tony Scinto.

The Clerk called the roll and recorded it as follows:

PRESENT:

Suzanne S. Testani
Vincent DiMasi Jr.
Donna Seidell
Ennio DeVita
Daniel Marconi
Cynthia L. Penkoff
Edna Colucci

Tony J. Scinto
Kenneth M. Martin
Mary Beth Thornton
Carl A. Massaro, Jr.
Vicki Tesoro
Michael J. London
Lori Rosasco Schwartz

Antonio Petitti
Ann Marie Evangelista
Mark S. LeClair
Bethany Llodra Gilman
Enrico R. Costantini
Joseph G. Pifko
Scott Wich

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman Timothy Herbst, Director of Economic & Development Edward Lavernoch, Stern Village Director Harriet Polansky, THA Financial Advisor Neil Earhart, THA Financial Advisor and THA Consultant Frank Stellato.

Moved by Ms. Testani, seconded by Ms. Penkoff to accept the March 2, 2015 meeting minutes as submitted. VOTE: Motion CARRIED 19 in favor, 1 Abstention (Ms. Colucci)

Special Meeting Minutes from March 16, 2015 moved by Ms. Penkoff, seconded by Ms. Rosasco Schwartz VOTE: Motion CARRIED 18 in favor, 2 Abstention (Ms. Colucci, Mr. Martin)

First Selectman Timothy M. Herbst –Expressed condolences to Council Member Tony Scinto who father Anthony Scinto of Norwalk passed away last month.

The First Selectman expressed on behalf of the Town of Trumbull very sincere condolences to two Trumbull families that lost sons at too young of an age. First, the Kruettner family lost their son Dan Kruettner, 25 years old, a product of Trumbull Public Schools and a Marine who did two tours of duty in Afghanistan. On behalf of the Town of Trumbull and a grateful nation condolences were offered to the Kruettner family.

The second young man is David Wowk, 25 years old, a 2008 graduate of Trumbull High School and a product of the Trumbull School System. Thoughts and prayers are with his family on behalf of the Town of Trumbull deepest condolences to the Wowk family.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Paul Littlefield – 162 Hedgehog Circle - Not in favor of cutting Building Permit fees thinks the process is flawed

Carlos Vazquez – 171 Hedgehog Circle – Not in favor of cutting Building Permit fees.

Ed Horan – 79 Hedgehog Circle – Has lived at Hedgehog for three years, is a member of Development Board and is in favor of changes as they will improve quality of life.

Bob Lewis – 50 Hedgehog Circle, resident for five years, member of the Development Board is for the project.

Thelma Burr – 169 Hedgehog Circle, resident for 25 years, Member of Development Board is for the project.

Sandy Pond Fischer – 97 Hedgehog Circle resident since 2008, Member of Development Board is for the project.

BUSINESS:

Mr. London motioned to advance #6 RESOLUTION TC25-170: Moved by Mr. Scinto, seconded by Ms. Testani.

VOTE: Motioned CARRIED unanimously.

1. RESOLUTION TC25-170: Moved by Scinto, seconded by London.
BE IT RESOLVED, Whereas, the Housing Authority of the Town of Trumbull (THA), intends to apply to the State of Connecticut Department of Housing and the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority for financing and other sources of funding in order to undertake the redevelopment of Stern

Village; and Be It Further Resolved, That the Town of Trumbull supports the THA redevelopment project and authorizes the reduction of Building Permit Fees by 50% for the Stern Village Revitalization and Redevelopment Project and all related construction work during the calendar years of 2015 through 2018. (Full Resolution Attached)

First Selectman Timothy M. Herbst wanted to go on record stating the administration's position on this resolution. He is very pleased with what is going on up at Stern Village, and hears from many residents about the reforms that are being made by Ms. Polansky and that are benefitting Stern Village and its residents. It is rewarding to go into the Community Room and see an active Community Room once again and to see an engaged population that works with the staff, collaborates with staff and takes a team approach.

This revitalization is overdue. Stern Village has existed for over 40 years and there had not been any meaningful capital upgrade in forty years. We repave our roads every twenty years, which is standard operating procedure. We have renovated each and every one of our schools within the last twenty years with either a full renovation or partial renovation and we have neglected Stern Village. I have made the determination that we are not going to kick the can anymore we are going to solve problems not neglect them. We need to really make this facility modernized. One reason is that electric heat is currently at Stern Village. Connecticut has highest utility cost in the Continental US, second only to Hawaii, which is surrounded by water. When utilities equalize rent then we have a very big problem and that is not affordable housing and certainly is not affordable senior housing when seniors are struggling to pay utilities because the cost are that of what they are paying for rent. The plan that is before you this evening modernizes those facilities, makes them more energy efficient, allows seniors to age in place and have more discretionary income at their disposal so they are not feeling the big squeeze of trying to afford to stay in Trumbull. This project has my complete unequivocal support and is long overdue. Thanked Economic and Planning Director Ed Lavernoich and Harriet Polansky

Ms. Testani read abbreviated version of L&A Committee report

Mr. Lavernoich – funding is a competition, funding set aside by the State and there are federal tax credits that the project is eligible for. Need a show of support from host community to be able to emerge successfully from competition. Spoke with building official and does not feel that this request will be onerous on his department. Approximately \$90,000 reduction in permit fees is being requested in this resolution.

Mr. London asked if it would make more sense to waive permit fees in entirety, would this be a strong voice for support of project.

Mr. Lavernoich stated it would be a strong statement, but that there are real costs associated with project. This department runs pretty lean already and he is comfortable in asking for a reduction not a waiver of fees.

Mrs. Polansky introduced Development Team. Trumbull Housing Authority is a five-member commission and is a Trumbull Housing Authority Project not the Town of Trumbull. Stern Village is isolated and has infrastructure issues; storm drains, ledge, walks, entrances and interiors Ms. Polansky reviewed Stern Village handout packet with the committee.

Main points are as follows:

- THA is not funded by the Town of Trumbull
- Trumbull taxes do not support the THA.

- THA pays Pilot (Payment in lieu of taxes) to the Town for town services.
- THA is governed by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) and the Department of Housing (DOH). We are not HUD (Federal) property.
- A needs assessment study was conducted by CHFA and THA was deemed critical at risk. If nothing is done in the near future there will not be a THA. That is the issue at large.
- Page 5 represents major drainage issues.
- Page 7 shows the need for road repair and the long walk to the parking area for the residents.
- The state mandated a Resident Participation Plan and has been implemented.
- Age of Villagers/Residents are as follows: 90+ (12), 80+ (43), 70+ (55), 62+ (31), 18 – 61(55) and the 2014-2015 Wait List under 62 = (20), 62 – 80+ = (38). Approximately 1/3 of the residents are non-elderly/disabled.
- The project cost is approximately \$29 million due to infrastructure issues and they want to create the village to be “Aging in Place Affordable Housing” not “Housing at The Last Resort”. The units will be expanded from 325 s.f. to 500-600 s.f.
- Everything planned is based on the direction of CHFA and the DOH.
- This community is unique in the fact that this all on one piece of land. Other communities have units spread amongst different locations throughout their city.
- THA is self-sufficient because all of their income comes from the rents.
- A new community center is planned for the many resident programs and will have solar panels.
- Creation of new units is not allowed under this state project.
- The circle will be expanded to allow better access for emergency services and better access for parking.
- Funding comes from DOH - rental assistance. Rent will go up but everyone pays the same base rent. Rent is calculated by the residents’ income. The DOH will pay the difference between the base rent. If they don’t get the RAP (Rental Assistance Program) they can’t move forward.
- They are working with U.I. on different energy incentives, windows, doors, insulation, appliances etc.
- Working with CT Greenbank on solar
- The application is due April 20th but plan to submit on April 15th.

Ms. Polansky explained the rents are base rents. Everyone pays the same base rent. Mr. Earhart further explained there are four (4) base rents: \$110, \$125, \$300 and \$310. The \$300 and the \$310 are for any new residents coming in based on 30% of their income. Everyone else is at 27% of income. Currently the electric bills are taking a third or more of their income. This project is trying to work towards efficiencies that will lower the residents’ overall living costs. The resident only pays the base rent. There is an income level of no more than \$44,000. The new income level is going down to \$40,000 and is allowing raising the rent to \$600 but they will give them the RAP. All of the current residents are grandfathered in and can stay as long as they want at the rate they are paying now. The DOH will make up the difference. The reason they have to raise the rent is because of the investors at the 4% investment tax credit have to get a certain return. The investors are not looking to make money but to get tax credits from the IRS on any negative tax flow they may have. Most of the investors are local banks because they have to invest due to the Community Investment Act. It was confirmed for the committee that the people’s rents currently living there would not go up. Mr. Earhart stated as long as they get the RAP otherwise if they do not they cannot move forward with this. Ms. Polansky stated RAP stands for “Rental Assistance Program” and is provided by the DOH, (Dept. of Housing). Whether the THA charges \$600 or \$700, it does not matter the DOH has to make up the difference from the base rent for every

resident. This has been given to the residents in writing; Ms. Polansky has had multiple meetings with the residents explaining this and also has a Resident Development Committee that the residents voted on. Ms. Polansky and Mr. Earhart explained they will apply, if they receive the financing they will also get the RAP. They should know by July maybe August. The new residents moving in until this goes through will also be grandfathered in.

Ms. Testani asked if there is any plan to change heat source, which is currently electric. Mrs. Polansky stated the plan is to replace electric heat with heat pumps. Mr. Stellato stated that studies show a 35% - 50% reductions in heating bill. Thermal efficiencies also help heat pump to run more efficient

Ms. Penkoff supports project. What is the 4% and whom is it coming from. Ms. Polansky explained that the Community Reinvestment Act, Syndicator finds banks that want to reinvest in communities in order to get low-income housing tax credits from the IRS. They are helping us to fund the project, while funding part of it they will be able to write it off. Stern Village is a non-profit and has to have a limited partner and a general partner. The general partner is the directors of THA and a board of directors. The limited partner is going to be the syndicator. Different tax laws that go in to affect that have to be abided by in order to do this particular project. The THA is still in control and not the syndicator.

Mr. Devito – Does not understand why there are those that live at Stern are against the project as it appears that everything is being done the right way.

Mr. Wich – RAP is state money? Is this the money that will make up the rent difference for those residents that currently live at Stern Village and if this project were to happen what the rents will be? Ms. Polansky confirmed this is correct. Mr. Wich wanted to know if Ms. Polansky had an estimate on how much RAP money is going to be needed each year from the state. Ms. Polansky confirmed that they are still working on this as the application is due on 4/20 and they are still crunching out numbers. Ball Park estimate \$600 - \$700 thousand per year. Ms. Polansky explained that if we do not get the RAP we do not get the project.

Mr. Wich referred to CHFA Capital Plan of March 2014 that they described as the road map in doling out the \$3million over the next 10 years. In plan it said the Stern Village did not need any subsidy for Capital improvements over the next 20 years, trying to understand report on one hand and optimism on the other. Ms. Polansky explained that when the plan was done a lot of information was missing. 1. Prevailing wages. 2. Spoke about replacement, wanted to keep same non-efficient energy, such as electric heating that currently is there now, several things missing and this was brought to the State. Gave a baseline, Stern Village was deemed critical and at risk, it is all about viability. If we do not make these changes now while the money is here and are able to get into this funding round we are not going to be able to be sustainable.

Mr. Martin – Wanted to confirm that funding was not for additional units; Ms. Polansky confirmed this is correct it is for replacement units. Mr. Martin asked about 18 new units that are going to be included. Mr. Polansky explained that they will have to take down 18 units and there needs to be swing space for the residents while these units are being built. The State will not increase of units in the complex. Plan for while construction is going on is to have hotel/swing units. If someone decided to leave Stern Village, unit will not be rented it will be held so there is a place for current residents to go. Relocation plan is also a part of the application. Mr. Martin asked if the \$29 million dollars includes what is estimated for building fees with this part of application. Ms. Polansky confirmed that they are asking for a 50% reduction in fees. Mr. Martin asked if the \$90 reduction in fees would be put aside for future evaluation of other projects. Ms. Polansky stated that the \$90 would actually help with the energy efficiency. Mr. Martin has a heat pump in his house and does not feel that a heat pump is a very efficient way to heat, but

maybe there are heat pumps that are available now that are more efficient, surprised that this is the type of heating for the complex. Ms. Polansky said they did a lot of research and this is the best thing to do, low cost, cost effective and energy efficient. Mr. Martin asked if the THA is contributing any money into the project, Ms. Polansky confirmed that they are. Ms. Polansky is not sure of the amount and is not a part of requirement of application or grant to contribute. Mr. Stellato shared that project has an existing reserve that would transfer with the program. Believes numbers are one million four in and about \$3 million two out.

Ms. Llodra-Gilman asked how long the project would take. Ms. Polansky stated about 18 months or so. Ms. Llodra-Gilman asked about level or attrition so that they would be able to allocate the 20 unit for swing space, Mrs. Polansky confirmed yes, Ms. Llodra-Gilman asked with they would be assisting as well as funding the movement of people while they are moving to the swing space, Ms. Polansky confirmed yes, plan is to hire a relocation specialist, along with self and residence coordinator to help relocate, means packing, in new space have cable, lights, medical equipment etc.

Mrs. Tesoro – What is guarantee 7, 8 years from now into program that the RAP still exists? Nothing is typically guaranteed with state, is there a guarantee that this is grandfathered in? Ms. Polansky explained that grandfathered in means that the people that are currently are not going anywhere. The RAPS are tenant protection. Ms. Tesoro questioned if their rents are guaranteed 10 years down the road so that they can still stay there if let's say the rents go up to \$600. What may chase them out is an increase in rent that they cannot afford to pay. Ms. Polansky explained that there is temporary RAP and permanent RAP, Ms. Polansky stated yes there is a guarantee. Mr. Stellato stated the one who really is at risk here is CHFA. One state agency essentially guaranteeing another state agency payment, they guarantee applies within the funding mechanism itself. Debt load on this project is very small.

Mr. London has a heat pump in his office and finds it to be extraordinarily efficient both for heating and air conditioning.

Mr. London Motioned to call question, seconded by Mr. Pifko.

VOTE: 18-2 (AGAINST Mr. Wich and Ms. Testani) motion passes

VOTE: ADOPTED 18-1-1 (AGAINST, Mr. Wich), (ABSTENTION Mr. Martin)

2. RESOLUTION TC25-165: Moved by Ms. Seidell, seconded by Ms. Penkoff
BE IT RESOLVED, That the recommendation of the appointment by the First Selectman of Sami Bal of 57 Primrose Drive, be and the same is hereby approved by a 2/3 vote of the Town Council as an alternate member of the Ethics Commission for a term of December 1, 2014 through December 5, 2016.

Committee Report: The Legislative & Admin Commission met on March 30, 2015 and voted 3-2 (Against: Marconi & Thorton)

Mrs. Tesoro wanted the group to understand why they were objecting to this nomination. Under the Charter the Alternate Members cannot be from the same party. Right now we have an Alternate Member James Stapleton who is a Republican. That means that the second

alternate needs to be from a different party either Democratic or Unaffiliated voter. She submitted name back in November to be considered or interviewed for this position. The alternate was never interviewed although she did try to be interviewed and did respond to telephone calls although Ms. Arnow who seems to have a difference of opinion. The interview never did take place and come to find out when agenda was issued that there was a new candidate up for nomination and our candidate was not considered. The reason why I will not support this nomination is that spirit and intent of Charter is not being followed. If Mr. Herbst wants an unaffiliated voter, I think you can find an actually unaffiliated voter as I do not think Mr. Bal really is. He was a registered Republican for 35 years until March 23, 2015 when he changed his party affiliation so he can sit as an alternate on this commission. Largest group of voters in Trumbull is unaffiliated voter, think you can find a true unaffiliated voter out of all of those people. Candidate that we put up had stellar qualifications to be on this commission and is a female, only males on Ethics Commission. Has nothing to do with Mr. Bal personally.

Mr. Costatini –Disagrees respectfully with Ms. Tesoro. We do not know if the call was or was not made. Some people are registered to a party and are not very political. Sami Bal is an unaffiliated voter; he is qualified to sit on the Ethics Commission and meets all of the requirements.

Ms. Penkoff –Does not feel that anyone who volunteers their time in Trumbull should be treated the way this man was treated in an interview to serve on an Ethics Commission especially a man of the cloth. There is at least one member on this board whose husband changed his affiliation to vote in a primary. Should I call this person out for being unethical? This person is going to give his time and experience to the Town of Trumbull. He is more than worthy, more than capable and has all the qualifications to do so and I will be supporting him.

Ms. Testani –Anyone has the right to choose is party affiliation, there are democrats who change their party half way through their term and this is their right. I expect Democrats and Republicans to show respect to each other and supports Deacon Bal's

Mr. Pifco – goes on record to say that he was also appalled at behavior in the L&A meeting, shocked that some of the volunteers of the Town did not just get up and walk out. He is a fine man, honest man and has very right to change party affiliations.

Mr. Massaro called for VOTE

VOTE: ADOPTED 16-4 (AGAINST Ms. Tesoro, Ms. Thorton, Mr. Marconi, Mr. Wich), motion passes

3. RESOLUTION TC25-166: Moved by Ms. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. London.

BE IT RESOLVED, That Joseph Pifko of 158 Plymouth Avenue and Daniel Marconi of 40 Brookhedge Road, be and the same are hereby appointed as Co-Chairmen of the Senior/Community Center and Library Study and Building Committee.

Committee Report: The Legislative & Admin Commission met on March 30, 2015 and voted unanimously.

VOTE: ADOPTED unanimously

4. RESOLUTION TC25-167: BE IT RESOLVED, That RESOLUTION TC25-153 is hereby amended to provide that the Senior/Community Center & Library Study and Building Committee's membership shall consist of two (2) Town Council representatives and six (6) residents of the Town of Trumbull. HELD IN COMMITTEE
5. RESOLUTION TC25-168: BE IT RESOLVED, That Mary Isaac of 50 Skating Pond Road, be and the same is hereby appointed as a member of the Senior/Community Center and Library Study and Building Committee. MOOT POINT
6. RESOLUTION TC25-169: BE IT RESOLVED, That Lara Walden of 104 West Lake Road, be and the same is hereby appointed as a member of the Senior/Community Center and Library Study and Building Committee. MOOT POINT

There being no further business to discuss and upon motion made by Ms Testani, seconded by Ms. Colucci at 9:43 p.m. by unanimous consent.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Whetstone, Acting Clerk

FULL RESOLUTION

Whereas, the Housing Authority of the Town of Trumbull (THA), intends to apply to the State of Connecticut Department of Housing and the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority for financing and other sources of funding in order to undertake the redevelopment of Stern Village; and

Whereas, THA's proposed redevelopment project involves the moderate rehabilitation and modernization of 168 rental units, the construction of a new community center, the construction of 18 new rental units, and other improvements to the property, at a total development cost anticipated to exceed \$27,000,000; and

Whereas, Stern Village participates in the State of Connecticut's Elderly Rental Program, and is a valuable asset for the Town of Trumbull; and

Whereas, the THA intends to apply to the State-Sponsored Housing Portfolio Re-Capitalization Program in April 2015, competing with other eligible housing authorities and projects throughout Connecticut for limited resources; and

Whereas, the Town of Trumbull's support, financial or otherwise, will aid the THA in the aforementioned competition; and

Whereas, a reduction of the Building Permit Fees due to the Town would not only demonstrate the Town's support for the redevelopment project, but also improve the finances of the project, making it more likely to be selected for financing and other funding; and

Whereas, without the Town's support, the project is less likely to be chosen for financing and other funding:

Be It Resolved, That the Town of Trumbull supports the THA redevelopment project and authorizes the reduction of Building Permit Fees by 50% for the Stern Village Revitalization and Redevelopment Project and all related construction work during the calendar years of 2015 through 2018.