

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
Community Facilities Building Committee  
July 13, 2022 at 7:00pm – Trumbull Town Hall Council Chambers

Present Members:     Lori Hayes-O’Brien, Chairman  
                              Dawn Cantafio, Vice Chairman  
                              Mike Buswell  
                              Ted Chase  
                              Ron Foligno  
                              Gail Ritacco  
                              Dave Galla  
                              Tony Silber  
                              Dean Fabrizio - phone

Absent Members:     None.

Also Present:         Gia Mentillo, Committee Clerk  
                              James Cordone, Town Attorney

Residents:            Cynthia Penkoff, 101 Columbine Drive  
                              Michele Blaskey, 63 Flint Street  
                              Mary Murdoch, 11 Hardy Lane  
                              Elizabeth White, 169 Church Hill Road  
                              Patricia Kelly, 15 Gibson Avenue  
                              Julia Panella, 23 Limerick Road

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Public Comment:**

Chairman Hayes-O’Brien asked that members of the public introduce themselves before speaking and do their best to keep comments succinct, noting all are welcome to submit comments in writing. She stated the Committee’s charge to be to determine the nature of and location for a facilities building, reminding that the Town Council will determine whether the project moves forward.

Cynthia Penkoff of 101 Columbine Drive stated she is solely representing herself in her comments and no other organization or group she is a part of. Ms. Penkoff voiced her opposition to the project, stating it will destroy the neighborhood and is a cost the Town cannot currently afford. She asked that the Committee request that the Town Council revoke the Committee’s charge and disband the group (see exhibit 1 attached).

Michele Blaskey of 63 Flint Street stated her family heavily uses the Trumbull recreational programs and facilities and feels they are adequate for the needs of the Town, noting that Library meeting space is often available in the evenings. She also stated that a traffic study is unnecessary as current and prospective traffic issues are evident as-is.

Mary Murdoch of 11 Hardy Lane questioned why the Hardy Lane location is still being considered by the Committee, as consideration of other location was abandoned for problems similar to those of Hardy Lane. She cited a November 18, 2021 Trumbull Times article where Mr. Silber opposed another location due to its proximity to the Pequonnock River Valley and the increase to traffic in the area. Ms. Murdoch

also cited a November 7, 2020 Trumbull Times article which states the reason of the purchase of the Hardy Lane property to be to mitigate contamination to the Pequonnock River Valley. She also cited a report from a conservation specialist which highlighted the significance of the Pequonnock River Valley and identified the area in questions as being particularly impactful to the overall waterway.

Elizabeth White of 169 Church Hill Road voiced support for Ms. Murdoch's comments. She added that she does not support the use of any undeveloped land for this project and encouraged the Committee to utilize an existing structure in town.

Patricia Kelly of 15 Gibson Avenue voiced opposition to the project and asked that the Committee recommend to the Town Council that this facility be put on pause.

Julia Panella of 23 Limerick Road stated her opposition to the project, particularly in reference to the Hardy Lane location.

Public comment closed at 7:20pm.

### **Acceptance of June 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

MOTION MADE (Cantafio), seconded (Ritacco) to approve the June 15, 2022 joint meeting minutes. The motion carried (7 – 0). *Tony Silber and Dave Galla abstained.*

### **Discussion of Project:**

#### **Site Analysis Components**

Chairman Hayes-O'Brien stated that, based on discussions from the prior meeting, the Committee will be re-evaluating all prospective project locations. She stated that Town Staff has been asked to reconsider the pros and cons of each location and present their findings during the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Ms. Ritacca stated that, though some locations had significant reasoning for being removed from consideration, all locations should be re-evaluated in order to make such reasons clear to all. Mr. Galla voiced his support for this.

Mr. Boswell voiced support for the re-evaluation of locations, noting that some information may be considering differently given the changing economic climate. He also asked that existing structures throughout Trumbull be considered as well. The Chairman agreed with this, noting that Rina Bakalar, Director of Economic and Community Development, may be able to provide some prospective locations as she will be joining the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Mr. Silber stated he would like to narrow down the list of locations prior to hiring a professional to re-score all locations.

#### **Building Components**

Chairman Hayes-O'Brien asked the Committee for their input on the scoring criteria for prospective locations, citing the 19 previously used by the Committee.

Mr. Foligno stated he did not feel "central location" should be a criteria as the majority of people will likely drive to center and drive time will not change drastically based on the center's placement in town. The Chairman disagreed with this.

Mr. Buswell stated he would like to refine the list of building components before re-assessment of the properties. The Chairman, Mr. Galla, and Ms. Ritacca voiced disagreement, citing surveyed information from the senior center and library staff. The Chairman noted the only recent change to be the expansion of the gym space in order to allow more flex space within the facility and accommodate the growing demand for pickle ball locations.

Mr. Chase stated he would like the Committee to consider redeveloping existing town properties rather than creating a new facility on undeveloped land. He also asked that, when re-assessing properties, the Committee look at how structures on those properties have deteriorated since the last evaluation.

**Next Steps:**

The Committee determined they would narrow down the existing list of scoring criteria for properties in question, then have Town Staff re-evaluate the pros and cons of each location allowing the Committee will reduce the list of prospective locations (ideally to 3 or 4). Next, the Committee intends to hire a professional to restore the refined list of a locations.

Mr. Silber asked whether the Committee was tasked with considering the financial component of the new facility, and the Chairman stated the the Committee's charge is solely to provide the Town Council with an effective plan for the facility, though she feels creating a cost effective plan is a part of that.

Mr. Foligno asked whether the library and associated amenities are still be considered as part of the project in question. The Chairman clarified that the library is no longer being considered as previously decided by the Committee, noting she will provide the corresponding minutes to the Committee for confirmation as the Town Charter has not yet been updated to reflect such a change.

The Committee questioned what project components must be known in order for the Town to apply for grant funding. Town Attorney James Cordone informed that a "shovel ready" project is *typically* sought for grant funding but each grant opportunity has different requirements, noting that community support can also be an important component.

The Chairman informed she spoke with a several professionals who advised that any traffic study done should be done during the school year, noting that the Committee will be mindful of the cost when engaging such a study. She stated that Rina Bakalar, Dmitri Paris, and George Estrada will work to identify the pros and cons of each prospective project location as requested by the Committee, noting that a special meeting may be in order to evaluate their finds as quickly as possible.

**New Business:**

There was no new business.

**Adjournment:**

MOTION to adjourn made by Vice Chairman Cantafio, seconded by Commissioner Galla. The motion carried unanimously. The July 13, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Trumbull Community Facilities Building Committee adjourned at 8:12pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Gia Mentillo, Committee Clerk

Here we are again tonight as we continue to move forward with a project that will not only destroy a residential neighborhood but that we cannot afford as a town. Even less so than we could in 2017 when a large number of people currently serving in this administration said we could not afford it then. A traffic study, that if not done during the school year is just a waste of more taxpayer money as it will not be anywhere near accurate.

We are, as a town, as a state and as a nation in far worse shape now than we were in 2017. And I do not need not to remind you all that we have 7 schools that are an embarrassment, a sewer contract that expires in just a few years, the cost of which is more zero's than any of us want to see and no plan in place, roads that remain in disrepair; real needs in this town.

There is no shame in stepping back and saying, we mis-calculated and things have changed. As a matter of fact that is what real leaders do; they admit they have been paying attention and have changed their stance on a situation based on the information at hand.

We have all been watching and we have all been paying attention and if this committee and this administration has not, here are some facts. We are at the highest inflation in our history; over 40 years and we hit new highs every month. We are all paying closer to \$5/gal of gas than we are \$4 which is still too high. The majority of residents in this town have just been hit with the largest property tax increase they have ever seen and the cost to feed our families increases every single time our governor opens his mouth and the Democrat controlled legislature is called into session. My personal property taxes increased 28% or \$2151+ for no other reason than the fact it exists. A new family to town just reported theirs increased by 41%. They have been here a year. And



while they were looking forward to making a future here, they are now rethinking it.

The location being proposed for this monstrosity will destroy a family neighborhood and the largest investment any of those home owners will ever have. That is simply adding insult to injury and is disrespectful to each of them.

I respectfully ask this committee to do the right thing tonight. Vote to table this discussion and go back to the TC and request that they revoke their charge to continue moving forward with this project until the priorities of this town are put in order.

It is the right and responsible thing to do.