

TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC SPEAKING MEETING

MAY 19, 1998

6:30 P.M.

A meeting of the Wallingford Town Council held specifically for the purpose of offering the public an opportunity to speak on topics of concern to them was held on Tuesday, May 19, 1998 in the Robert Earley Auditorium of the Wallingford Town Hall and called to Order by Vice Chairman Raymond J. Rys, Sr. at 6:31 P.M. All Councilor answered present to the Roll called by Town Council Secretary Kathryn F. Zandri with the exception of Mr. Farrell who was vacationing in Italy and Chairman Parisi was vacationing in London. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. Was also in attendance. Attorney Janis M. Small and Comptroller Thomas A. Myers were absent from the meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given to the Flag.

John A. Young, 104 Pierson Drive requested ten minutes to speak to the Council.

Mr. Young asked, where do we stand on the open space purchase with the thirty day window that we have? I noticed that there is one foundation in on the Route 68 parcel, Terrell Property, and they are putting more footings; they can't go fast enough up there. What happens after thirty days?

Mayor Dickinson responded, after thirty days the issue is the effectiveness of the ordinance. If there is not a petition on the ordinance, it would be effective and we would evaluate our interest at that point in going ahead immediately and posting the required amount of money with the court and we would become owners. The relative value of any work done out there would have to be considered in the overall valuation of the property.

Mr. Young stated, it looks like he is trying....they are going to put a couple of houses in there or at least try to before the 30th and then say that you are going to have to pay him for eighty homes. I don't know what their motive is but....

Mayor Dickinson replied, obviously, the longer the time they have to build the more money they look for.

Mr. Young stated, in reading some of the articles in the paper recently this is a sham; it is a sin. You people voted 7-1 to acquire this open space and now you have some people who seem to have a motive to stop it. I see people at the dedication out here and a councilman getting petitions signed for a referendum; at the Council meeting tonight getting petitions signed. This is no place to get petitions or out at a public ceremony; it is a disgrace. The way they pulled you people apart; Mr. Centner, Mr.

... and the Mayor in the paper, I don't think it was right. You are doing the right thing. I loved Wallingford; you have read it. I have contacted a lot of you people and I have a right to call my Councilors. I have called the Mayor's Office to get an answer. If they don't think I am right they will tell me I'm not right. If I ask them to back me up on something and they think it is right, they will. The Mayor has given me his opinion; he has told me he thinks I am wrong, if I am right. Bob Parisi has been very helpful to me; all of you people have. If you think I am wrong, you tell me. I think what you are doing here is right and I see in the paper that they are asking to re-consider the vote. I hope you never do that. Stick to your guns. I think you did the right thing. We cannot use anymore traffic in this town, I am sorry. It took me twenty minutes to get from Stop and Shop to Hope Hill Road at 5:00 P.M. At noon it is really tough when everyone is coming out to go to lunch. It is congested. Any you want to give them room for eighty houses here and fifty houses here; you are talking about three hundred more cars to add to the mix. Where are you going to put them? We are stymied now in this town and you are calling for a moratorium on building; I think you are doing the right thing. Stick to your guns and hopefully the referendum.....you won't get enough votes and I don't think people will come out and vote for it anyway. I think they are being duped. All someone is saying to them is, it is going to cost you \$4.5 million. Wasn't this money put.....you have money to purchase open space, correct? Isn't it more or less put aside?

Mayor Dickinson stated, we have a capability of purchasing the open space, that is correct.

Mr. Young stated, people think this is going to come out of their pockets and their taxes are going to go up, etc. This is all they are being told, that is will cost them \$4.5 million.

Mayor Dickinson explained, any expenditure of money has an impact upon tax rates. The question is, with the adoption of any public policy, what is the appropriate way to spend money? There are those who feel that the purchase of open space helps to control what the town will look like and plan for it. There are those who will not agree with that or disagree with a particular piece of open space. Any expenditure of money effects what everyone pays. The question is, is it an appropriate expenditure of money.

Mr. Young stated, the articles by the editors the other day; he is saying we don't have a plan. Rich (Centner) explained the plan at that meeting. Does the editor have a plan for the traffic? Does he have a plan for the new schools we are going to need; police, fire, etc.? Where is his plan? You people are doing the right thing; at least eight of you are. Stick to your guns and put a moratorium on building, we don't need it. I can see building a few houses here and there; I am not against it. These developers coming in from out of town and grabbing up our space; the original developer for the parcel on Route 68 grabbed his money and he is long gone. They come in and make their money and run. Let's say enough is enough. You are doing a great job, keep it up; stop the building.

Mr. Rys corrected Mr. Young explaining that the Council is not calling for a moratorium. That was published by one of the editors. We are not calling for a moratorium for building. Another thing you have to realize is that government has its Charter which allows the public, if they don't like what we are doing here, to collect signatures and go through the referendum process. You can't fault the people for that. That is how they exercise their rights.

Mr. Young stated, it was not proper to be done in the places that they were doing it. It may have been a disgrace to you, Mr. Rys, being a Vietnam Veteran; taking signatures out at a dedication for American Legion. That is a slap in the face to the veterans as far as I am concerned.

Mr. Rys stated, people have the right to do what they want. The paper has their opinion as do the individuals up here. We all express our opinions at one time or another.

Mr. Young stated, you people got slaughtered in this paper and it is not right.

Reginald Knight, 21 Audette Drive stated, I have been listening to Mr. Young and I can see his point view. I was one of the individuals who was signing up people for the referendum. I did not go and ask anyone to sign those forms, they came to me and asked me if I had forms. Also, I have the greatest respect for the veterans of foreign wars, I was in Europe and I saw what the American people did for Europe. I have been in the armed forces myself so I know what the score is. I also know that the whole idea of those people going to war is to protect the privileges of the people to speak and I don't think that anyone should stop that. I would like to answer that with all due respect to the gentleman on my left (Mr. Young). I did not go after anyone, they came to me and I had the forms and they signed them. Regarding this land acquisition, I do feel strongly, lots of people speak to me about it; they are very strongly against the method. With all due respect, I did not see anyone charging to stop the building on Hope Hill Road; there is huge housing estates both to the right side and a condominium on the left and nobody started shouting green space going away. The Ahearn apartments up by the golf course; nobody said anything about green space going away. Out there by the soccer fields, there is new housing there and the only problem we had there was when the Land Trust started a bit of a barney with the developers but I did not hear anyone shouting green space, etc., etc. Again, with all due respect, all of a sudden we get areas close to people; either the Mayor or Town Council. This is my opinion and I feel I have the right to express it. It seems a very odd coincidence because these things are adjacent to their property and all of a sudden there is great concern for green space. Myself, I am very concerned for green space but I believe there is a better way of doing it. Develop a plan to approach people long before it comes to the develop stage, ask for first dibs on the property and bargain for it like anyone else before it gets to the development stage

where we have to argue and go to court and all of that nasty business like we had on the west side with the sewers. We are all citizens of the town who do not want to end up with a "ghetto-type" of town. We want green, we want open, we want trees, we want park land but there is a better way of doing it.

On a separate matter, why does the Chairman ask, "Is there any comment from the public?" and then, when the public starts to comment, repeatedly, repeatedly, ask them, "What is your question?" "What is your question?" when he has asked for comment and they are giving comment. Mr. Centner read it from the meeting procedures, that comment is what it is about, not just questions. I don't think that the people who step up here.....they are very nervous like myself and they should not be interrupted with, "What's your question?", "What's your question?", that is not the point. Especially when the question is asked of you, "any comment from the public?" Thank you for listening to me.

There were no other speakers at this time.

tion was made by Mr. Zappala to Adjourn the Meeting, seconded by Mr. Centner.

VOTE: Farrell and Parisi were absent; all others, aye; motion duly carried.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

Meeting recorded and transcribed by:

Kathryn F. Zandri
Kathryn F. Zandri
Town Council Secretary

Approved by: *Robert F. Parisi* 6/19/98
Robert F. Parisi, Chairman Date

Rosemary A. Rascati 6-19-98
Rosemary A. Rascati, Town Clerk Date