

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Town Council Chambers

January 12, 2016

6:30 p.m.

RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES

The Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Town Council was called to order at 6:35 p.m.
The Opening Prayer was given by Rev. Margaret Jay, First Congregational Church, Wallingford.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were: Chairman Vincent Cervoni; Vice-Chair Tom Laffin; Councilors John LeTourneau; Robert Parisi; Jason Zandri; John Sullivan; Craig Fishbein Vincent Testa; Christopher Shortell; Joseph Marrone

Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr., Town Attorney G.E. Farrell, Sr. were also at the meeting.
Comptroller Jim Bowes was not in attendance.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

3a. Consider and Approve Tax Refunds totaling \$843.19 (#445-454) Acct. # 1001001-41020/Tax Collector

3b. Consider and Approve Acceptance of Donation of Funds in the Amount of \$75 and Consider and Approve Appropriation of Funds in the amount of \$75 to Donations Revenue Acct. #2134002-47152 and to Expenditure Acct. #21340100-55830/Youth & Social Services

3c. Consider and Approve Acceptance of Donation to Holiday for Giving Program in the amount of \$25 and Consider and Approve Appropriation of Funds in the amount of \$25 to Donations Revenue Acct. #22640150-58830 Youth & Social Services

3d. Consider and Approve Appropriation in the amount of \$100 to Revenue Acct. #2264002-47152 and to Expenditure Acct. #22640150 -58830/Youth & Social Services

3e. Consider and Approve Appropriation in the amount of \$250 to Revenue Acct. #2264002-47152 and to Expenditure Acct. #22640150-58830/Youth & Social Services

3f. Consider and Approve Acceptance of Donation in the amount of \$2,500 for the Holiday for Giving program and Consider and Approve Appropriation in the amount of

\$2,500 to Donations Revenue Acct. #2134002-47152 and to Expenditures Acct. #21340100-58830/Youth & Social Services

3g. Consider and Approve a Transfer of \$5,000 to Program Planning Professional Services –Small Cities Acct. TBD from Contingency-General Acct. #1009000-58820/Program Planning.

3h. Consider and Approve Appropriation in the amount of \$7,072 for Fire Watch Services to Misc. Revenue Acct. #1009052-47040 and to Replacement Pay Acct. #10020150-51500/Fire Department

3i. Consider and Approve Transfer of \$1,088 to Glass Replacement Acct. #TBD from Maint. Of Buildings & Grounds Acct. #10020050-54315/Police Department

3j. Consider and Approve Transfer of \$63,400 to Waste & Compost Acct. #10030000-56754 from Recycling Contract Acct. #100300000-56752/Public Works

3k. Consider and Approve Transfer of \$12,926 to Capital Account Hot Water Heater-Senior Center Acct. TBD from Maint. of Building Acct. #100300000-54315/Public Works

3l. Consider and Approve Resolution to contract with the US FDA Retail Program Standards Division to educate and train staff utilizing the FDA Program Standards in the amount of \$3,000/Health Department

3m. Consider and Approve Appropriation in the amount of \$3,000 to FDA Standards Acct. #TBD-Fund #250 and to FDA Standards Acct. #TBD-Fund #250/Health Department

3n. Consider and Approve Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to enter into an Agreement with State of CT Division of Emergency Services and Public Protection for an FFY 2015 Homeland Security Grant Program/Fire Department

3o. Consider and Approve reappointment of Loren Lettick to the Personnel and Pensions Board for the 5 Year term effective immediately and expiring on December 31, 2020/Mayor

3p. Approve Minutes of December 15, 2015 Regular Town Council Meeting

4. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda – None

Motion to approve Consent Agenda Items 3a -3p

Made by: Laffin

Seconded by: Fishbein

Vote: 7-0-2 (Zandri and Shortell abstaining).

5. Public Question & Answer Period

Gina Morgenstein, S. Main Street, welcomed the new Council members and appreciate their work, and asked the Council to work across the aisle. She asked the Council value the service of the public, just as the public values the service of the Council and noted we are a community, stating that some serve this Community by attending the Council meetings twice a month; some by watching on TV and others by serving on the Boards and Commissions.

Ms. Morgenstein pointed out that two years ago, the right of the public to question on non-voting matters was eliminated. She cited a meeting for the Coalition of a Better Wallingford which did a school survey where no members of the public could give their opinions. She asked the Council to consider re-instating the ability of the public to speak on non-agenda voting items.

Chairman Cervoni said the Council will be re-visiting the rules, noting there is an item on tonight's agenda for the Council to re-visit their rules and procedures.

Paul Ciardullo, 2 Bayberry Drive, said the Council is the most important element in the checks and balances dimensions in government and this includes taxes and a range of items. He said the Council sits between the taxpayer and potentially the excesses of government.

He said he believed Wallingford has been overtaxing. He pointed out there was a Petitioning Candidate for Mayor who ended up running on a "no new taxes" platform and garnered 2,300 votes noting he is not the lone voice in this overtaxing belief. Mr. Ciardullo cited as an example, the fact that the budget year ended with approximately \$5,400,000 in revenue beyond what was needed. He said this included a 2.6% tax increase two years ago. Mr. Ciardullo said last May, the current year's budget was approved with another tax increase. He said he was confused on how the Town didn't know to some extent there would be a surplus, but had to wait for the audit.

Mr. Ciardullo said the Council has a heavy challenge and responsibility, and said he hoped they would be more proactive, thorough and aggressive in pursuing this issue. He asked Chairman Cervoni what he intended to do about this issue. Chairman Cervoni said this is an issue appropriate during budget time, but believes the Council will work with the upcoming budget with a sharper pencil as it possibly can, bearing in mind the Town has to operate.

Mr. Ciardullo proposed the Council be proactive now before the budget process starts and deliver a message to the administration as a minimum of no tax increase for next year based on his presented data. He said he would like to see a public hearing on this. Chairman Cervoni noted the process always begins with a public hearing and noted there are parts of the budget which develop independently from the Council.

Mr. Ciardullo said he would like to see an agenda item that the Council votes on which is a mandate to the Mayor noting there is \$317 million of net tangible assets and \$27 million in cash available to us. He asked if there was anyone on the Council now who would be willing to put the issue on the agenda, i.e., a vote and discussion on no new tax increases for this year. Chairman Cervoni said per charter, there is no point in the Council doing this because the budget process is delineated in the charter. He pointed out that any Council can send him an agenda request for consideration.

Ken Daily, 194 N. Elm Street, spoke about problems he sees with the paving process and noted he has had to shovel stone from the road paving off his lawn every month. He said he was concerned about possible damage to his snowblower from loose paving stone.

Rick Bergerois, Ortense Drive, spoke about problems he had with the construction of his home in 2006-2006. He said he contacted Mayor Dickinson and spoke about the one-year State warranty for new homes. He said he will present photo documentation and a report at next month's Council meeting and wants to put a claim against the Town because he believes the building inspectors were never in the home.

Mayor Dickinson said because the event took place in 2005-2006, this would affect the Town's liability. He said there is a statute of limitation, but if a claim is made, the Town's insurance would deal with it. He re-emphasized there is a significant lapse of time from when this issue occurred. Chairman Cervoni said he would get in touch with Mr. Bergerois.

End of Public Q & A – 7:08 p.m.

6. Discussion and Action regarding authorizing the Council Chairman to communicate an asking price for sale of 188 N. Cherry Street/Chairman Cervoni.

Appearing in front of the Commission was Atty. Norm Fishbein and Michael Masella, abutting property owner.

Chairman Cervoni went over the property history. He said he was contacted by Atty. Fishbein because his client, Mr. Masella, is an abutting property owner who believes he could benefit by purchasing the Town-owned property. Chairman Cervoni said a \$10,000 offer was made and an appraisal made by the Town Tax Assessor.

Councilor Craig Fishbein recused himself from participation in this matter.

Atty. Norm Fishbein showed photographs which showed the section of the overgrown property which borders Mr. Masella's property. He said this matter began in the spring of 2015. Atty. Norm Fishbein said Mr. Masella approached the Town regarding the overgrowth, and was told he needed to contact the Electric Division which has utilities on the property. Atty. Fishbein said Mr. Masella was directed back to the Town and then back again to the Electric Division.

Atty. Norm Fishbein said vines, poison sumac and animals are coming through the fence. He said if Mr. Masella were the owner of the property, it would be maintained. Atty. Norm Fishbein said the other abutting property owner, Tunde Kovacs, discussed the possibility of joint ownership by dividing the property into two pieces to allow her to have access. He said an agreement was worked out between Masella and Kovacs. Atty. Norm Fishbein noted that in an agreement could not be worked out with Wallingford, Atty. Norm Fishbein suggested the Town either maintain the property or sell it to Ms. Kovacs and Mr. Masella.

Mayor Dickinson said the Electric Division has 24 hour a day access to the facilities which are on the property. He said he wasn't aware of the removal of overgrowth on the property was the issue. He said he would look into this. Atty. Norm Fishbein said his client has no intention to

block access to the Electric Division's utilities. Councilor Fishbein asked if the property were sold would the utility easement plan. Atty. Farrell explained there is no easement, the Town owns the property with Electric Division utilities in place. He said he is the Attorney for Ms. Kovacs and noted he spoke with an Electric Division representative who said the Division didn't object to the sale of the property, only that full access to the utilities remain. Atty. Farrell pointed out that if the property is sold, a public hearing will have to take place.

Councilor Sullivan asked why the property wasn't maintained and said it appeared the abutters wanted the property cleaned up initially and want to purchase it to keep it cleaned up. Mr. Masella said this property is an eyesore and has no value to the Town. He said if he and Ms. Kovacs purchase it, the Town will receive property taxes and their liability will be diminished.

Councilor LeTourneau suggested if the property was sold, a permanent easement should be created for the Electric Division. Atty. Farrell said the deed would retain the easement and would bind the owner and purchaser to this. Councilor Sullivan said he insists the Town clean the property up and stated he wasn't that enthusiastic about selling the property.

Councilor Zandri said he looked at the lot and said while he agrees the property should be cleaned up and maintained, we have abutting property owners who are willing to purchase the land. He noted this property is a non-conforming lot and said the argument that anything would be able to be built there is shallow because he believed the variances would never be able to be obtained because of the equipment Right-of-Way. He said equipment would not be able to access the property with a structure on it and noted the proposal to sell the property to adjacent property owners was a win-win situation. He said the Town would have an easement and a property owner and adjacent property owner willing to purchase the lot. Councilor Zandri said he would be supportive of a public hearing to sell the property.

Atty. Norm Fishbein said the agenda item just authorizes the Chairman to communicate an asking price. He noted there is no agreement or contract. Mayor Dickinson said in order to have a meaningful public hearing, a price would have to be known. Vice-Chair Laffin said the assessed value of the property is \$13,300 to \$16,000 and \$10,000 is being offered. He said he didn't have a problem with this and supported moving forward with further discussion. Mr. Masella address the possible parking problem stemming from the new railroad station. He said he and Ms. Kovacs would make the property look like part of their properties so as to not have it used as an overflow parking lot.

Councilor Zandri addressed the possibility of parking on this lot. He said this is an argument for the private residents to purchase this lot, it would be there responsibility. He said there is a common offer and this should move forward and be put on the agenda for a public hearing.

Motion to authorize Chairman Cervoni, Town Council Chairman, to communicate an asking price for the sale of 188 N. Cherry Street with the advisement of the Law Dept. and the Assessor's Office.

Made by: Laffin

Seconded by: Zandri

Public Comments

Gina Morgenstein, S. Main Street, questioned if there would be a conflict of interest noting that Ms. Kovacs, the other adjoining property owner, had retained Town Attorney Farrell as her Attorney in this matter and if Corporation Counsel Janis Small should be retained by the Town in this matter.

Chairman Cervoni said this was a fair question, noting that the Law Dept. will deal with this issue appropriately.

Larry Morgenstein, S. Main Street, asked about the transformers and if there were environmental concerns.

James Hine, 342 S. Elm Street, said this was a no brainer to allow these residents to purchase it from the Town. Tunde Kovacs, the other abutting property owner, pointed out she had been cleaning the other side of the property for 25 years and noted she never submitted a bill to the Town. She said she was concerned about the transformer on the property and if anything failed, it would be the responsibility of the owner. She said equipment would have to enter the property for repair. She said she has had access as needed to the back of her property as needed, and in order to have access again, she will have to purchase the abutting property and said if this is the only way, she will have discussions. She spoke about the liability and the parking issue, noting she will not be able to do anything about this. She said she can't build on the property. She also asked about snow removal in the easement.

Atty. Farrell noted that if the Town needed access, they would have to get in the property themselves. Atty. Norm Fishbein noted that since this is the Town's utility, it is the Town's responsibility to maintain it. Councilor Zandri said there is a demarcation of what the Town is responsible for and what a homeowner or business is responsible for.

Chairman Cervoni said if this is a line that provides a service to a property, it is the owner's responsibility once the line leaves the curb, but if it is the Electric Division's line, then it will be the Electric Division's responsibility. Ms. Kovacs said in November when there was a line failure, the property owner was responsible for the repair because the line failed underground. She said if this happens on N. Cherry Street, she has to have access.

Mayor Dickinson said he didn't believe the sale of this property would have any impact on the Electric Division and its rules and processes in maintaining service.

Chairman Cervoni called for a Roll Call vote.

Laffin-yes; LeTourneau-yes; Marrone-yes; Shortell-yes; Sullivan-yes; Testa-yes; Zandri-yes; Chairman Cervoni-yes.

Motion passes.

Chairman Cervoni took the agenda in the following order:

9. Discussion and possible action on various initiatives to promote downtown development and revitalization, including, but not limited to the following:

Tax Incentives for development in IHZ and TOD zone

Public/Private partnerships to secure grants and funding assistance
Public ownership and operation of parking facilities
Public purchase and packaging of properties for resale
Councilor Testa

Councilor Testa said he requested this item to begin what he hopes will be ongoing discussions regarding initiatives by the Town to promote redevelopment and economic development in the downtown, specifically lower Center Street and the area surrounding the new train station. He spoke about the Incentive Housing Zone which Planning & Zoning created, and noted as to date, there has been no movement by developers to take advantage of this. Councilor Testa also spoke about the Transit Oriented District and the Plan of Conservation and Development. He spoke about the Town being financially invested, i.e., purchasing property or investing in currently owned property, tax incentives and partnering with private entities by acting as a grant sponsor.

Appearing in front of the Council was Kacie Costello, Town Planner, and Don Roe, Program Planner. Ms. Costello said the Planning & Zoning Commission was in the process of pursuing opportunities in the Center Street area. She also provided an update on the Plan of Conservation and Development, (POCD), and the Transit Oriented District, (TOD). She said the Council should be seeing a draft of the POCD in early to mid-February and a draft of the TOD study in the near future. She said the TOD study is based on the half mile radius around the new train station, i.e., the southernmost part of the train station which specifically looks at what would be appropriate to the Town and what the Town could do to take advantage of this.

Ms. Costello said the Incentive Housing Zoning is a type of TOD housing, that it be transit oriented and near certain modes of transportation. She said the "incentives" in the IHZ are the allowance of higher density development for the developer as tax incentives. Ms. Costello asked the consultant to determine if the IHZ should be expanded and doing a "sister" TOD zone. Ms. Costello said she has met with many developers concerning the IHZ and said there is some interest and has a positive feeling about the potential, but noted there are some obstacles, such as accumulating properties, the financing of some of these properties and the cost of some of these properties.

Ms. Costello said the Planning & Zoning has options, and noted the downtown would probably be the first area pursued when the POCD is completed. She pointed out that some of the parking requirements could be reduced and some zoning could be modified. Ms. Costello spoke about the Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

In answer to Chairman Cervoni's question regarding Parker Place and N. Washington, Ms. Costello spoke about the DA Overlay, (Downtown Apartment) Overlay District which allows the developer to apply for a special permit to construct multi-family. She said that zone is in place but noted every property in the TOD would not have this overlay available. She also spoke about streetscape improvements and pedestrian linkage between the train station and the lower Town Center area.

Mr. Roe spoke about financial incentives on the Economic Development side. He said the Business Incentives and Retentions Committee began work on a possible incentive program for

downtown about half a year ago, noting that all Town incentives expire Dec. 31 of this year. Mr. Roe said a program would be framed which would be useful for a variety of users, not just big developers. He spoke about historic property tax credits being used along with the TIF. He said the 2015 statute adopted by the Legislature makes it easier to consider this option.

Chairman Cervoni said he was excited the approval of the DA overlay stating he hopes this will provide some spark in the area. Councilor Zandri asked about the Incentive Housing Zone and what would be permitted for building. He asked if commercial businesses would be located on the first floor, office space on the second and then housing. Ms. Costello explained there are three sub-districts to the IHZ, the core sub-district around the old train station and over to Meadow Street. She said the other two sub-districts are the Meadow Street sub-district composed of five properties which allow town houses, the N. Cherry Street sub-district to Parker Street which allows for mixed use and fully residential development.

Councilor Zandri spoke about parking garages and noted in New Haven they are maximum utilized for the monthly commuter card holders and for people who purchase monthly passes in the nearby apartments. He said in West Haven, parking is \$6 per day or a six-month pass can be purchased for \$300 adding that nights and weekends are free. He said it is a nice balance and cars are not there 24-7. Councilor Fishbein spoke about paid parking which he said he is in favor of. He said Middletown does a fantastic job noting their parking lots are meticulous. Councilor Fishbein said Middletown has paid parking and is in favor of this discussion for Wallingford. He spoke about the TIF and asked why the discussion stopped.

Mr. Roe said this ties into how a Tax Incentive Program will be designed. He said because this is the year all incentives are worked on, he believes this will be discussed and look to advance something this year. Councilor Fishbein said EDC has been talking about this for a year but never came to the Council. He said he is in favor of a tax abatement program if a developer does an IHZ. Councilor Fishbein spoke about the winery regulations and asked why this can't be done with parking. He said a parking study is needed now so everything can come together at the same time. Ms. Costello said there is no money to hire a consultant to do a parking study for this year. She said there also isn't enough internal staff to perform this study. Councilor Fishbein said the last parking study was performed in 2008. He asked about the cost of the study. Mr. Roe clarified that the study was actually a survey which is different than a parking study. He said there needs to be information to do a parking study.

Councilor LeTourneau thanked Councilor Sullivan for bringing up this topic. He said he would like to see this topic go past the discussion stage. He said a lot of ideas were brought up tonight. Councilor LeTourneau said there needs to be some glue to these pieces. He suggested workshops with EDC, P&Z. He said after nine years on the Council, parking is still being discussed. He said at some point this has to be done, and said his fear is that the energy for this project is in pockets and must all be pulled together. He suggested breaking this off by beginning with a workshop and have everyone sit down at one time, pick one issue, talk about it and move forward. Councilor LeTourneau said he fears two years from now, we will still be discussing this. He said he went through Meriden on Colony Street and noted they are light years ahead of Wallingford. He noted a massive building with a sign "TOD". He said Meriden got it done and is time for Wallingford to do the same.

Chairman Cervoni said there should be discussions on the process and what the Council's involvement should be. He suggested coming up with a series of talking points to have focused and directed meetings. Ms. Costello said when the POCD comes out, there will be recommendations made and will be up to each suggested agency to take this up. She said there will be prioritization of things based on their desirability level and plausibility. She said there is a purpose to this and noted the POCD is very action oriented. Councilor Testa said when the Council meets with other organizations, the Council should have in mind what we want to consider; are we interesting in purchasing property or interested in running parking. He said the Council should talk about these ideas now and which ones we are willing to go forward with. He said he likes the idea of tax abatements as suggested by Councilor Fishbein and recommended implementing a committee to implement these ideas or have another agenda item soon to discuss this.

Councilor Fishbein said he is in favor fostering private development of property. Councilor LeTourneau said he would like to discuss TIF or a tax incentive in a workshop. Councilor Zandri said three or four years ago when a cycle of properties came up for sale near the old railroad station, the Council sitting at the time, never expressed a solid interest in purchasing the properties. He said Wallingford has been purchasing available land since the 1950's and said one of the Council's job is purchasing property.

Mayor Dickinson said the Town did consider all of these properties, but the pricetag was beyond the appraised value. He said purchasing property for municipal use is one thing, but if the Town isn't purchasing for a private party, this is an entirely different question. He noted once the Town owns a property, and sells it to someone else, there has to be public hearings and lengthy discussions, its aggravated more when it is for a third party. He said this is a difficult path to follow.

Councilor Sullivan said he is looking forward to the POCD in February and noted there are challenges with the Hall Avenue property. Councilor Shortell said he was in favor of everything proposed except for the purchase of property when there is no clear use for it. He said he is worried about the POCD and that will it solve everything. He said he hopes we don't take the POCD and not put it on the shelf for another 10 years.

Public Comments

Larry Morgenstein, S. Main Street, said that Ms. Costello and members of the Committee have been committed to public participation and said to move forward and have a unified plan, the public must be behind this. He said when people are not unified, things go wrong. He noted that over 1,800 people responded to the survey and they want to be involved. He said if this is going to work, people need buy-in and if it comes from a small group, things could go wrong. He said the POCD has done a wonderful job including the public and hopes it continues.

Gina Morgenstein, S. Main Street, said she hears repeatedly regarding the conception of the rail and commuting is not going to take place. She said the State is investing a lot of money on transit and this is the future. She said people need to think about getting out of their cars and biking and walking, and Wallingford needs to get into step with the fact that with proper development, young professionals can be attracted to Wallingford. She said a building can be

built near the railroad tracks and the Council needs to realize the 21st century is here and Wallingford will hopefully be moving into it.

John Walworth, 28 Laurel Wood Drive, said she worked on the POCD 20 years ago. He said a development czar is needed. He shared a document regarding strategies regarding tax incentives and having the Electric Division and Water & Sewer Divisions participate in the incentive plan. He suggested gaining as much knowledge as possible of what a developer needs to do to accomplish a project and that a timeline be established, and possibly having the POCD meet bi-weekly.

Public Comments closed at 8:51 p.m.

Ms. Costello said if there are options or opportunities the Council wants to explore further, she would be happy to accommodate as well as would the Planning and Zoning Commission.

7. Discussion and Possible Action on the Town Council Appointing a Charter Revision Commission/Councilor Fishbein

Councilor Fishbein said in 2009 there was a move to modify the charter and in his opinion the process became political. He said prior to 1958, local governance was ruled by the State and any changes of how a Town operated had to be approved by the State. He noted at that point the Home Act Rule was established and Wallingford created their own charter. He said this charter has been revised five times and noted there are specific areas of the charter which should be addressed.

He said the Town Clerk should be a regular civil service position and for stability in that office, he doesn't see a reason for the Council to appoint the Town Clerk. Councilor Fishbein said there should be changes in the Building Dept. where the charter states the Building Inspector shall be the Zoning Enforcement officer where in fact the Zoning Enforcement Officer position is budgeted in the Planning & Zoning office which he said makes sense but noted the charter should be changed to reflect this. Councilor Fishbein said another possible area of change in the charter involves the Public Utilities Commission. He said currently, the Council has veto power over any action taken by the PUC by seven votes within 14 days of the PUC action. He said the Council doesn't get timely notice of anything the PUC does citing the Inflow and Infiltration reimbursement program.

Councilor Fishbein said it was represented to the Council there would be a component from the property owner and a component from the Water Division, and what ended up happening was the PUC decided there would be no buy-in from the property owner and he didn't approve of this. He said the Council received notice two days before the fourteen days ran and said the charter should reflect a notice procedure and that the veto power of the Council doesn't extinguish until 14 days after notice, not action.

Councilor Fishbein said that a commission be created to discuss these items and make recommendations. He said the PUC as of the last budget have control over approximately \$75 million in revenue and approximately \$80 million in expenses. He suggested the PUC have five commissioners instead of three. Chairman Cervoni suggested the Council get advice from the Law Dept on the charter revision issue. Atty. Farrell said the Law Dept. advises it would take

2/3 vote of the Council as required by C.G.S. 7-180 (8)(b). to change the charter. He said the Law Dept. will provide a roadmap of the process.

Councilor LeTouneau asked how long this would take. Atty. Farrell said he would ask Corporation Counsel Janis Small for a timeframe. He said he would report back at the next Council meeting. Councilor Fishbein asked what was wrong with the 2009 document issued because the statute hasn't changed. Atty. Farrell said there was nothing wrong with it. Councilor Fishbein asked Atty. Farrell to ask Atty. Small for that document so this can be discussed at the next Council meeting.

Councilor Fishbein suggested this item be tabled to the February Council meeting. He requested Chairman Cervoni put this item back on the February Council agenda. Chairman Cervoni said the item will be put on the agenda.

ITEM TABLED TO THE FEBRUARY MEETING.

8. Discussion and Possible Action on issuing a Request for Proposal relative to the real property commonly known as the Wooding-Caplan property/Councilor Fishbein

Councilor Fishbein said he was totally against the Mayor's suggestion of this property being a communications center and said he would like to see another suggestion from an outside developer. He said there have been discussions about this at the POCD meetings noting that most people were in favor of some sort of development. He said all of the choices should be in front of us and would cost nothing for a Request for Proposal. He said this would be a move forward when speaking about downtown development in putting this property back on the tax roles, noting the Town has owned this property since 1992.

Chairman Cervoni recalled there was a study on the property. Mayor Dickinson said he wanted to make clear is the building would be used, which is next to the Police Dept. property. He said the entrance would be from the Police Dept. He said other sites would be looked at in the proposal which doesn't give the Town authority to hire an entity to provide the information. He said the study is to review several sites besides Wooding-Caplan. Mayor Dickinson said this study is centered on a combined dispatch which he said makes economic sense and is in harmony with State of CT. directives and policy and may result in Wallingford receiving money.

Councilor LeTourneau said the Caplan office building is an important piece to the property and noted he sat on the committee nearly three and a half years and an extensive study was done. He said it was a good commission and got rejected out of hand basically for political reasons. He said in the study, the building was an integral part of the property and noted if the building stays for a needed communication center along with much needed parking, it will kill the property for future development. He said in the original proposals, that building was to be taken down and the property was to be used by developers. He noted that the property is small and if developed, every inch will be needed for parking. Councilor LeTourneau said the proposal his committee approved was for high density housing which he said would have worked, but needed the building for the parking. He said he opposed this for the communications center but noted this was looked at extensively by the Caplan-Wooding Study Committee.

Councilor Sullivan said he agreed with Councilor Fishbein that politics had an impact on charter revision and the Wooding-Caplan project. He said he followed this closely and remembered developers being brought in to discuss their plans for development and one of the tactics used was to ask people not to vote. Councilor Sullivan said he would like to see the study results and noted there are people in Town who want to see this property developed for housing. He said the people who contact him own businesses on Center Street who cry out for more permanent parking not the gravel with the spray painted lines and some greenery.

He said he wouldn't rule out a 911 center, but said he had the impression we were shoehorning a project into a small parcel. He spoke about in Town housing and said there are opportunities but didn't know if it lies on that piece of property which he believed was viewed as a sacred cow. He said he believed it would be congested and there would be traffic issues and in the end multi-housing would be a mistake. Mayor Dickinson the third aspect is to provide an estimate of what it would cost to locate the 911 center somewhere else.

Councilor Sullivan said there should be a plan for the property and said the Town could do a better job in planning this project and would like to see a committee working on this instead of talking about it every two years. Councilor Fishbein said he is cautious about parking in the downtown area but if the 911 center is located on the Wooding-Caplan lot and is servicing other municipalities, they will park on the property. He said he agreed to have a plan and is appropriate to put this out to the POCD. He said without full information a proper decision can't be made. He said this doesn't make the downtown inviting.

Mayor Dickinson said this is not a parking issue and noted the Town currently has the dispatch center which parks in the police area. He said we probably wouldn't need more people and noted it would be a waste of money to improve parking until the study is done. Councilor Sullivan said he agreed with the Mayor noting there is plenty of parking which goes unused. He said whether we agree to make use of the property as a 911 center, there needs to be a time table and need to make a systematic approach.

Public Comments

Gale McCormack, 6 Cypress Lane, said she agreed with some of the Councilors who have spoken in favor of not using this parcel of land to be a dispatch center: She said when this area is built on or paved, it will be rendered useless. She said Wallingford is just beginning to grow in a nice way and implored the Council to take this land and use it as a dispatch center or parking lot.

Larry Morgenstein, S. Main Street, said there is a template from the POCD meetings of recent imaginings of uses for this property from different planners. He said whether it be lower downtown or Wooding-Caplan, all of these plans are the key of driving economic development and growing the grand list and when property is taken off, it doesn't come back. He said these areas have potential and should be viewed in this way.

Robert Avery, 42 N. Elm Street, asked about the dispatch center being almost 1,000 sq. ft. noting there would only be four or five people employed there. Mayor Dickinson said dispatch would probably have as many as eight people but the entire building would not be needed, so a architectural review is being requested. He said it is a solidly constructed building and might be

an opportunity to provide space at a lower cost. He said the belief is that the building could be an ideal location based on where it is situated but noted there may be a better site. He said after review by Fire and Police and other municipalities, all found this to be a reasonable and possible location for dispatch.

Kathy Avery, 42 N. Elm Street, said she got involved with a group called Project for Public Spaces which came to Wallingford at her request. She said the group meets with people and go over the available space and what would be desired. She asked if anyone from the Town has contacted different groups, i.e, student architects, and architects, asking what other Towns in New England are doing to preserve their integrity. She said driving into Town from any direction, it isn't a pretty view. She said Wallingford can be better than it currently is.

Public Comments closed at 9:36 p.m.

10. Schedule a Meeting Date for a Workshop to discuss Town Council Rules of Procedure/Chairman Cervoni

The Commission decided to schedule the workshop for Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in Room 315 in the Town Hall.

11. Executive Session pursuant to Section 1-200(6)(D) of the Connecticut General Statutes with respect to the purchase, sale and/or leasing of property/Mayor

No Executive Session

Adjournment

Councilor Fishbein made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 9:37 p.m. Councilor Shortell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Kleist
Acting Recording Secretary