

Town Council Meeting
April 11, 2016

EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:00 p.m.
RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (1) (2)

➤ Boards and Commissions

- (a) Sewer Subcommittee
- (b) Land Trust
- (c) Coventry Housing Authority

➤ Anthony Mill Betterment Assessment

➤ Evergreen vs. Town of Coventry (KC 14-0426) Discussion of Consent Judgment

A motion was made by Vice-President Carlson seconded by Councilwoman Duxbury to come out of Executive Session. All voted Aye.

A motion was made by Councilman McGee seconded by Councilwoman Duxbury to seal minutes of Executive Session. All voted Aye.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING – 7:00 PM

Present: Councilman McGee, Councilman Laboissonniere, Councilwoman Duxbury, Vice-President Carlson, President Shibley, Town Manager Waters, Town Solicitor Gorham
Pledge of Allegiance led by JRROTC Drill Team
Invocation
Review of Emergency Evacuation Plan
Approval of Town Council minutes March 21, 2016

Councilwoman Carlson asked for correction on Page 10, third paragraph, first sentence, where “she” should be replaced by “Councilwoman Duxbury”. A motion was made by Councilman McGee seconded by Vice-President Carlson to approve minutes with correction. All voted aye.

President’s Comments

President Shibley commented on the good cleanup job that DPW did during the recent unexpected snow storm.

Certificates of Recognition – AFJROTC Drill Team

Vice-President Carlson presented certificates to the drill team, congratulating them for placing third in the Armed Division of the Air Force Nationals South Eastern Championship on March 5, 2016 in Macon, Georgia.

Celebrate Coventry – Event Update

Chairperson Norma Smith updated the Council on the schedule of events:

- On April 30 a craft show will be held at the Guy Lefebvre Community Center
- On June 18 will be a ribbon cutting event and concert
- On August 13 is the second annual classic car show
- On August 27 we planned to schedule a pow/wow, however, there is a glitch and it is questionable at this point;
- On October 1, we want to have a beer garden but need to find a private venue
- On October 29 the Legend of Sleepy Hollow will be held at Fish Hill Soccer Field.

There are other events in the planning stages and the Town Manager will be informed as time goes on. Also, the Summer Concert series will begin on July 3 and will be held on Sunday nights at the art park.

Council District Updates

Councilman McGee, District 3, commended DPW for their hard work cleaning up during the recent snow storm. In addition, construction began on Route 116 today; they road will be finished and paved.

Councilwoman Duxbury, District 5, announced that public hearings will be held on the FY 17 budget on April 28, 2016. She also advised Wood Estates area residents to keep their car doors locked as there have been recent break-ins in the area. The police have been notified.

Vice-President Carlson, District 1, remarked that Lynch is doing a good job cleaning up the sides of Route 102.

Councilman Laboissonniere, District 2, had no news this evening and President Shibley, District 4, stated that long overdue work is currently being done on New London Turnpike; Arnold Road will be next.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Taxes and Abatements for the months of January and February 2016

A motion was made by Councilman Laboissonniere seconded by Councilman McGee to approve Consent Agenda. All voted aye.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Reappointing John Ball and Barbara Bridge to the Coventry Library Board of Trustees

A motion was made by Vice-President Carlson seconded by Councilwoman Duxbury to approve resolution. All voted Aye.

LICENSES

1. Application by Rhode Island Gunworks (Jason Lund) for change of location from 303 South Main Street to 15 Sandy Bottom Road

Jason Lund explained that he has operated at his present location for 3 ½ years. He would like to relocate to Sandy Bottom Road to the unit next to Captain Nemo's and hopes to be able to open there on May 1. He has his town and federal licenses and meets all requirements. There are no objections from the Police, Zoning or Planning Departments.

A motion was made by Councilman Laboissonniere seconded by Councilman McGee to approve location change. All voted aye.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Application for transfer of Class A Liquor License by Bills Package Store to Bill's Wine & Spirits Inc.

A motion was made by Vice-President Carlson seconded by Councilwoman Duxbury to open public hearings. All voted aye.

Attorney Tom Cronin represented the seller, Mr. Fontaine. According to Mr. Cronin, current liabilities will be paid off at the closing and a conditional request for approval is being made tonight. Arpita Patel, the new owner and President of the corporation, was present at the meeting. Solicitor Gorham acknowledged that the outstanding liens will be paid at closing, then subsequently the releases will be filed with the Town Clerk's Office before the license may issue.

Councilman McGee advised that the Town Council also sits as the Liquor Control Board if there should be any problems. He wished her the best of luck in her endeavor.

Councilman Laboissonniere asked if the property is being transferred as well as the business and Attorney Cronin replied that it is. He went on to state that Ms. Patel will be the President of the corporation, she is qualified and has no criminal convictions or transgressions in Rhode Island or any other state.

Mrs. Duxbury added that all town taxes, real estate and tangible, need to be paid before the license issues.

No public comment.

A motion was made by Councilman McGee seconded by Councilman Laboissonniere to close public hearing. All voted aye.

A motion was made by Councilman McGee seconded by Councilman Laboissonniere to grant license subject to creditors' releases and payment of real and tangible taxes.

2. Providing for the protection and preservation of the Towns historic stone walls

A motion was made by Councilwoman Duxbury seconded by Vice President Carlson to open public hearing. All voted aye.

Manager Waters advised that the stone wall ordinance was sponsored by Councilwoman Carlson, has been introduced, and tonight is on the agenda for public hearing. Vice-President Carlson indicated that she has received feedback regarding the ordinance and asks that we table it tonight after public comment to do more research. There are pros and cons on both sides, but she would like to table it and continue discussions with Mr. Gorham. Councilman McGee stated that he is not in favor of the ordinance and the reason being is that people in the town are not looking for us to manage their property. In District 3, my end of town, there are many ¼ acre lots. If someone doesn't want a stone wall on their property, they should be able to move it. I don't think the town should step in.

Charles Vacca, 124 Fairway Drive, supports the ordinance. There are many cemeteries in town that have been lost because there is nothing there protecting them. This ordinance will instill pride in the town and stop the desecration and loss of heritage and character to historical buildings and sites. He encouraged the Town Council to fully review the ordinance.

A motion was made by Councilman Laboissonniere seconded by Councilman McGee to close public hearing. All voted aye.

A motion was made by Vice-President Carlson seconded by Councilwoman Duxbury to table ordinance for further discussion and study. All voted Aye.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Frank Palin, 47 Breezy Lake Drive, believes that if things don't change, one of the fire districts will collapse in the future, maybe both of them. He is asking the Town Council to put a yes or no question on the November referendum, let the community decide if it wants a municipal fire department. I was flat out told no. My premise is to ask the community first. If they want this, then it empowers the Town Council to hire an outside consultant, have them come in, study the issue and come up with options. With the Town Council continuing to say no and refusing to discuss this in public, I am forced to have my referendum in another way, which is to recruit candidates, pro municipal fire department candidates in Districts 2, 3, and 5, to run against you in November. And I believe the community will vote for these people.

If these three people become members of the Town Council, they will move forward with this plan in ways you don't want to see. We need a public discussion and have asked to put this issue on the agenda. I urge you to consider moving forward with this. I am asking to send this out to the community and see what they want. We cannot let the minority of the town move us forward. Failure to do so is abdicating your responsibility.

Councilman McGee thinks he is putting the cart before the horse. The people need to be presented with facts, they need to be educated before having a referendum.

Mr. Palin stated that he doesn't have a problem with bringing in a consultant and going in that direction.

Ken Jackson, 2799 Harkney Hill Road, has spoken to people in the western end of town, and they want nothing to do with either the Central or Anthony fire departments, and although I am not speaking for him, I don't believe Chief Brown in Hopkins Hill wants anything to do with it either.

In reference to the work session on the schools last week, Mr. Jackson explained that he took the incomes in the school department and divided them out, resulting in: Administration with benefits, \$7,167,522, equaling almost 13% of the budget; Teaching Assistants (117 of them) totaling \$2,481,157. Mr. Jackson suggested maybe Pre K through Grade 3 should have assistants, after that he feels children should learn responsibility.

Regarding school cuts last year, the only things that were cut last year were science packs for the kids, and they still handed out over \$79,000 increases to administration. They have spent over \$154,000 on chromebook parts, which they say will be covered by insurance, but I can't seem to get a number on that.

Another issue, in June of 2014 there was one support individual with a salary of \$50,500; twenty months later that same person was making \$62,000, a 22.7% raise. I think their budget could be adjusted down.

Russell Crossman, 11 Silver Maple Drive spoke with regard to House Bill 7985, where if low/mod income requirements are not met by 2017, they want to charge us \$1,000 per dwelling unit that we are short (currently Coventry is 600-700 units short). We are only at 5.6%. I wanted to make you aware of this and thought the Town Council might want to draft some kind of letter to the legislators. Solicitor Gorham agrees this is against the best interests of the town.

Representative Nardolillo was present and stated that he is against the bill. There are communities which are in more serious shape than Coventry and I can't imagine that the legislators are going to go any further with this. President Shibley feels that a Town Council resolution to the General Assembly wouldn't hurt though. Councilman McGee added that he thinks we should keep trying to get mobile homes included in the 10% requirement.

Jim Terra, 46 Liena Rose, owns a mobile home and questions why they are considered affordable homes. Do you think they are poor quality? Low class? What does the state consider affordable?

President Shibley explained it has nothing to do with quality. Solicitor Gorham stated it has more to do with how the homes are financed, generally speaking some type of subsidized financing. It's not dependent on the pricing of the housing but on who finances it. For example RI Housing sponsors a whole array of financing options, a lot probably qualify as low/moderate income housing, nothing to do with the structure.

Charlotte Porter, 26 Sandra Circle, reported that she is hearing noise on Airport Road, they are working before 7 a.m. and also on Sunday. Mr. Baird is making noise and Miozzi is still working.

Mrs. Duxbury responded that if she is hearing work noises, she would need to call the police. There should be a clear line to enforcement as the police department now has the proper tools.

A motion was made by Councilman McGee seconded by Councilwoman Duxbury to adjourn meeting. All voted aye.

Town Clerk