

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Coventry Town Hall Council Chambers
1670 Flat River Road, Coventry, RI
April 23, 2007 – 6:00 p.m.

Work Session:

- Potential Bond Ordinance

Manager Kerbel outlined proposal for the bond ordinance as follows, stating that he is seeking direction from the Town Council:

- I. What is hoped to happen tonight
 - a. Five Projects
 - b. Timing
 - c. Tax Impact
 - d. Next Steps
- II. Renovation of Flat River Middle School for Government Center
 - a. Town Hall
 - i. All Town Facilities in Town Hall and MacArthur Boulevard
 - ii. Emergency Operations Center
 - iii. 13,000 sq. ft.
 - iv. Saccoccio Estimate
 1. \$2.5 mil
 2. 10% contingency and fees
 3. Total \$3 mil
 - b. School Administrative Offices
 - i. 20,000 sq. ft.
 - ii. Saccoccio Estimate
 1. 4.0 mil
 2. 10% contingency and fees
 3. Total \$4.8 mil
 - c. Assumptions assume major reconstruction upgrade in finishes and HVAC
 - d. Other uses
 - i. Recreation
 1. Auditorium
 2. Gym
 - ii. Coventry Central Fire District Tax Collection
 - iii. Other Governmental Uses
- III. Library Remodeling of Current Town Hall
 - a. Estimate of \$3,450,000 – Douglas A. Pearce Associates
 - b. Issues
 - i. Role of the Foundation
 - ii. State Construction Aid
 - iii. Champlain Foundation Grants – historically 20%
- IV. Senior Center
 - a. Revised Estimate of \$5,530,000 Litman Architecture
 - b. 25,500 square feet
 - c. Issues
 - i. Fund Raising of \$2,530,000
 - ii. Priority of Renovations
 - iii. Fire Safety
 - iv. Tenants
- V. Police Station
 - a. 30,000 sq. ft.
 - b. Estimate of \$8,250,000 based on \$275 per sq. ft.
 - c. Issues
 - i. Needs Assessment – accurate sq. ft. and cost estimates
 - ii. Location –
 1. Town-owned 6 acres on Walker Lane
 2. Tiogue Avenue Property
 3. Other
 - iii. Use of Existing Building

- VI. School Renovations
 - a. Needs Assessment of \$17 mil +
 - b. \$10 mil recommended for now
 - c. TIF remaining \$7 mil
 - d. Issues
 - i. Housing Aid – Saturday’s Projo
 - ii. Priorities
 - iii. Scope of Ordinance
- VII. Tax Increment Financing
 - a. Public Works Equipment
 - i. Garbage Trucks
 - ii. Plow Trucks
 - b. School Roofs and Fire Alarm
 - c. Brookside Development
- VIII. Next Steps for Bond
 - a. Legislation
 - i. Drafting of legislation
 - ii. Council Approval of Home Rule request
 - iii. Introduction of Legislation
 - iv. Passage of Legislation
 - b. Referendum
 - i. Timing
 - ii. 60 days after passage
 - c. Appointment of Building Committee
- IX. Effects of Bond Projects
 - a. Property Tax Implications
 - b. Operating Costs

Manager Kerbel introduced Steve Massaroni, bond counsel, who has developed information regarding the bond ordinance. You would be talking about an increase in our annual debt payment of 1.8 million dollars. You can figure that for every \$100,000 of debt service, about a 3-3 ½ cent increase in the tax rate, so you are talking grossly about .62 cents with this 1.8 million dollars.

One thing you should remember is that the Centre of New England tax treaty only exempts the properties for taxes, but no debt, so they do pay their full fair share of debt and this is calculated into the tax rate.

Mr. Massaroni of First Southwest gave presentation on bond program. Mr. Kerbel asked me to look into bonding project. The \$10 million the schools would be asking for could be reimbursed 50%, as well as a portion of the library bond (See handout in council folder)

Town currently has about \$27,000,000 outstanding in debt. Gross debt service for a 20 year debt with 5% interest would be approximately 2.5 million a year. Your current debt situation is very nice. The ratings agency is more concerned with ratios to see where your debt falls – high, low or average. Your debt service is considered low end. The Town is in a good position. With this you would be doubling your debt, and would go from low to average rating. Even without the state aid, you would be in the average range.

On paper, your ratios are fine. There are no credit implications regarding debt. From a credit standpoint you are fine.

Manager Kerbel – Senate bill 3050 is not a limiting factor in this. Realistically, if you told us tonight to go full board right away, the earliest we could probably have this referendum would be sometime in July or August. Even if everything passed, you wouldn’t be talking about construction until August 2008, finish in August 2009. Debt wouldn’t hit you until 2010 or 2011, and you can manage when the debt hits. Again, though, the voters need to know what they are voting on. The money that would come back to us would pay the debt service.

Mr. Hyde – Would the percentage rate change? Could you do better than 5%?

Mr. Massaroni – We used an average, assumption of 5%, 20 year rate. Right now in today’s market would probably be a little lower than that.

Manager Kerbel – Looking for direction as to whether the Town Council wants to proceed with legislation for a bond and if you want to take in everything. Do you want us to work on the bond ordinance? Do you want one bond ordinance, voters would vote yes or no on the whole thing.

Mr. Pomfret – Feels we should repair the whole town. School roofs, police station, library, think we should keep everything rolled into one. Repair in one shot.

Mr. Hyde – Agrees, something in this for everyone. We keep putting bandaids on every year. We have between now and 2012 to grow our town before the debt hits. The window of opportunity may close by the legislature if we don't act on this.

Mr. Thompson – Also in favor, town is in need of repair. We aren't going to be able to do this any other way. If we don't take action, will be in serious trouble down the road. Need to let the voters decide. Recommend going forward as one bond issue.

Mr. Cloutier – I also think that the fact that we will try TIF on a \$7-10 million dollar bond would be a good test. If it does prove to be successful, could be a good tool to use in the future.

Mr. Colaluca – Agree, time to act. Think we should go forward as well.

- Budget FY 2007-2008

Manager Kerbel also outlined issues for budget discussion.

Regarding the issuance of \$50,000 Johnson Pond Boat fees – Recommended reductions to make up for that are \$35,000 in Human Services medical waivers that have been counted twice in the budget, and eliminate Town Hall copier rental which was also counted twice in the budget \$15,000.00

School Budget Reductions (distributed corrected handout). Regarding issue of how to absorb Flat River operational expenses, school has indicated they want to turn Flat River over to the Town. Discussion as follows:

How to absorb Flat River Operation Expenses

1. Expenses – Janitor \$17,000 (?)
2. Water - \$7,000
3. Light and Power – estimate \$85,600
4. Fuel, gas, oil, propane - \$131,000 estimate

Unbudgeted expenses – field maintenance (School will take care of fields until July 1)

Options would be to estimate the true expenses for a partially opened building, charge the School Department rent to cover their expenses, rent out a portion of the building and/or absorb expense with existing budget. Each \$.01 on the tax rate means approximately \$30,000 in income. If the budget is reduced by \$100,000. the tax rate would be \$16.34 residential, \$19.68 commercial.

- TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Present: Kenneth Cloutier, Anthony Colaluca, Justin Pomfret, Bruce Thompson, Frank Hyde

Town Manager Richard Kerbel
Assistant Town Solicitor Scott Hammer

Absent: Town Solicitor Patrick Sullivan

Pledge of Allegiance led by President Pomfret.
Invocation by Councilman Colaluca
President Pomfret reviewed evacuation plan.

Motion made by Anthony Colaluca seconded by Bruce Thompson to approve Town Council minutes from April 9 and April 13, 2007. All voted Aye. So voted.

- PUBLIC COMMENT

Ray Spear
261 Phillips Hill Road

Mr. Spear thanked the Town Council on behalf of School Committee for intent to go forward with capital needs funding through bonding. Have also heard that some people are unhappy regarding further bonding at this time. Need to be careful to identify what projects will be done and that they get done.

Helen Andrade
53 Breezy Lake Drive

Ms. Andrade – Water from neighbor is draining across my property. Request that a certificate of occupancy not be issued to him until this situation is fixed. Also, town garbage truck has been turning around in my yard, making ruts.

Manager Kerbel – Much of this issue is a civil matter. If the adjoining owner has directed water onto her property, then that does not involve the town.

President Pomfret – Will do what we can, legally.

Wayne Asselin
Lorraine Avenue

Question regarding curb cut on Hopkins Hill Road near condos. Hazard for navigation. Do you know when this will be fixed?

Manager Kerbel – Wednesday morning, 8:00 a.m.

Kim Paul
181 Colvintown Road

Ms. Paul spoke regarding Independent Sand and Gravel clean up. Supposed to be done by July.

Mr. Sprague – Owner would like to develop property into about 225 - 250 houses. I have spoken with the attorney. They still want to do this, that's basically where it is now, they need to get their financing together. We want to see it developed residential. DEM attorney has not responded.

Manager Kerbel indicated he would get in touch with director's office at DEM and set up a meeting. Will see if I can facilitate them responding to Mr. Sprague, then set up a meeting.

Nancy Sprengelmeyer
26 Taft Street

Ms. Sprengelmeyer – Interested in appointment to Juvenile Hearing Board when vacancy comes up.

Ron Gizzarelli
50 Harrington Road

Mr. Gizzarelli – Believe that the school department should put together advisory committees to help with the budget process. Also have concerns about flooding/flood insurance with regard to Tiogue Lake .

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Resolution #43-07-2750 re-appointing Ernest Rusack, Marge Gartelman and Patricia Corcoran to Coventry Friends of Human Services Board
2. Resolution #44-07-2751 re-appointing James Barber to the Coventry Housing Authority
3. Resolution #45-07-2752 re-appointing John Ball and Barbara Bridge to the Coventry Library Board of Trustees
4. Resolution #46-07-2753 re-appointing Joshua Nunes and ~~Kevin Arcand~~ to the Coventry Planning Commission
5. Resolution # 47-07-2754 authorizing Town Manager to prepare documents and request \$4,200,000 financing from State Revolving Fund for Sewer Contract No. 5
6. Resolution #48-07-2755 awarding bid for tee shirts for Parks and Recreation summer program
7. Resolution #49-07-2756 awarding bid for HVAC system at Flat River Middle School
8. Resolution #50-07-2757 awarding bid for sealing cracks in town roads
9. Relieving Tax Collector of collecting taxes between 1998-2006 on property located off Club House Road, donated to Coventry Schools for ecological study

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Kenneth Cloutier to remove Item #4 from Consent Agenda. All voted Aye. So voted.

Motion made by Anthony Colaluca seconded by Bruce Thompson to approve Items #1-3 and 5-9 on Consent Agenda. All voted Aye. So voted.

President Pomfret noted that regarding Item #4, Kevin Arcand is not seeking reappointment at this time.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Kenneth Cloutier to appoint Joshua Nunes to the Coventry Planning Commission. All voted Aye. So voted.

- LICENSES

Application by Mark Trosin for a 90-day Hawker's license located at 1280 Nooseneck Hill Road. (Mark's Nursery)

Present – Mark Trosin, Mark's Nursery
1725 Harkney Hill Road

Mr. Trosin – Seeking 90 day Hawker's license to sell annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees.

Motion made by Bruce Thompson seconded by Anthony Colaluca to grant license. All voted Aye. So voted.

- PUBLIC HEARING

Application for transfer of B liquor license, new victualling license, pool table license and gameroom license for Charles Tompkins dba Charlie's Place, Inc., 33 Sandy Bottom Road (formerly Europa)

Present: Charles Tompkins
Cobblestone Terrace

Motion made by Bruce Thompson seconded by Kenneth Colaluca to open public hearing. All voted Aye. So voted.

No one spoke in favor, no one opposed.

President Pomfret – Believe this is a good idea. He wants to start a franchise and begin here in Coventry.

Mr. Tompkins – Want to build a family restaurant and entertainment center, looking to create a place where kids can play mini-bowling, ping pong, foosball. Just for people to enjoy an evening out. Maybe have little checker boards too. George (former owner) will be a long term associate with us. This would be our first site. This will be in the Coventry Rental site.

Mr. Thompson – Will there be liquor on only one side of the building and not mixed in?

Mr. Tompkins - We are looking at a single business. Our intent is to keep the liquor, all of our servers will be certified. Would like to bring in amateur billiard players, have talked to the RI Table Tennis Association. We are not looking to create a bar room atmosphere. Will keep the lounge the same as it is now.

Mr. Cloutier – Were there some issues about back payments relating to the liquor license? Were those cleared up?

Manager Kerbel - There were some businesses that had liens against the property and two were cleared up. These will have to be taken care of before we issue the license.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Kenneth Cloutier to close public hearing. All voted Aye. So voted.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Kenneth Cloutier to approve transfer of B liquor license, new victualling license, pool table license and gameroom license, subject to all other necessary approvals. All voted Aye. So voted.

Ordinance regarding site specific special sewer assessment for business park (Maise Quinn)- tabled

Motion made by Kenneth Cloutier seconded by Frank Hyde to continue public hearing of ordinance to June 25, 2007 Town Council meeting. All voted Aye. So voted.

- Public Comment continued:

Kathleen DiPrete
C & A Landscaping

Ms. DiPrete – Have a 12 year vested interest in this business. We are a full service landscaping business. Mark's Nursery has been selling mulch. They are operating on a cease and desist order. There is no septic, no water, no certificate of occupancy. He's on my border and wants a hawker's license. You are supposed to be 1,000 feet away in order to sell the same thing that we are. Also, he sold materials over the weekend.

Paul Sprague, Planner – Mike Baird (Mark's Nursery) was told that they would need to do Development Plan Review. This is in a General Business zone, this is a permitted business on both properties. There is no town license needed for selling these goods. These businesses involve a retail sales license that you get from the state. In January of this year, mulch was brought on site. At that time, the zoning enforcement official issued a cease and desist. Subsequent to that, Mark Trosin came in and was told to submit to Development Review Review. He hired an engineer, met initially with the Planning Commission. In the interim, the owner of the property contacted the Planning Department between meetings on the plan for the project.

They had a significant rain event, resulting in the off-site mulch being damaged. They asked if they could move the mulch back to the other site in the meantime.

Mr. Sprague read letter from Mr. Peabody, Zoning Officer, in regard to issuing cease and desist, before Development Plan Review was submitted. He received permission to deposit additional material onto the site due to flooding. Since the DPR process is under way and this is a permitted use, I had no problem with him relocating the materials due to the circumstances.

Mr. Peabody mentioned that he is also going to look into C&A's obtaining permits for sheds and signage. DPR was filed in 2004, can't find approvals for the plans. Would like to see some evidence. There are inconsistencies with what is on the ground and what is on the plan.

President Pomfret – You checked on the situation and nothing is running illegally?

Mr. Sprague – Hawker's license was really precipitated by our office. What happened was the concern with next door. This type of season doesn't last all year, small window of opportunity. This hawker's license is just an interim stop until, if in fact, he gets DPR approval.

Alfred DiPrete
C&A Landscaping

Mr. DiPrete – No one told us we were in violation.

Mr. Kerbel – Mr. Peabody indicated in his memo that he has to investigate further, he may find that there is a c.o. and everything is valid. I think on the issues of signage and setback, again, he has to look into the files more.

Ms. DiPrete – Don't understand how a hawker's license can be issued when he is abutting an existing company that sells the same thing.

Mr. Sprague – I would agree with that, but with my visual inspection, as recently as today and also Mr. Peabody and other town officials, you are not selling the nursery stock.

Mr. DiPrete – Haven't put our inventory out yet, it's early.

Ms. DiPrete – Can't understand why they can be in operation without a certificate of occupancy.

Mr. Kerbel – Not sure that they need a certificate of occupancy if they don't have a building.

Ms. DiPrete – Operating out of a shed with a desk in it.

President Pomfret – As of today this license is granted.

Mr. Kerbel – And if the Planning Board does act favorably on Wednesday night, the whole issue of the hawker's license could be mute.

Richard Mazena
Shippee Plat Road

Mr. Mazena – Last time we were at Planning, they didn't let us speak.

Mr. Sprague – Wednesday night is a public hearing at 7 p.m. You can speak at a public hearing.

Charles Vacca
124 Fairway Drive

Mr. Vacca – Spoke regarding bond issue, glad to see what is planned for the library. I believe we are having enforcement issues regarding planning and zoning though, for example the old lace mill on Tiogue Avenue is an eyesore and I don't feel the building meets minimum standards or is safe; also, would like to see the town establish an active Historic District Commission.

Wayne Asselin
30 Lorraine Avenue

Mr. Asselin – Suggested one of the council's goals should be setting the tone and letting all department heads know that the Comprehensive Plan is what we live by and is a means of treating everyone fairly.

Michael Baird
2172 Plainfield Pike

Mr. Baird - I rent to Mark's Nursery. Unfortunately I have my tree service on Reservoir Road. I'm sorry if I upset the DiPretes by purchasing that piece of property next to them, but I went to them and approached them about purchasing my product. I have a problem getting rid of my big chunks of wood. Bought a tub grinder, grind those big pieces into chips. Overburdened the guy that usually takes the chips, so now have to find another way to get rid of them. Approached Al DiPrete, would have been a benefit to me if he would have taken them and I don't have to haul too far. Al was not interested. I asked him if he would be interested in selling his property and he was not interested in selling out. I'm trying to help Mark start his business. Not trying to hurt Al or Kathy.

Public comment over.

Motion made by Anthony Colaluca seconded by Frank Hyde to go into executive session. Roll call vote. All voted Aye. So voted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a) (5) (6)

1. Extension regarding sewers for Lakeside Funeral Home
2. Extension regarding sewers for Brookside Plaza Development

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Kenneth Cloutier to come out of Executive Session. Roll call vote. All voted Aye. So voted.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Anthony Colaluca to seal minutes. All voted Aye. So voted.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Kenneth Cloutier to adjourn meeting. All voted Aye. So voted.

Town Clerk