

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Coventry Town Hall Council Chambers
1670 Flat River Road, Coventry, RI
November 5, 2007

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Per R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a)(1) (5) (7)

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Bruce Thompson to go into executive session. All voted Aye. So voted.

1. Acquisition/disposition of property (Picozzi)
2. Central Coventry Fire District/Wood Street
3. Sewers/consultant
4. Workers' Compensation Fund

Motion made by Bruce Thompson seconded by Anthony Colaluca to emerge from executive session. All voted Aye. So voted.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Kenneth Cloutier to seal minutes of executive session. All voted Aye. So voted.

- TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Present: Kenneth Cloutier, Anthony Colaluca, Justin Pomfret, Bruce Thompson,
Frank Hyde
Town Solicitor Patrick Sullivan

Pledge of Allegiance led by Town Sergeant
Invocation by Kenneth Cloutier
Town Sergeant reviewed evacuation plan

Motion made by Bruce Thompson seconded by Anthony Colaluca to approve Town Council minutes from October 22, 2007. All voted Aye. So voted.

- PRESENTATION ON WIND ENERGY

Presentation on Wind Energy by Professor Pavlides of the Wind Energy Alliance. Professor Pavlides gave presentation, proving the economic incentives of wind energy. RI could take care of 30% of its own electricity by utilizing this form of energy. (See handouts in Council folder)

- CONSENT AGENDA

1. Renewal of victualling license for Hampton Inn
2. Tax abatements for month of October 2007 in the amount of \$17,226.85
3. Resolution adopting budget calendar for 2008-2009 fiscal year
4. Resolution approving sewer tie in for Phases 6A, 6I, 6J and 6K only, Center of New England

Motion made by Bruce Thompson seconded by Kenneth Cloutier to approve Consent Agenda. All voted Aye. So voted.

- RESOLUTIONS

Resolution affirming award of contract for diesel cargo service van for DPW
(tabled October 22, 2007)

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Anthony Colaluca to adopt resolution. All voted Aye. So voted.

Resolutions appointing members to Friends of Human Services Advisory Board and member to the Board of Canvassers

Motion made by Bruce Thompson seconded by Kenneth Cloutier to appoint Lynn Andrews to the Friends of Human Services Board and Jerry Hoff to the Board of Canvassers. All voted Aye. So voted.

Resolution awarding contract for Rice Field Renovations

Recreation Director Guy Lefebvre explained that Airhart Electric was the low bidder at \$492,601 with alternate addition of lighting at \$78,848.00. Have a grant from DEM in the amount of \$172,920. leaving a balance of \$398,529 and that would be to do everything listed in the bid.

Manager Sprague stated that there is a balance in the impact fees of \$114,000 that could be applied. Possible labor could be done by DPW, which might save \$175,000.00

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Frank Hyde seconded by Kenneth Cloutier to adopt resolution. All voted Aye. So voted.

Resolution awarding contract for Centrex telephone voice service.

Manager Sprague – would be saving \$125,000 over five years.

Ed Warzycha, IT Director – Hope to replace the existing phone system. This is an upgrade, just something that we have to do every few years. Money comes out of the regular budget.

Motion made by Kenneth Cloutier seconded by Frank Hyde to adopt resolution. All voted Aye. So voted.

Resolution requesting the Redevelopment Agency investigate the feasibility of a TIF district for the Harris section of the town

Mr. Hyde – This refers to the Harris Mill district. We have outlined the TIF district and what it encompasses, and basically we are just moving forward in this direction towards a TIF district.

Mr. Cloutier – Is there a timetable as to when this would have to be created?

Mr. Sprague – Need to do this by December 31, 2007 to maximize the revenues. Needs to go through Redevelopment Agency for recommendation, then to the Town Council for district change.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Anthony Colaluca to adopt resolution. All voted Aye. So voted.

- LICENSES

Renewal of campground licenses

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Anthony Colaluca to approve licenses. All voted Aye. So voted.

- PUBLIC HEARINGS

Amendment of Zoning Ordinance and Map – Assessor's Plat 7, Lot 22, Arnold Road (Rezone from Industrial to Business Park)

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

Attorney John Brunero represented Dupre Realty Associates. My client owns Good Neighbor Alliance Corporation, they are consultants.

Attorney Brunero explained that this property is zoned Industrial now. Good Neighbor Alliance wants to put in an office, the property is presently zoned Industrial and office use is not allowed in an Industrial zone.

Even though Speedy Printing is in this building now, it is zoned Industrial. Offices are prohibited in an Industrial zone. This will not be harmful to the area and will cause minimal traffic.

We are here to change the zoning. This use will not generate traffic; these are consultants who are on the road for the most part. Probably would be only two employees in the office. Recently there was a zone change in the area from Industrial to Business Park for a bank that will be coming in next door to the business park.

Solicitor Sullivan – The Planning Board recommended approval of this zone change on September 27, 2007.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Anthony Colaluca to close public hearing. All voted Aye. So voted.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Bruce Thompson to adopt ordinance. All voted Aye. So voted.

Amendment of Zoning Ordinance and Map – Assessor's Plat 29, Lot 27, Hopkins Hill Road (Rezone from R-20 to General Business)

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Anthony Colaluca to open public hearing. All voted Aye. So voted.

Attorney John Brunero represented Walgreens Drugstore (Arista Development). This has not been approved by the Planning Commission; vote was 3-3.

Attorney Brunero conducted presentation of Walgreen's plan for this piece of property. (See handouts/presentation) Have been numerous concerns and objections from the neighbors. Walgreen's has now given authority to reduce the size of the building so that none of the building itself would be in a residential zone other than the drive-thru and some parking area. We could live with that as a stipulation. Reduction would be from 14,740 square feet to 13,800 square feet. Would be about 1000 square feet less than originally proposed. Will put in a well for irrigation of the green area. (See proposal in council folder showing existing conditions along with a landscape plan and new, proposed conditions.)

President Pomfret – What happens when buildings are removed? Also I have heard concerns about lighting and noise.

Attorney Brunero – Proposing an 8 foot fence along the residential buffer, 20 foot buffer. We will keep it completely green and will put in a well for our own irrigation. Will put in sidewalks on Tiogue Ave and Hopkins Hill.

On the plan, there are a significant number of parking spaces. We did a traffic analysis by an engineer. Used comparables, met with Mr. Sprague and Mr. Crossman of the Planning Commission. We submitted a report from Mr. Paul Bannon, reduced parking spaces from 70 to 30. I think everyone was satisfied that we have significant parking. Also, we have a significant amount of green space. This is a seven million dollar building. You are talking \$30,000 - \$35,000 taxes coming into the town. Additionally, my client is willing to donate \$25,000 to offset some of your capital improvements to the recreation department. Walgreen's is willing to spend some money in the town.

President Pomfret – I am glad to see that you have addressed some of the neighbors concerns, especially with the lighting into their windows.

Attorney Brunero – We have a lighting plan and this will be low intensity lighting.

Caroline Dion (represented property owners Annette and Richard Mouchon who are presently out of town) Ms. Dion read letter of opposition and submitted petition of objection.

Charles Vacca
124 Fairway Drive

Mr. Vacca objected over concern regarding traffic congestion and questioned whether or not this is in a historic district.

Evelyn Capwell
30 Hopkins Hill Road

Ms. Capwell stressed that there are many people in the area who are against this, and urged the council not to approve.

Michael Tucker
16 Hopkins Hill Road

I live in the middle of all of this. Am concerned because traffic will back up, police, fire and rescue always use this as a cut-through and what about the 18 wheelers trying to get in and out of there.

Nathan Knott
1 Hopkins Hill Road

Mr. Knott – Do not like the idea of 24 hour lighting, will decrease our property values.

Too small of a road for this business.

Christine Bowes
245 South Main Street

Ms. Bowes is concerned with traffic and noise

Wayne Asselin

Mr. Asselin – Road width is not sufficient, not good situation for tractor trailers to get in and out, was already rejected by the Planning Board. Should find another site in town. Not against a drugstore coming in, this is just not a good location.

Ronald Gizzarelli
50 Harrington Road

Mr. Gizzarelli – Opposed. Should find another site.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Bruce Thompson to close public hearing. All voted Aye. So voted.

Councilman Thompson – I'm in favor of business coming in, that corner is an eyesore and something needs to be done at that location. But, I am here to listen to the voice of the people and will be voting against this.

Councilman Cloutier - Questioned where the main entrance is, assume Route 3?

Attorney Brunero - Two entrances. Entrance and an exit, right only, onto Tiogue Avenue. Second means is off Hopkins Hill. Drive up will be off the Hopkins Hill side and with exit onto Tiogue Avenue.

Councilman Cloutier – Sidewalks?

Attorney Brunero – Sidewalks all along Hopkins Hill and also depicted along Tiogue Avenue. Bushes will have to be low for visual purposes. The landscaping design will accommodate so that you will still be able to see.

Councilman Colaluca – Hours of operation?

Attorney Brunero – Have not proposed a 24 hour operation, would have to come back to you for that. This would be your normal hours of operation 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. If they went to 24 hour, would have to come back to you for a decision on that. In this area, you don't see any of these places doing much business after 10:00. We don't have the number of people who are out at that time.

President Pomfret – You were willing to reduce this 1,000 square feet. What would that do to the store?

Attorney Brunero – What will happen with the building is that this will make the building a little smaller here and a little larger here (shown on diagram), square off the building somewhat. Drive out area will be a little closer to the building. We are going from business zone to business zone, no problem with that, will just reduce our landscaping in between the fish market and our store.

Mr. Cloutier – Can you tell us roughly how many cars can line up from the window to the road?

Mr. Brunero – Maybe five cars to the corner of the building. I think that when people see more than two or three cars, they go inside anyway.

President Pomfret – How long does construction take from start to finish?

Mr. Brunero – About 6-7 months, from 6 or 7 in the morning to 4 or 5 at night. If behind schedule, might work on weekends. You can stipulate that not before 7 a.m., not on Sundays.

Motion made by Anthony Colaluca seconded by Frank Hyde to adopt ordinance. Vote taken: Kenneth Cloutier – Opposed; Anthony Colaluca – In favor; Bruce Thompson – Opposed; Frank Hyde – In favor; Justin Pomfret – In favor. Motion passes 3-2.

Amendment of Article 5 of the Zoning Ordinance to add SPD – Special Planning Overlay District/Special Management District for Route 3 and Sandy Bottom Road

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

Maren Luciani, Assistant Planner, gave presentation of overlay district. Believe will actually help alleviate concerns regarding Route 3 and Sandy Bottom Road area. Outlined new aesthetic zoning ordinance and the design guidelines that are associated with the district. We are working on landscape designs, signage, lighting to give the area a sense of character.

A special overlay district is proposed (Article 530). For example, parking areas are hidden from view, overall functionality is improved. Another example is that we are working with Churchill and Banks on Brookside Center, trying to create a visually appealing and functional landscape. Also working with the developers of a market that is planned to move into town. The developers do not have an issue with these proposed guidelines. such as sidewalks, creating an appealing landscape design, signage (avoiding large, obnoxious signage) and really trying to create a neighborhood that has a strong sense of character.

Several smaller business owners have come in and we are also working with them to try to get something more appealing on a smaller scale.

This would encourage better planning and development along Sandy Bottom and Route 3. To promote efforts, we focus on a traditional New England architecture, which will create a sense of community.

Mr. Cloutier – For existing buildings, at what point does this kick in? If they do a renovation?

Ms. Luciano – If someone applies to the Planning Department for a major renovation or sign or implement a landscaping plan, that's when you would actually work with them.

Mr. Sprague – The businesses coming into town have bought into this process – Dave’s Market, Brookside Center, Papa Gino’s, Sovereign Bank.

Mr. Thompson – Is this just for Route 3 and Sandy Bottom, or town-wide?

Ms. Luciani – It’s for any business that is located in a General Business zone.

Robert DiPadua - Urge to pass townwide, not just piecemeal.

Kevin McGee
Gervais Street

Mr. McGee – Double edge sword, don’t want to hurt small businesses. Just want you to be cautious as to how you do this. Don’t want to create a financial hardship for businesses.

Ms. Luciani – Ultimately these are recommendations, not requirements.

Mr. Sprague – One further step that we had discussed would maybe be to provide some type of incentive, such as a low interest loan.

Ms. Luciani – Maybe some type of reward program.

Mr. Hyde – Feel should be proactive and do some of this.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Anthony Colaluca to close public hearing. All voted Aye. So voted.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Ken Cloutier to adopt resolution. All voted aye. So voted.

- INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE

- Ordinance amending Ordinance 12-88-0157 regulating vehicle towing services within the Town of Coventry

- Motion made by Bruce Thompson seconded by Anthony Colaluca to advertise ordinance for public hearing. All voted aye. So voted.

- Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Anthony Colaluca to adjourn meeting. All voted Aye. So voted.

- Work Session

- Transfer Station

- Manager Sprague – With respect to the transfer station, presently there are certain eligible residents in town who can use the transfer station at no charge. There are some people who are not accorded that privilege, being residents of mobile home parks, condos and residential compounds. Certain council members have expressed concern that these residents are not being treated equitably as they are also taxpayers and should be able to use the transfer station four times a year.

- Presently it costs the town about \$250,000 a year for these drop offs and transfers to the landfill, approximately \$20.00 per drop off to the town. What we are asking for you to consider is enacting a resolution allowing all Coventry residents to access the transfer station whether they live in a mobile home park. This would not be to pick up their garbage, but for them to access the transfer station.

- Would be an increase of \$125,000 to \$150,000 per year. We would reach our cap earlier, but could offset this by giving consideration to some type of graduated fee. Suggest maybe \$10.00 per resident the first year, then graduate to \$20.00. Something to ponder.

President Pomfret noted that there is a lot of abuse at the transfer station.

Ms. Barrett – We have no way of knowing where this stuff comes from. A fee would “offset” some of the increased cost of opening it up for further use.

Town Clerk