

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
November 14, 2011
Worksession

Present: President Gary Cote, Ted Jendzejec, Raymond Spear, Carl Mattson, Jr.

Town Manager Thomas Hoover
Town Solicitor Frederick Tobin

Absent: Vice-President Kerry McGee

Presentation by SOLECT Energy on the installation of solar panels on the Town Hall Annex

Manager Hoover introduced Dennis McCarthy, who was hired by the town when the Federal Stimulus program began, as a consultant to look into energy grants. After exploring proposals over the past year for the installation of solar energy in the community, Solect Energy was the successful bidder. They have been able to receive a federal grant through the EDC and are here this evening to explain a project that is planned for the Town Hall Annex.

Mr. McCarthy gave overview of project, noting our commitment to exploring ways to cut energy costs along with the feasibility of implementing different types of renewable energy. Solect Energy was chosen from ten bids we received and has been working for the last year on what is best for the town. We received verbal approval for a grant through the EDC and then were further notified by the EDC about additional dollars that had also become available. We then applied for the bigger grant and were approved for \$325,000, which will enable us to proceed with this project.

Mr. McCarthy introduced Ken Driscoll and James Dumas, representatives from Solect Energy, and they gave a presentation of their proposal to the Town. (See entire presentation in Council folder).

Information was provided regarding the proposed solar powered system and how it will work off of sunlight. The system will use no batteries and stored energy returns back into the grid. This system will cover 30% of the usage at the annex and we will get a better rate than we do from National Grid. There are also Federal and State incentives available. Solect Energy will purchase and install the system.

Roof conditions were also considered, as shade has an adverse effect to solar production. The system will draw power from solar panels while there is light and from National Grid when there is not. The panels are warranted up to 25 years; the inverter is the only item that might have to be replaced at some point.

Councilman Jendzejec asked about unused energy credit and whether it could be applied to the entire town. Councilman Spear asked about the feasibility of selling overproduced energy. Mr. Driscoll responded that there will not be enough production to sell at this point. If there was a credit, it could be credited back to the town. However, the way this system is structured, it will only cover 30% of the usage.

However, financial benefits to the town include no cash outlay, a reduction in the electric bill and maintenance will be performed by Solect Energy. The town has a buy-out option after five years. If the projected timeline is followed, the system will be turned on in March of 2012.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to adjourn work session. All voted aye.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Present: President Gary Cote, Ted Jendzejec, Raymond Spear, Carl Mattson, Jr.

Town Manager Thomas Hoover
Town Solicitor Frederick Tobin

Absent: Vice-President Kerry McGee

Pledge of Allegiance led by Town Sergeant
Invocation by Councilman Spear
Review of Emergency Evacuation Plan

President's Comments

President Cote summarized proposed solar project which was discussed at the work session along with the benefits afforded to the town. He noted that the project would be funded through federal and state grants with no cost to the taxpayer.

Recognition was given to the Veterans Day ceremony which took place at the Village Green. About one hundred people were in attendance to rededicate the park. President Cote urged citizens to attend next year's ceremony.

Approval of Town Council Minutes from October 24, 2011

Motion was made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve minutes from October 24, 2011. All voted aye.

Proclamation: Designating the Month of November as "Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month"

Steven Cayouette of Sharon Drive, Coventry accepted a proclamation declaring November as Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month. Mr. Cayouette became active with the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network after his sister passed away in June 2010 from the disease. He thanked the Town Council for helping to raise awareness of this fourth leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, the deadliest form with the lowest survival rate.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Mattson to adopt proclamation. All voted Aye.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Fourth of July Fireworks presentation by the Johnson's Pond Civic Association

Mr. Rene Gaudet, 154 Acres of Pine Road, President of the Johnson's Pond Civic Association, asked the Town Council to reinstate a \$5,000 contribution, the amount of support that was given to the association approximately three years ago. Although the fireworks are funded entirely by the residents of Johnson's Pond along with generous local area businesses, donations have dropped off considerably. He advised that they are not asking for financial donations toward the fireworks display itself, but for assistance with the costs of the police and fire details.

President Cote stated that although he personally considers this a community-friendly event, it is something that the Town Council needs to discuss and will take under advisement. Councilman Jendzejec commented that he believes this would help restore community pride, and asked that Council keep that in mind during consideration. Councilman Mattson suggested that the Johnson's Pond Association seek more local business support.

2. Council redistricting presentation by Election Data Services, Inc.

Election Data Services President Kimball Brace of Manassas, Virginia offered information to the Town Council regarding redistricting. He noted deviations in population between the districts in town, the largest deviation being District 3 and District 5. District boundary lines need to change in Districts 3, 4, and 5. An example of some factors that he takes into consideration include district size, town boundaries and major roads.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Renewal of Private Detective license for Robert Conover, 2747 Flat River Road
2. Approval of tax abatements and additions for the month of October 2011

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilman Spear to approve Consent Agenda. All voted aye.

RESOLUTIONS

1. In support of immediate statewide pension reform

Town Manager Hoover and Finance Director Ted Przybyla recently testified at the State

House on pension reform and requested that the proposed bill include all independent systems in RI. Since the General Assembly is meeting again this Thursday and there may be amendments, Manager Hoover requested that the Town Council turn the resolution back to him as he does not believe it is in the best interest of the town at this point to approve the resolution. There are still too many uncertainties and we wouldn't want to end up hurting ourselves.

Councilman Spear would like to support the resolution anyway, as the last statement of the resolution "therefore, be it resolved, that the Town of Coventry supports immediate comprehensive statewide pension reform to ensure an affordable and sustainable pension system" is a broad, general statement. The legislature will vote on this Thursday of this week and it seems to me that it wouldn't hurt for us to be on record as a community saying that we want immediate, comprehensive, statewide pension reform and an affordable and sustainable pension system.

President Cote stated that we are already on record as the Town Manager testified at the State House to the desires of the Town of Coventry. Councilman Jendzejec remarked that as amendments are passed, it could end up costing Coventry more money. The Manager is asking to let the dust settle first before we support or not support something. We don't want to vote on something that will cost the taxpayers more money.

A motion was made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilman Mattson to send resolution back to Town Manager. All voted aye.

2. Affirming the award of a contract to Crossman Engineering at a cost of \$101,920 for final design plans, documents and construction monitoring services for drainage and infrastructure projects in the vicinity of Johnson's Boulevard, Franklin Road, Maple Valley Road, Hammet Road and Industrial Drive under the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Hazard Mitigation Program

Manager Hoover recommended that Town Council approve this resolution. There are five projects under the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Hazard Mitigation Program, funding is from the federal government. We put out a bid request and received one bid from Crossman Engineering, which is within the budget.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve resolution. All voted aye.

PUBLIC HEARING

Transfer of Class B liquor license from Strikers Bar & Grill, Inc., 17 Sandy Bottom Road to Black Stallion LLC, Barbara Giroux (with new victualling, live show entertainment, dance and pool table licenses)

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Mattson to open public hearing. All voted Aye.

Proprietor Barbara Giroux, 99 Ginger Street, Warwick, was sworn in by Solicitor Tobin. Ms. Giroux stated that she plans to have country line dancing, karaoke, DJs and live bands, but no hard rock bands.

Chief Volpe stated that while he has no concerns with the transfer, he recommended that the doors are kept shut when there is live music, as there have been noise issues at that location in the past.

No further questions. Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to close public hearing. All voted aye.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Mattson to approve transfer subject to satisfaction of outstanding state requirements; also with the stipulation that doors are kept shut during live entertainment. All voted aye.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Up Grant Application – Historic Harris Mill Park and Anthony Village Boarding House

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Mattson to open public hearing. All voted aye.

Recreation Director Guy Lefebvre was sworn by Solicitor Tobin and gave presentation explaining that in the matter of Harris Mill Park (opposite Victor Electric) we are

looking at the cleanup of a 3 acre site that the town acquired a few years back. Phase 1 and Phase 2 assessments were done, along with soil and water samples. We will remove contamination by using encapsulation. This resolution would authorize the Town Manager to sign agreements. This is a \$200,000 grant application with a 20% match, and we would ask for an in-kind waiver. Obtaining this grant would enable us to move forward with an additional recreational grant. The intent of project from the beginning was to develop a park with trails along the Pawtuxet River. There are no development costs, we just need to clean up the park.

The second item on the resolution is also a \$200,000 EPA grant application for the Anthony Mill Workers House at 606 Washington Street. This is actually the same situation as the first, and we will ask for a waiver and offer an in-kind match. Phase 1 and 2 Brownfield site assessments were done by DEM. We would also clean up through encapsulation on-site as opposed to full removal.

No further questions. Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Mattson to close public hearing. All voted aye.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve resolution authorizing Town Manager to sign agreements securing funding for Anthony Mill Workers House and Harris Mill Park from Brownsfield's Clean Up grants. All voted aye.

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Recreation Acquisition and Development Grants for Historic Harris Mill Park, Sandy Acres Recreation Area and the Hall/Seaman's Waterfront and Open Space Project

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Mattson to open public hearing. All voted aye.

Mr. Lefebvre first referred to the Harris Mill Park at 633 Main St. regarding acquisition of .60 acres. This site would be utilized for construction of a facility for parking, storm water management and re-greening and would serve as an access to the park. A 50/50 match is required, but will require no money from the taxpayers. We were informed that Brownsfield activity can be a match, so the money we have spent on the Phase 1 and Phase 2 survey can be a match for the actual purchase of the land. We can purchase for no charge to the taxpayers.

With regard to the second item, Sandy Acres Recreation Area, contaminated soil removal and encapsulation is in progress. The goal here is recreational and will include wetland reclamation, storm water management and invasive species removal. The new facilities include off street parking, stone dust walking paths and an elevated boardwalk. The end result will be a clean site with riverfront and woodland experiences through three adjoining parcels. Property will be for passive recreational use. We have completed Phase 1 and Phase 2 and are now in cleanup stage. We look forward to an elevated boardwalk, post and rail fencing and landscape improvements, opening up for public access in the areas such as bird watching, hiking, animal habitat with frontage on greenway, the river and Sandy Bottom Road. .

The next project is west on 117, before the Johnson's Pond overpass, called the Hall/Seamans Waterfront and Open Space Project, which is comprised of 115 acres, 4.4 acres of which is waterfront. In this case the Coventry Land Trust is quite interested and would meet our match. This would be used for passive recreational use. The deadline for all three grant applications is 11/28.

No further questions. Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Mattson to close public hearing. All voted aye.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve resolution authorizing the town Manager to sign agreements securing funding from RIDEM Recreation Acquisition and Development Grant Program. All voted aye.

Manager Hoover recognized Recreation Director Guy Lefebvre and Planning Director Paul Sprague for their successes in securing grants for the town.

ORDINANCE

Amending Section 217-5 of the Coventry Code of Ordinances, Chapter 217, Article III – Exemption for Elderly or Disabled Persons (Tabled from Town Council meeting on October 24, 2011)

Councilman Jendzejec noted that since Vice-President McGee is absent, he would like to table this ordinance to the Town Council Meeting on November 28, 2011, in order that Mr. McGee's voice may be heard. All voted aye.

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilman Spear to table ordinance to November 28, 2011. All voted Aye.

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Florio, 153 Princeton Ave., advised the Town Council that there is a School Committee person currently residing in Galveston, TX and running a political campaign for Robert Gonsalves. The Democratic Town Committee was not aware of this and I think that it is wrong that the School Committee did not inform the Town Council. You should know if you have a School Committee member living in another state and not performing her job, as she still gets a check from the town.

School Committee Chairwoman Kathy Patenaude, 38 Fieldstone Drive, confirmed that Ms. Lianne Russell is working on a political campaign in Texas. However, Ms. Russell went to Texas to care for her father because he is ill. She is actually doing dual things in Texas. She has talked to us about resigning and my advice to her was that she has to make her decision in her heart as to whether she can still represent her constituency. If the people in her district are not happy with this, their recourse would be to recall her, and I told her that. Her residence is still in Coventry. We would appreciate her presence and input at every meeting, but outside of that, I'm not sure what we can say.

Councilman Spear asked how long she expects to be away. Mrs. Patenaude responded that Mr. Gonsalves's primary is in March. If he wins the primary and she works on the general election, then she will resign from the School Committee.

Scott Guthrie, 31 Maplewood Drive, suggested that the town establish a Pride Committee to see exactly what the community wants. It was a disgrace that the Memorial Day Parade was given up last year.

Ron Gizzarelli, 50 Harrington Road commented on several issues:

1. If people cannot properly serve on a committee, they should resign and the position should be filled.
2. Mr. Gizzarelli takes a supportive stand on fireworks at Johnson's Pond and anything the town can do to support that event. Many families look forward to attending those functions in town and we should promote it any way we can.
3. It would be an error at this time to confirm the original resolution on pension reform.
4. Public Comment should be offered more than just at the end of the meeting, it is important to have public comment on issues before voting takes place.
5. Mr. Gizzarelli brought to the council's attention the headlines in the Providence Journal on November 3, 2011 relating to emergency response times regarding a West Warwick death while in police custody.

President Cote explained that the fire districts are completely independent from the Town of Coventry and he would have to take up these rescue issues with Chief Brown from Hopkins Hill.

School Committee member Nancy Sprengelmeyer, 26 Taft Street, added that the four members of the School Committee have done everything they can to address the situation regarding the School Committee member from District 3, but we have no authority to do anything about this.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Mattson to adjourn meeting. All voted aye.

Town Clerk