

MINUTES
Town Council
Town of East Greenwich
Regular Session
February 13, 2017 @ 7:00pm
Town Hall, 125 Main Street, East Greenwich, RI 02818

Town Council Present: S. Cienki, S. Todd, A. Deutsch, N. Granatiero, M. Schwager

Town Staff Present: T. Coyle, III, L. Carney, K. Benoit, J. Duarte, W. Schmidle, C. Bradley, R. McGillivray, J. Peixinho, J. Fague, P. Clarkin, R. Houghtaling. S. Brown, S. Cirella

7:00pm ~ Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag

President Cienki called the meeting to order and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Acknowledgments

None

1) Town Council Minutes

- a) January 23, 2107 (Regular and Executive Sessions)

VP Todd moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Deutsch. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

2) Reports and Communications

- a) Public Comment (15-minute time limit for items NOT on the agenda)

None

- b) Review of 2016 East Greenwich Drug Program

Mr. Houghtaling gave an overview on the creation of the program which is in its 33rd year and the significant changes that have occurred over time since its inception. Statistics on clients, major concerns and referrals were explained. A myriad of prevention initiatives were briefly noted and the Teen Center program was highlighted. Details on the upcoming Opioid Forum were provided. He focuses on prevention/intervention and provides support and treatment for those who need it. The State is involved in the opioid and Narcan epidemic at the local level. A discussion followed on the dynamics of the legalization of marijuana. Parental education exists but could be increased. Metrics to measure to success were discussed and the system in place that offers immediate intervention. Parents receive support as needed. Dual diagnosis cases are handled with care and referred out to other resources.

c) Presentation on Parks and Recreation Department

Ms. Bradley provided an overview on the recreational activities and programs offered throughout the Town in fifteen different facilities. Brochures are mailed out seasonally and special event flyers are circulated through the schools. Three full time staff plus approximately 50 part-timers help teach classes and run programs. The Parks and Ground division maintains everything “inside and outside the fences” including all Town and school buildings, fields, playgrounds, recreation sites, historic cemeteries, streetscaping, etc. All seven staff members also maintain most of the equipment. She also manages the mooring and dingy rack permits, maintains website page and offers online registration using specialized software. Grants were received for the nature and cross country trails, Tufts shade structure, kayak launch and Town dock improvements. Other duties include snow and ice removal, special projects, street and traffic signs and helping other departments with special events. She noted that over the past 30 years, the work has doubled but the staff has not and they are experiencing growing pains. The greatest demand would be to hire another laborer. She explained work done at tennis courts and that the turf field at the high school is not currently failing or included in recent class action lawsuits, but drainage is still an issue. Increasing revenues from other outside entities for field rental was discussed.

d) Update on New England Institute of Technology

Ms. Peixinho explained how NEIT came to own the parcels on Division Road. She spoke about the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) and tax revenues. Mr. Malm purchased 15 acres as part of the NEIT agreement in order to develop nine homes on Granite Drive for a total tax amount of \$180,000.00. Although this reduced the MOU payment from \$450,000 to \$418,000, the Town is receiving the additional revenue for the new subdivision by Mr. Malm. As the property is developed and its value increases, the Town could possibly receive an increase in PILOT payments from the State if the Governor fully funds the program in FY2019. This would be in lieu of the MOU payment. Several house lots and roads were rezoned to become part of the Rocky Hill zone so NEIT could purchase them. The value of the golf course was discussed. The Town has an option after the completion of ten years to buy the property if the value is \$4.5 million or greater which she feels is not likely. NEIT currently leases that land to Avenger Land Management. Tracking police responses were discussed, which is a negotiable part of the MOU after three years. She further explained how the MOU and PILOT payments are calculated based on her assessed value and occupancy. Building fees were addressed as a one-time revenue source. More dorms and athletic facilities are expected in the future.

3) Public Hearing

None

4) Consent Calendar

- a) Application for Class F Alcoholic Beverage License for The Seasons to host the EG Chamber of Commerce Business after Hours on February 28, 2017.

Councilor Deutsch moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Schwager. Voted 4-0 with VP Todd being absent at the moment, motion carried.

- b) Recommendation from the Tax Assessor for Abatements and Additions to the Real Estate, Personal Property and Motor Vehicle tax rolls (per attached list).

Ms. Peixinho provided a brief explanation of what creates abatements and/or additions.

VP Todd moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Schwager. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

- c) Reappointment of Tracie Truesdell to the Municipal Land Trust for a five year term to expire March 1, 2022.

VP Todd moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Deutsch. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

- d) Reappointment of Denise Schwarzbach to the Municipal Land Trust for a five year term to expire March 1, 2022.

VP Todd moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Granatiero.

Attendance was a concern but has been satisfactorily resolved to the liking of the Council.

Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

- e) Reappointment of Robert Brooks to the Personnel Board for a three year term to expire March 1, 2020.

VP Todd moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Schwager. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

5) Unfinished Business

- a) Municipal Court Overview and Recommendation

Ms. Benoit provided an analysis of the financial history of the court to support her argument that the court is self-sustaining. Statistics were provided on the total number of motor vehicle violations/parking tickets and what percent were East Greenwich residents.

A lengthy discussion followed on the financial impact on the Town's budget if the court was eliminated, deferring violators to the RI Traffic Tribunal and District Court. The Police budget would see an increase in overtime and the Town Solicitor would be required to attend additional court hearings on a weekly basis. The current software in place could handle municipal violations (ordinances/zoning) and parking tickets but not moving violations. Variable costs and fixed costs were discussed. Det. Lt. Fague explained how revenues are generated from RITT and Municipal

Court as well as court procedures at both the municipal and State level. Any moving violation over 11 Mph would have to go to the RITT. The software is being redesigned for smaller communities based on a transactional basis. Historically, revenues from moving violations fluctuate drastically and are unpredictable. Discussion continued on the program's sustainability, the benefits of the service for Town residents and passing fees to the violators.

VP Todd moved to keep the Municipal Court as it exists, seconded by Councilor Schwager.

After further discussion among Councilors, it was voted 3-2 with VP Todd, Councilor Schwager and Councilor Deutsch voting yes and President Cienki and Councilor Granatiero voting no, motion carried.

6) New Business

- a) An ordinance in amendment of Chapter 248 "Vehicles and Traffic" of the Code of the Town of East Greenwich, modifying Article II "Operation", Section 248-16 "Throughways designated" and 248-19 "Multi-way stop intersections" effecting Kent Drive, Allen Drive and Great Road. (FIRST READING AND INTRODUCTION).

VP Todd moved to approve on First Reading and schedule for Public Hearing on March 2nd, seconded by Councilor Deutsch. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

- b) An ordinance in amendment of Chapter 34 "Boards, Committees and Commissions" of the Code of the Town of East Greenwich, adding Article X "IT Governance Council" (FIRST READING AND INTRODUCTION).

Councilor Deutsch moved to approve on First Reading and schedule for Public Hearing on March 2nd, seconded by VP Todd. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

- c) Discussion on funding for Informational Video

Councilors voiced their concerns and discussed the idea behind promoting transparency and educating tax payers about the decision making process to create the Town's budget, accomplishments, future plans and needs of town infrastructures. Details such as parameters, timelines, content, management and oversight all need to be established. Viability, presentation type and the method of delivering information to the taxpayers as it relates to the delivery of the budget were also discussed. In addition to the informational video, the town needs to establish a total multimedia approach for communicating with residents. Establishing a request for proposals was discussed

Ms. Schmidle indicated that a video tour book currently exists on the Town's website and that the website can support what is being suggested. However, she recommended having a marketing person or consultant with experience in local government. Anything over \$17,000 will need to go out to bid.

VP Todd moved to fund an Informational Video not to exceed \$15,000, seconded by Councilor Granatiero.

Following further discussion about a formal business proposal, budget allocation, measuring results, and a multimedia approach due to there not being a Financial Town Meeting where residents have the ability to learn about all aspects of the budget and the needs of the Town it was voted 4-1 with President Cienki, VP Todd, Councilor Deutsch and Councilor Granatiero voting yes and Councilor Schwager voting no, motion carried.

7) Town Manager's Report

Mr. Coyle reported that snow removal will begin on Main Street starting tomorrow night. Council discussed the legalities and difficulties associated with snow removal. Tours of the public safety buildings need to be scheduled.

8) Council Comments

Councilor Schwager asked the Clerk to schedule interviews for Boards and Commissions on March 2nd.

VP Todd advised that the IT Governance Council will replace the IT Tech Committee. He is hosting the East Greenwich Education Foundation Beach Ball event at The Dunes Club on June 2nd.

9) Public Comment (15-minute time limit)

None

10) Executive Session per R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5 (a) per the following sections:

None

VP Todd moved to adjourn at 9:45pm, seconded by Councilor Deutsch. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

Leigh A. Carney, CMC
Town Clerk

TOWN COUNCIL APPROVED MARCH 2, 2017