



City of Groton, Connecticut

**City Municipal Building
295 Meridian Street
Groton, CT 06340**

**Committee of the Whole
MINUTES**

Council Chambers

Monday, July 26, 2021

6:00 PM

**Mayor Keith Hedrick, Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, Councilor Rashaad Carter, Councilor Lisa McCabe,
Councilor Paul Norris, Councilor Christine Piazza and Councilor Stephen Sheffield
City Clerk Megan Peters**

Mayor Keith Hedrick called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

I. ROLL CALL

Mayor Keith Hedrick, Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, Councilor Lisa McCabe, Councilor Paul Norris,
Councilor Christine Piazza and Councilor Stephen Sheffield

City Clerk Megan Peters

Absent: Councilor Rashaad Carter

II. REFERRALS:

792 SISTER CITIES

7/26/21

Mayor Keith Hedrick introduces the Sister Cities topic and brings resident George Mathanool to the floor to give an overview and an update on this initiative and the benefits of the Sister Cities partnership.

Councilor Stephen Sheffield asked what the timeline was of this partnership.

George Mathanool states that the group would like to reconvene and get back together to continue the discussions that COVID had interrupted. The long term goal of this partnership would be to create a formal agreement to include culture, education, and technology and business exchange.

August 3rd is the projected date for the visit.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot questions whether we will have events related to this partnership for residents to get involved?

Mayor Keith Hedrick states that we are still in preliminary discussions but once established we will most likely have an event celebrating the partnership.

Councilor Christine Piazza reflected on an event in Norwich, CT that she attended to celebrate the Cape Verde culture and is excited to celebrate other cultures.

Councilor Paul Norris questions the definition "Sister Cities" and why an agreement needs to be formed in order to have business exchange as mentioned.

George Mathanool states that a "Sister Cities" Partnership would be a solid agreement with these places to establish business. A Sister Cities Partnership is a mutual shared vision of helping each other.

Mayor Keith Hedrick clarifies his thoughts on the partnership and our obligations.

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Motion made to move this to the August 2nd Mayor and Council Meeting by Councilor Paul Norris, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot. All in favor, 5-0-0.

655 DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS
-BUILDING AND ZONING

10/17/17
7/26/21

Mayor Keith Hedrick introduces Building and Zoning Inspector Joseph Summers to present his department to the group.

Building and Zoning Inspector Joseph Summers provides the Annual Report to the group including what his team is doing now and what their goals are for the future.

Building and Zoning Inspector Joseph Summers provides the group with the current building trends and his projections for the future based upon those trends. He explains that due to the construction at Electric Boat our permits and permit values have skyrocketed versus past years.

Mayor Keith Hedrick explains how the City of Groton is handling this and the money coming in now versus the money that will be coming in later to control the tax base.

Building and Zoning Inspector Joe Summers continues with his presentation and the projections, giving explanations on each projection.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot questions whether this presentation is or will be available to residents?

Inspector Joseph Summers states that yes, it will be added to the website for viewing.

Councilor Paul Norris thanks Building and Zoning Inspector Joseph Summers for the information and also all his efforts during COVID. He then questioned why there were no projections for 2022 – 2023 and how things will change for those years.

Building and Zoning Inspector Joseph Summers does not want to make assumptions on the projections for the following years as he is unaware as to whether this boom in construction will continue.

-POLICE DEPARTMENT

7/26/21

Chief Eric Jenkins presents the City of Groton Police Department including hiring, training, and the plan for updates in policies due to the ever changing times. He also states that we have increased amount of blight cases in the city and therefore, the blight officer has been very busy.

Mayor Keith Hedrick addresses recent blight concerns and how they are being handled.

Councilor Lisa McCabe questions the steps of action regarding blight.

Mayor Keith Hedrick clarifies that yes, there is a standard protocol for blight issues.

Councilor Lisa McCabe questions whether we have processes in place to assist those who cannot resolve their issues based upon disability, age, etc.

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Chief Jenkins explains that they explore every avenue to assist those who need help to resolve the blight issues.

Mayor Keith Hedrick mimics this, the City of Groton will try to assist and provide any assistance to resolve the situation.

Chief Jenkins also mentions that they are trying to address the many complaints of speeding throughout the city.

Chief Jenkins continues by noting that they are also continuing the updates of the radio system as well as updating the cameras and adding cameras to intersections throughout the city. The police are looking to add radar trailers that will record speeds and take video of cars speeding to allow the police to address speeding issues with those who are the offenders.

Chief Jenkins also mentions the following items that are on the horizon and planned for the future-

- FBI Audit
- Community Events
- Surveys
- Dispatch Update
- Resolving parking issues
- Implementation of House Bill 6004

Councilor Stephen Sheffield questions whether the COVID vaccine will be mandated for Police?

Mayor Keith Hedrick stats that vaccinations cannot and will not be mandated throughout the City of Groton.

Councilor Christine Piazza questions the issues with scooters in the city. This is something she encounters frequently as a bus driver and the rules they have to follow.

Chief Jenkins notes that all rules of the road should be followed as if you are driving a car and all scooter motorists must have a license to operate a scooter.

Councilor Lisa McCabe questioned the frequency of FBI audits?

Chief Jenkins states every three years.

Councilor Lisa McCabe questions the distribution method for the discussed survey.

Chief states that the survey is being worked on and distribution is planned for City Day.

Further upcoming and ongoing efforts-

- Cadet Program
- Civilian Police Academy
- Children First and Neighbors for Neighbors - \$50 gift cards for families in need.
- Care packages for persons in need of housing.
- Southeastern Mental Health Authority participating in drive along with officers.

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Councilor Paul Norris states that he loves the idea of community block parties.

Councilor Paul Norris inquires as to the City's parking issues and if they are wide spread or localized to a certain area? He also asked for clarification on the Southeastern Mental Health Authority and also questions the training that our officers receive to address mental health training. Lastly, Councilor Paul Norris questions dispatch and if you call 911, where does that call go?

Chief Jenkins explains that parking issues are mostly contained to the area of Electric Boat. That the officers do receive mental health training to be aware of how to handle those issues and the 911 line goes to the Town of Groton and if the incident is located in the City, they would be patched through to our dispatch.

758 POLICE **7/22/19**
-LOCKER ROOMS **7/26/21**

Chief Eric Jenkins reviews his presentation for the updates of the locker rooms and explains the need for an update to the locker rooms.

Councilor Paul Norris questions whether we will be painting and updating the entire room, or just the lockers?

The entire area will be updated.

Motion to move this to the August 2nd Mayor and Council Meeting made by Councilor Paul Norris second by Councilor Lisa McCabe. Motion carried. All in favor, 5-0-0.

-NUCLEAR SAFETY EMERGENCY PROGRAM BUDGET

Mayor Keith Hedrick needs a Motion to amend the agenda and add this topic. Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, second by Councilor Lisa McCabe. Motion carried. All in favor, 5-0-0.

Chief Jenkins explains the new budget and the need for this project, to update the dispatch center in the station.

Motion to move this to the August 2nd Mayor and Council Meeting made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, second by Councilor Lisa McCabe. Motion carried. All in favor, 5-0-0.

550 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS/BONDS **6/10/15**
-SHIPP GRANT **7/26/21**

Mayor Keith Hedrick introduces City Planner Leslie Creane to represent the SHIPP grant.

Mayor Keith Hedrick gives a brief explanation of the SHIPP Grant.

Councilor Paul Norris questions whether these are reimbursement grants or if they are giving the monies up front.

Mayor Keith Hedrick explains that they are reimbursement grants.

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Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot questions who will be in charge of getting that money.

Mayor Keith Hedrick explains that the Finance Department will handle the reimbursements.

Councilor Paul Norris questions if operations have been discussed for this.

Mayor Keith Hedrick states that yes, operations has been thought through and the city will be hiring out to someone who will be maintaining and operating the docks.

Councilor Lisa McCabe questioned the plan for camera installation in that area?

Councilor Christine Piazza questions the safety of kayaks at the marina and if any plans have been established for kayaks?

Mayor Keith Hedrick explained that they do have multiple plans for kayaks and they will evaluate when the time comes.

Motion made to move this to the August 2nd Mayor and Council Meeting by Councilor Paul Norris, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot. Motion carried. All in favor, 5-0-0.

1 APPOINTMENTS

5/14/01

Appointment of Colton Jenkins to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Motion to suspend this topic. Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot Councilor, second by Christine Piazza. Motion carried. All in favor, 5-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot questions if there is a limit to the # of alternates each Commission has?

Mayor Keith Hedrick explains that yes, there is a specific amount per commission set in by-laws.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot explains the process to residents to get involved.

Motion to move to the August 2nd Mayor and Council Meeting made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Councilor Christine Piazza. Motion carried. All in favor, 5-0-0.

793 AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

7/26/21

Mayor Keith Hedrick mentions that this topic is informational only and provides the Council on the current update of the funds.

Motion made to go to Executive Session by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot. Motion carried. All in favor, 6-0-0.

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Enter into Executive Session pursuant to CGS 1-200 (6)(A)

-To discuss personnel – Fire Department

-To discuss personnel – Police Department

Executive Session and returned to the regular meeting at 8:05pm.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Councilor Christine Piazza. Motion carried.

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All in favor, 5-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:06pm.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Megan Peters
City Clerk