



City of Groton, Connecticut

Committee of the Whole
Minutes

Monday, September 27, 2021

City Municipal Building
295 Meridian Street
Groton, CT 06340

Council Chambers

6:00 PM

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

Mayor Keith Hedrick called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Keith Hedrick, Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, Councilor Rashaad Carter, Councilor Lisa McCabe, Councilor Paul Norris, Councilor Stephen Sheffield, Finance Director Ron Yuhas and City Clerk Megan Peters

Excused: Councilor Christine Piazza

II. REFERRALS:

798 LAKE GEORGE WETLAND ENHANCEMENT DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

9/27/21

Mayor Keith Hedrick introduces Maura Robie, Natural Resource Specialist at ECCD. Maura explains to the group that the ECCD has been awarded a grant for the Lake George Wetland area located at Washington Park to enhance the area for environmental impact and for the community. She explains that with this grant they will go to bid with an implementation plan to improve bio retention, expand plant diversity and to positively improve the area overall for the environment. In addition to the positive environmental impact, it will also include boardwalks, paths and signage to educate the pedestrians who walk near the area about the Lake George Wetlands.

Councilor Lisa McCabe inquired into the timeframe of this project, what is the projected start date to projected completion date.

Maura Robie projects it could be about two years to project completion.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot states that she is excited to see this project as it is an area that is commonly inquired about as some see it as wasted park space. She likes this project.

Councilor Paul Norris is excited about this project as he did not even realize this area existed. He then inquires about the permitting process and next steps.

Councilor Paul Norris also inquires as to where the storm water is coming from.

Mayor Keith Hedrick states that it comes from the park and the roadways.

Councilor Paul Norris inquires about the stone paths mentioned in the proposed sketch.

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Mayor Keith Hedrick states that there have been many residents who have inquired about more walking paths and this will assist in getting them that. This will also have a positive environmental impact too.

This is informative only. No action is necessary on this topic.

Mayor Keith Hedrick requests a motion to suspend the rules and add 773 Parks and Recreation. Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, second by Councilor Lisa McCabe. All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.

**773 PARKS AND RECREATION
RAGNAR RACE**

7/20/20

Mayor Keith Hedrick introduces Parks and Recreation Director Mary Hill who notifies the group that Groton City, specifically Eastern Point Beach has been selected as a race starting point for the popular Ragnar Race, most commonly known for in Cape Cod, Massachusetts where it has been run for many years.

Director Mary Hill introduces Amber Sadlier from the Ragnar Race organization to the group to further discuss the request to have Groton City & Eastern Point Beach as the starting point of the upcoming New England Ragnar Race.

Amber presents the plan for the race if accepted by the council. She explains that New England has always been an ideal location for the race and therefore with participation down due to COVID it was a good year to introduce a new location (New England) with less teams, approximately 160 versus the normal 300+.

Councilor Rashaad Carter is familiar with the race and states that this is a big draw for the law enforcement community.

Councilor Stephen Sheffield asks about projected date.

Amber states that the planned race date is October 22, 2021.

Mayor Keith Hedrick notifies the group that the police are notified and ready to go to support this event.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot inquires as to if this will effect hospitality and tourism.

Amber states that yes, this will boost the economy greatly.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot inquires with Mayor Keith Hedrick how we will communicate this to our local business owners.

Amber states that social media is a great tool amongst this demographic and encourages local

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businesses to promote their business on the social media page.

Mayor Keith Hedrick stated that we will promote and communicate this event through all of our communication avenues including social media and the newsletter.

This is informative only. No action is necessary on this topic.

603 ORDINANCE REVIEW DISCUSSION 8/19/16
-ORDINANCE 167 9/27/21

Building Inspector Joseph Summers would like to request changes in Ordinance 167 based upon discussions with the Harbormaster and the Harbor Management Commission. Changes include to allow buoys in the water year round, flood zone designations and the updating of the references for DEP to DEEP.

No further discussion.

Motion made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot.
All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.
This item will be moved to October 4th Mayor and Council Meeting.

655 DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS 10/17/17
-HUMAN RESOURCES 9/27/21

Not heard this evening due to illness.

-ELECTRIC / SOLAR 9/27/21

Len Mediavilla, Key Account Manager from Groton Utilities is introduced to the council to educate the group about Electric and Solar Power throughout Groton Utilities.

Len Mediavilla presents his presentation to the group.

Councilor Lisa McCabe inquires about what to do if residents would like to have solar power installed on their home.

Len Mediavilla states that residents should inquire with Groton Utilities if they would like to have solar power installed on their homes. Call Customer Care and they will get you in touch with Len Mediavilla, 860-446-4000.

Councilor Stephen Sheffield inquired as to the average cost for solar to be installed on your home.

Len Mediavilla states that it is very difficult to estimate as all homes are different.

Mayor Keith Hedrick advises all residents that they can request an energy audit any time by

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reaching out to Groton Utilities Customer Care.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot inquired as if a tenant could initiate an energy audit.

Yes, a tenant can initiate an energy audit. The tenant would have to grant permission for this to be done on their property.

Councilor Paul Norris did go through the audit. He wanted to state that Groton Utilities and the third party vendor were very professional and he was greatly satisfied with the audit.

Informative only. No further action needed.

**773 PARKS AND RECREATION
 TYLER HOUSE WINDOWS**

7/20/20

Parks and Recreation Director Mary Hill is introduced back to the council to request the need for additional funding for the Tyler House window project. The additional funding would be for lead abatement. The additional funding requested is \$30,000.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot states that the original funds were from bond funding. If additional funding is necessary and from capital budget, are there any projects that won't get done due to it?

Yes, Director Mary Hill states that Washington Park Pavilion roofs and possible bleacher replacement.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot would like to try to continue moving forward with the proposed projects, Washington Park Pavilions and bleachers, in addition to the lead removal.

Finance Director Ron Yuhas states that they are looking at other sources to find the money in addition to Director Mary Hill looking in her budget.

Councilor Paul Norris inquires to the contingency on the project.

Director Mary Hill states that they had already planned for a 5% contingency versus the normal 10% for this project. 5% was chosen versus the normal 10% based upon having the actual pricing for the budget.

Mayor Keith Hedrick gives a brief explanation of the need for this project.

Councilor Stephen Sheffield inquires to our history with this company that we will use to remove the lead.

Director Mary Hill states that we have not used them in the past, but the company doing the window replacement is comfortable with this company and the process.

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Finance Director Ron Yuhas explains that the window replacement company and invoice will remain the same, the company doing the lead removal is a third party who works with our window replacement company.

Councilor Stephen Sheffield inquires as to the possibility of any additional surprise costs that could be associated with this project.

Mayor Keith Hedrick explains that the future presented resolution will be to not exceed that cost.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot further explains the process per the handout given to the council.

Councilor Paul Norris inquires as to worst case scenario, that the \$5,900 credit that is listed could be used towards the cost.

Finance Director Ron Yuhas states, yes the \$5,900 credit plus the contingency could be used.

No further discussion.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, second by Councilor Lisa McCabe.

All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.

This item will be moved to October 4th Mayor and Council Meeting.

742 GROTON UTILITIES 2/21/19

Mark Biron is introduced to the group to present the following projects to the council.

-NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE ACT 9/27/21

Mark Biron and Finance Director Ron Yuhas present this project to the group. This is an initial approval to submit our request to the state to receive these funds for our local organizations.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot inquires as to a deadline to this submission.

Finance Director Ron Yuhas states that this will be submitted September 30th to the state.

Councilor Stephen Sheffield inquires as to the amount for the Sacred Heart School.

Councilor Paul Norris states that this is a great program for non-profits. He also inquired as to how many non-profits have submitted for this in the past.

Mayor Keith Hedrick states that it has always been a very small number but they are calling and notifying groups of this program and telling them to apply.

Motion made by Councilor Paul Norris, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot.

All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.

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This item will be moved to the Special Mayor and Council Meeting tonight, September 27, 2021.

-PAR ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS

9/27/21

Mark Biron introduces Randall Surprenant, Groton Utilities Engineering Manager, to the group to explain this project for updates to the power lines and the need for the proposed 50% contingency attached to the cost.

Mayor Keith Hedrick gives a further explanation to the need for this money, the contingency and the overall project.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot inquires further into the pricing and if it will go over our proposed budget.

Randall states that no, they have projected on the higher side to avoid going over the proposed budget. He is working closely with Eversource to ensure that the costs are kept within budget.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot states that this is not the first time that costs have had to come back to council due to increases and she is happy to see that we are being creative to avoid this issue moving forward.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot would like to request an overview once the project is completed to educate residents on the life of the project and how much work goes into maintaining a utility.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot thanks Randall for coming in to explain the project.

No further discussion.

Motion made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot.
All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.

This item will be moved to Special Mayor and Council Meeting tonight, September 27, 2021.

-SCADA WASTEWATER

9/27/21

Mark Biron explains this project to the council.

No further discussion.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, second by Councilor Lisa McCabe.
All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.

This item will be moved to October 4th Mayor and Council Meeting.

-SCADA WATER

9/27/21

Mark Biron explains this project to the council.

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No further discussion.

Motion made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot.
All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.
This item will be moved to October 4th Mayor and Council Meeting.

-EASTERN POINT PUMP STATION GENERATOR

9/27/21

Mark Biron explains that this project is just one of the many necessary projects to update our pump station.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot inquires to the timeline and the effect on residents.

Mark Biron states that this project timeline will be based upon the parts and when they can come in. He also states that this work will take place inside the building and should not affect residents too much.

No further discussion.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, second by Councilor Stephen Sheffield.
All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.
This item will be moved to October 4th Mayor and Council Meeting.

-AMI METERS

9/27/21

Mark Biron explains that this project is to upgrade the water meters on our homes.

Councilor Paul Norris inquires about the AMI Meters and where they are specifically located.

Mark Biron states that these meters are scattered throughout the city.

Councilor Lisa McCabe inquires about the radio transmitting meters. She would like to know if there is a way to track whether they are being read correctly.

Yes, Mark Biron states that Meter Engineering and Customer Care can assist with this.

No further discussion.

Motion made by Councilor Stephen Sheffield, second by Councilor Lisa McCabe.
All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.
This item will be moved to October 4th Mayor and Council Meeting.

-HIGH VOLTAGE MAINTENANCE CORPORATION

9/27/21

Mark Biron states that this is for maintenance in preparation for the upcoming transmission work.

Councilor Paul Norris inquires if this is routine maintenance.

Mark Biron states that the substation transformers are maintained by a third party vendor as they are too large for us to maintain on our own.

No further discussion.

Motion made by Councilor Stephen Sheffield, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot.

All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.

This item will be moved to October 4th Mayor and Council Meeting.

-D AND D POWER MATTING AND POLE REPLACEMENT

9/27/21

Mark Biron explains the importance of this project. If these poles failed it would be detrimental to the area.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot inquires about the contractor.

Councilor Paul Norris inquires as to the number of poles to be replaced in this area.

Mark Biron states that all four poles in the swampy area will be replaced.

No further discussion.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, second by Councilor Stephen Sheffield.

All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.

This item will be moved to October 4th Mayor and Council Meeting.

-EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PARTNERSHIP

9/27/21

Mark Biron explains the need for this project and to upgrade our plan with emergency preparedness.

No further discussion.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, second by Councilor Stephen Sheffield.

All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.

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561 GROTON UTILITIES FINANCIALS 9/24/15

Director Ron Yuhas presents the Groton Utilities Financials to the group.

This is informative only.

690 CITY BUDGET PRESENTATIONS 4/6/18

Director Ron Yuhas states that there is nothing to present at this time.

748 DONATION REQUESTS 3/21/19
-CHILDREN FIRST GROTON 9/27/21

Mayor Keith Hedrick states that Children First Groton is requesting a \$1,000 donation to continue with the programming that they do for all of Groton. We have donated \$1,000 to Children First Groton in the past several years.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot would like to manage the donation funds and possibly notify charitable organizations in order to spend the entire allotted money by the end of the year.

The group decided that this would be a good idea and we will strive to spend all the donation funds moving forward each year.

Councilor Rashaad Carter explains that he believes in the past we had tried to hold back to ensure we didn't run out of donation funds.

Councilor Lisa McCabe inquired as to why we don't typically spend the entire allotted month.

Finance Director Ron Yuhas explained the trends with the past years and the spending.

Councilor Rashaad Carter would prefer to assist those who typically request the money, but he would also like to notify those who don't know about the donation program.

The Council continues discussion on dispersing funds moving forward to ensure that we spend the entirety of the allotted funds.

No further discussion.

Motion made for a \$1,000 donation by Councilor Stephen Sheffield, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot.

All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.

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-DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND

9/27/21

Finance Director Ron Yuhas explains the history of this next request for funds. He explains that the City has donated to this in the past through a dinner event with table purchase.

Councilor Lisa McCabe would like to recommend a \$1,000 donation to this group.

Motion made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Councilor Stephen Sheffield.

Discussion, Councilor Paul Norris would like to specify this would be a Bronze Scholarship.

All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.

This item will be moved to October 4th Mayor and Council Meeting.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made to adjourn by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Councilor Stephen Sheffield.
All in favor, 5-0-0. Motion carried.

Mayor Keith Hedrick adjourned the meeting at 8:05pm.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

**Megan Peters
City Clerk**