

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

OCTOBER 23, 2001

6:30 P.M.

AGENDA

Blessing

1. Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call
2. Correspondence
3. Consent Agenda
 - a. Consider and Approve Tax Refunds (#440-495) Totaling \$6,216.94 - Tax Collector
 - b. Consider and Approve an Appropriation of Funds in the Amount of \$8,000 to Paramedic Training S.G. Acct. #2030-501-5710 and \$8,000 to Misc. State Grants Acct. #1040-050-5520 – Dept. of Fire & Emergency Services
 - c. Consider and Approve an Appropriation of Funds in the Amount of \$2,000 from State Grant Revenues to Program Expenditures – Board of Education
 - d. Approve and Accept the Minutes of the September 25, 2001 Town Council Meeting
 - e. Approve and Accept the Minutes of the October 9, 2001 Town Council Meeting
4. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda
5. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD
6. Consider and Approve One (1) Appointment to the Position of Constable to Fill a Vacancy which Expires 1/25/2002

7. Consider and Approve One (1) Appointment/Re-Appointment to the Position of Commissioner on the Wallingford Housing Authority for a Term of Five Years to Expire 10/31/2006
8. Consider and Approve Accepting Quarry Run Court as Approved and Accepted by the Wallingford Planning & Zoning Commission at its October 10, 2001 Meeting - Town Planner
9. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Simpson School - Mayor
10. Report Out, Discussion and Possible Action on the Status of Hiring an Inspector in the Fire Marshal's Office as Requested by Council James Vumbaco
11. Executive Session Pursuant to Section 1-200(6)(D) of the CT. General Statutes Pertaining to the Purchase, Sale and/or Leasing of Property – Mayor

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6:30 P.M.

SUMMARY

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TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

OCTOBER 23, 2001

6:30 P.M.

A regular meeting of the Wallingford Town Council was held on Tuesday, October 23, 2001 in the Robert Earley Auditorium of the Wallingford Town Hall and called to Order by Chairman Robert F. Parisi at 6:33 P.M. Answering present to the Roll called by Town Clerk Rosemary A. Rascati were Councilors Brodinsky, Centner, Farrell, Knight, Papale, Parisi, Rys, Vumbaco & Zappala. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. arrived at 6:50 P.M.; Town Attorney Janis M. Small and Comptroller Thomas A. Myers were also present.

A blessing was bestowed upon the Council by Margaret Jay, Minister, Outreach Program Coordinator, First Congregational Church of Wallingford.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given to the Flag.

ITEM #2 No items of correspondence were presented.

At this time Chairman Parisi acknowledged John Sullivan of Wallingford Public Access Association (WPAA).

John Sullivan, 62 Dutton Street stated, I am here this evening as a representative of WPAA, the Wallingford Public Access Association and Channel 18. I serve as Vice President of this organization located at 88 S. Main Street. Let me begin by saying that Town Council meetings are my second-favorite program on local television (Mr. Sullivan hosts a live broadcast on the channel). There is nothing that compares to the entertainment value I get for my dollar, watching my local government in action, here; kudos to you guys, you do a good job. The reason I am here tonight is to recognize the award winning television that is produced at our WPAA studio. Last Friday evening, AT&T presented its final C.A.P. (Community Access Programming) Awards ceremony. The AT&T CAP Award recognizes excellence in public access television across AT&T's seven town franchise. I am pleased to announce that WPAA took home approximately fifteen (15) first place awards and several honorable mentions that evening. On two separate occasions winners accepting awards from other franchise towns took a moment during their acceptance speech to praise our town and station for producing broadcast excellence. One program, in particular, that is very close to my heart was the program taped on March 10, 2001 entitled, "Take a Stand Against Hate". You may recall this day, it was originally thought to be a day of protest; a day that would be distinguished by the presence of the World Church of the Creator leader, Mat Hale, visiting our town, bringing his poisonous message of white power. Well that was what was supposed to happen. What actually occurred proved, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that our town, its people, its government and its churches

stand together and united against one race or one religion being superior to another. What the newspapers predicted would be our most humiliating moment turned into our most glorious day. I am proud to live in this town; I am proud of our residents, our political leaders and our churches who stood united with the NAACP in taking a stand against hate and for those who solicit these beliefs. March 10th will not go down in our history books as the day Mat Hale visited our town. It will go down as the day the Town of Wallingford stood tall before state and nation defining its character, beliefs and convictions. In closing, I would like to thank all of the WPAA viewers for adding that \$1.00 to their cable bill. That continues to allow us to produce quality, local programming, obviously with the exception of my show on Wednesday nights from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

(Applause)

Mr. Parisi congratulated everyone at Public Access for the fine job that they are doing.

ITEM #3 Consent Agenda

ITEM #3a Consider and Approve Tax Refunds (#440-495) Totaling \$6,216.94 - Tax Collector

ITEM #3b Consider and Approve an Appropriation of Funds in the Amount of \$8,000 to Paramedic Training S.G. Acct. #2030-501-5710 and \$8,000 to Misc. State Grants Acct. #1040-050-5520 – Dept. of Fire & Emergency Services

ITEM #3c Consider and Approve an Appropriation of funds in the Amount of \$2,000 from State Grant Revenues to Program Expenditures – Board of Education

ITEM #3d Approve and Accept the Minutes of the September 25, 2001 Town Council Meeting

ITEM #3e Approve and Accept the Minutes of the October 9, 2001 Town Council Meeting

Motion was made by Mr. Rys, seconded by Mr. Farrell.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

ITEM #4 Withdrawn

PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

Howard Greenberg, 205 Center Street asked, what is the Town of Wallingford doing to supplement Town employees' pay if they are called into active duty in the Reserves or National Guard?

Chairman Parisi stated that he had no idea if the Town had any policy in existence which addresses this matter. He asked Comptroller Thomas Myers if he was aware of such a policy?

Mr. Myers replied that both the Mayor and Personnel Director were working on policy. He was not sure if it was completed or still in process.

Mr. Greenberg stated, there is something in place that says the reservist would get paid for the two weeks during the summer when they would have to report for duty but, according to the contract, there is nothing provided further for them in times of emergency, such as we are experiencing now. I hope that the Town Council would encourage something to be done for the town employees. I know of one employee in the Police Department and one in the Fire Department this situation would apply to. In today's Hartford Courant there was an article that a Councilor in Glastonbury was proposing that the Town of Glastonbury subsidize the pay of town employees if they are called (into duty). The subsidy would make up the difference between the employee's regular pay and not any bonuses or overtime or anything like that and what they would receive in pay and benefits from the military. In Glastonbury, the pension contribution, sick time, vacation time, would all accrue as it normally would. The plan would stay in effect for six months but, certainly, there could be extensions afterwards. This way no town employee in Glastonbury, nor here, would suffer any financial loss for doing their patriotic duty. In addition, the Town of Manchester has already adopted a policy like this. Obviously, re-employment without losing any time, rank, pay, etc., but the compensation would certainly remain the same. Medical and dental insurance, when an employee is called into active duty, he or she is automatically covered under the military's healthcare coverage. Therefore, after the initial 30 calendar days of leave, the military insurance shall be the primary provider for that employee. Employee's spouse and dependents are also eligible for coverage under the military health plan or can be continued under the Town's health plan. Again, in Manchester, the employee shall retain any unused sick, holiday and vacation time, earned prior to active duty and will be credited to the employee upon his or her return. However, in Manchester versus Glastonbury, no additional sick time, vacation or holiday or any other earned or unearned time would accrue while the employee is away from the municipality. Again, I would suggest and recommend, as a taxpayer and resident of the town, we should look forward to doing something similar to that.

Chairman Parisi replied, if it is being worked on, that is all we can hope for right now. Everything you do, be it bad or good, has to be negotiated.

Mr. Greenberg replied, according to Manchester, they only have five employees so we are not talking about a large number of employees and the amount is minimal for someone who is serving our country.

Chairman Parisi replied, I am sure the Town would treat its employees fairly and there will be many models of programs available to use. It is a good suggestion and I am glad that it is being raised.

Mr. Greenberg stated, Wallingford should be in the forefront on something like this.

Jack Agosta, 505 Church Street, Yalesville referred to a sweatshirt he was wearing from Desert Storm. He stated that the shirt was ten years old and he brought it out to wear it at this time. He commented that because the Desert Storm situation was not handled properly ten years ago the country has found itself in the current predicament. What we do today is very important to the future, he said. He asked if the School Building Project report referred to at the last meeting is available to the public? Is the financial information available to the citizens?

Chairman Parisi answered, I would think that it should be.

Mr. Agosta asked how he could obtain a copy.

Chairman Parisi replied, I think you can ask the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Committee for a copy. If there is a problem getting any of the information, call a Councilor. I wouldn't think there would be. There are meetings available, too. The meetings are posted in the Town Clerk's Office and I know you are in the Town Hall frequently, you might check down there and check their schedule or, again, just call one of the committee people.

Mr. Agosta stated, he attends every meeting he can but, if one were to go to a meeting each night of the week...I am not always up to going to the meetings I would like to. I would like to have a report back and see how it goes. I don't have any doubts about the committee at all.

Chairman Parisi stated, the names (of the committee members) are available in the Town Council Office and the phone book. I am sure the secretary would be happy to give them to you.

Mr. Agosta stated, Mr. Harwood is very cooperative, I know that. I would just like to see the report because I want to see the numbers.

Pasquale Melillo, 15 Haller Place, Yalesville stated that he has heard that PP&L is trying to get a new contract going with us. Is this true?

Chairman Parisi replied, I don't think so. I don't profess to know every single thing that happens but I think we have a contract already.

Mr. Melillo stated, the way I understand it is, the contract is organized in such a way that they will pay the Town \$1 million per year in taxes.

Atty. Small replied, they are going to pay what ever the assessed value of their property is. There is no limit as to what the taxes would be. The assessment is still in the process. I don't know where this \$1 million figure is coming from.

Mr. Melillo stated, one of the candidates had on his flyer that the Town will get \$1 million per year in taxes from the plant.

Atty. Small answered, I don't recall what possible projections there were at the time. I am sure there were some representations about what the ball park figure was but I don't recall that number off the top of my head.

Mr. Melillo stated, it was on the agenda at one of the recent Council meetings but was then withdrawn. Why did you take it off of the agenda?

Chairman Parisi answered, it wasn't ready to be discussed. More information was requested.

Howard Greenberg, 205 Center Street stated to Mr. Farrell, it has been about ten weeks since I started the conversation with you about the newspaper publication boxes located around the center of town. Like rabbits, they are starting to multiply. Have you had any updates of information on the topic?

Mr. Farrell replied, the last meeting I reported that Atty. Adam Mantzaris responded back to me saying, in essence, that the boxes should not be there but he did not recommend self-help to remove them. I don't agree with his opinion necessarily. I am doing my own legal research on commercial speech and I am gathering my information to try and convince Atty. Mantzaris that his opinion could be changed.

Mr. Greenberg stated, some of the publications are informative and some are advertisements. There is no money going to the Town. As an attorney, you must know if there is a way to expedite this.

Mr. Farrell answered, I am trying to find a way we can legally do something about this.

Jack Agosta, 505 Church Street, Yalesville asked if the Town's audit will be released soon?

Comptroller Thomas Myers replied that it will be released before December 31st.

Mr. Agosta stated that last year it was released in November.

Mr. Myers disagreed saying, I think last year we released it late December.

Philip Wright, Sr. 160 Cedar Street asked, what is the status of the American Legion Building?

Mayor Dickinson replied, the property was placed on a website indicating an historic structure that, if there was interest in moving it, any party or organization could contact the town I have Not checked with Don (Roe, Program Planner) lately. I am not sure if we have any solid inquiries as yet or not.

Mr. Wright asked, could I assume that if no one asks for it, we are going to tear it down if we can't sell it?

Mayor Dickinson replied, that would be my recommendation.

Mr. Wright answered, I know that is your recommendation but, is that what is going to happen?

Mayor Dickinson answered, at the point there is no longer any point to wait for something to come along, I will put an item on the agenda myself regarding taking action on the building.

Mr. Wright asked, how long are we going to wait for this website inquiry?

Mayor Dickinson answered, I will have to check with Don as to when it first went on. We are trying to give it a reasonable time.

Robert Sheehan, 11 Cooper Avenue asked, has it been determined yet who owns the West Dayton Hill Road dam? We are in our twenty-second month of this.

Atty. Small answered, the trial is not finished yet. The evidence portion concluded this afternoon but there is still a briefing schedule and I wouldn't expect a decision for several months.

Pasquale Melillo, 15 Haller Place, Yalesville asked if the renovation project will bring the schools up to code with regards to ADA requirements? Federal and State laws dictate that schools under renovation must meet these codes, are we making sure that will be done?

Mayor Dickinson answered, as far as I know, we meet the law regarding handicapped access.

The school system will meet the program accessibility that is required under the law and regulations. Every school may not be totally accessible; all aspects of the school. But as long as there is program accessibility within the system, that meets the law. The law, as I understand it and has been explained to us by an attorney, deals with program accessibility. It is really not as much a structural bricks and mortar requirement as it is a program requirement. All components of every school, under the law, would not have to be accessible as long as programs were accessible within the school system.

Jack Agosta, 505 Church Street, Yalesville stated, at the last meeting I asked if I could obtain a copy of the Town's Plan of Development. Ms. Bush, who was very gracious, handed me a development plan that was compiled in 1993. At that time affordable housing was an issue. Eight years later, we finally have an affordable housing plan coming into effect; that is how long it took. Otherwise, almost everything in that program, that they had in that book is almost effect. What concerns me is, Route 5. I believe in filling up the street. We have Yale Plaza at is almost like a ghost town. We have the Yale Motor Inn property that can be developed by someone and the old Colony Lumber site. Is there anyone who has contacted the owners of the properties that are vacant to offer them an incentive if they attract tenants or owners to occupy them?

Chairman Parisi replied, I cannot imagine anyone who owns any of those properties not trying to market it. It can't be very productive sitting there empty. I am sure that the Economic Development Commission is more than willing to work with anyone that asks for any help or guidance or what ever.

Mr. Agosta asked, is it wrong for our mayor, on his own, to try and contact possible tenants for those empty buildings on Route 5?

Mayor Dickinson answered, we have a very active Economic Development Office. Doreen DeSarro is now back with us. She left for a short time and is now back with us. She has a very active marketing program. She works with the Realtors and with companies that are looking for space of a variety of sizes. That is the office that would handle inquiries and recruitment of businesses.

Mr. Agosta asked, do you feel that it might help the Town to get properties such as the plaza that Lowe's was going to move into, occupied by putting your effort into it? Do you feel that, with your expertise, it may prove to be an asset to the Town to do that?

Mayor Dickinson answered, my office and other offices do meet with developers when a proposal comes to the Town and they are interested in what the Town can do. Typically, those inquiries do come through the Economic Development Commission office which is headed up

by our coordinator Don Roe. That is the route they follow and it is an appropriate way to handle that business.

Mr. Agosta asked, isn't that committee comprised of volunteers? They are appointed. That is not their main focus in life.

Mayor Dickinson replied, that is correct but they oversee a budget that the Economic Development Office spends for advertising, recruiting, for all of the activities associated with trying to interest businesses in moving, relocating, expanding in Wallingford. That is their function. That is why they have money and they have had success in doing that.

Mr. Agosta asked, is it wrong for nine councilors to approach a business and turn it back to the Mayor...

Chairman Parisi replied, some of us may be doing that. You cannot make the assumption that no one is doing anything.

Mr. Agosta asked, is it wrong for all of you to be doing that?

Chairman Parisi replied, I would say that you would have to be very careful on how you approach the subject. One would have to be aware that they cannot make any promises or guarantees or anything. I think everyone of us is supportive of the Town when the opportunity presents itself. I don't think we turn it down to promote Wallingford. I have asked someone who has expressed some interest in land here and I gave their name to the Economic Development Commission and I expect them to pursue.

Mr. Agosta stated that he felt the Town Council and Mayor should be able to assist in trying to attract business to Wallingford and that personal opinions should not interfere in the process.

Chairman Parisi asked, who said you can't do it?

Mr. Agosta answered, the things you read in the paper; the criticisms because it is election time. The Mayor from Meriden was criticized for doing so.

Chairman Parisi answered, this is not Meriden.

Mr. Agosta reiterated that he thought it was proper for the Mayor and Council to assist in attracting business to Wallingford.

Pasquale Melillo, 15 Haller Place, Yalesville asked, are we doing our best with regards to security for our Town resources? The Water Division, it seems, has started the ball rolling.

Chairman Parisi answered, yes, the Town is doing something. There was an article in today's newspaper on that very subject.

Mr. Melillo asked, what about the new PP&L plant? It seems that we should have that guarded. Maybe it is a combination of responsibility; PP&L and the Town?

Mayor Dickinson answered, we take security issues very seriously. I have met with the departments in question. On several occasions, if we are taking measures that are adequate under the total circumstances. We are not going to spell out everything that we do but, given what is happening, we are looking to safeguard and protect the public in the best manner we know how.

Mr. Agosta stated, I think that the newspapers should publish information on who to call if a resident receives a piece of mail that looks suspicious. It should tell people who to call, either the Police or Fire Departments. I would call the Fire Department; someone might call the Police Department. I know what to do, but most people may not. Do you want all the calls to go to the Fire Department or Police Department?

Chairman Parisi replied, we are telling everyone right now to call those people and that should be adequate.

Public Question and Answer Period was concluded at this time.

ITEM #6 Consider and Approve One (1) Appointment to the Position of Constable to Fill a Vacancy which Expires 1/25/2002

Mr. Farrell placed into nomination the name of John LeTourneau to fill the vacancy created by Michael Mangini. He went on to say that he has known Mr. LeTourneau for many years; he is a local businessperson with a lamp and shade shop on Center Street. He is a father and grandfather and a very diligent one, as well as someone who serves in a variety of volunteer capacities for a number of organizations in Wallingford. We did have quite a number of conversations regards the job of constable. He is trying to familiarize himself with that and I think he would do a very good job. I am intimately familiar with what the office entails since it involves serving legal papers and I certainly have occasion to hire people to do that.

Motion was made by Mr. Rys to Appoint John LeTourneau to the Position, seconded by Mr. Knight.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

ITEM #7 Consider and Approve One (1) Appointment/Re-Appointment to the Position of Commissioner on the Wallingford Housing Authority for a Term of Five Years to Expire 10/31/2006

Motion was made by Mr. Rys to Re-Appoint Fred Monahan to the Position, seconded by Mr. Farrell.

Mr. Rys stated that correspondence from Karen Hlavac, Chairperson of the Republican Town Committees states that both Mr. LeTourneau and Mr. Monahan were endorsed by the Republican Town Committee to be appointed to the respective positions.

Mr. Rys stated that Mr. Monahan has tenure in the Housing Authority since 1986; has been Vice Chairman of the Wallingford Housing Authority since 1992. He is very diligent in his work and has certainly shown a lot of expertise with the rest of the Commissioners.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

At this time Chairman Parisi announced that Mr. Vumbaco is requesting that Item #10 be withdrawn from the agenda this evening. He is awaiting additional information on the subject matter.

Town Clerk Rosemary A. Rascati performed the Swearing In Ceremony for Mr. LeTourneau. Mr. Monahan was not in attendance.

ITEM #8 Consider and Approve Accepting Quarry Run Court as Approved and Accepted by the Wallingford Planning & Zoning Commission at its October 10, 2001 Meeting – Town Planner

Motion was made by Mr. Rys, seconded by Mr. Knight.

Mr. Knight asked, how long has this project been finished?

Linda Bush, Town Planner, responded, I suspect about five (5) years. There was a drainage problem on private property that held it up.

Mr. Knight asked, is it normal to have a five year situation?

Ms. Bush answered, no, it is not normal at all.

Mr. Knight asked, what transpired?, Briefly, if you would. I got calls on this and I wondered what had happened.

Ms. Bush replied, I am not knowledgeable about drainage. There is a private drainage easement that the state had for years over an existing property at the corner of Quarry Run Court. That water drained back through three of the new lots that were created on Quarry Run Court and then down into the pond at Tilcon. It was shown on the subdivision map, basically as private drainage easement. When the developer built the houses supposedly there were pipes under those three driveways to get to the drainage easement. The developer did not put the pipes at an elevation to allow the water to drain properly. It was a private drainage easement but was affected by Town approval. The Town held up the road acceptance to force the developer to solve the problem. The drainage did not impact any of the new homes; drainage problems impacted two existing homes that were there before Quarry Run Court went in. It is my understanding that the developers put in a new pipe, it is my understanding, under only one of the driveways but I was not involved in it at all. The Engineering Department felt that would solve the problem so they signed off.

r. Knight stated, obviously, it is not normal to take this kind of time to get a job like this done. Are there any other tools that we could use to get these developers to finish what they are supposed to be doing?

Ms. Bush answered, the Town probably could have taken them to court. If someone does not comply with our regulations that is our only recourse; take them to court.

Mr. Knight asked, did we just lean on this guy until he did what he was supposed to do ?

Ms. Bush answered, yes.

Mr. Brodinsky asked, was there a bond in place in connection with this particular drainage easement?

Ms. Bush answered, no, because it was private. We only bond for public improvements and it was an existing drainage easement and it was questionable whether the Town could force them to correct it anyway. It was sort of a private property issue and it was exacerbated obviously because of a Town approval. The Town felt that the only way to force them to correct it was to hold up; because it was the developers who created the problem; accepting the road because they were still liable for the road and maintenance which cost them money every year.

Mr. Brodinsky asked, the drainage solution was a condition of the subdivision approval?

Ms. Bush answered, no, it was just shown on the original subdivision approval. The pipes under the driveway were just shown. It was a long time ago and I am not the drainage person therefore I don't review drainage. It is my recollection that the pipes and their elevation were shown on the original approval and I was told that they were not installed at that elevation so

that water goes downhill and that the pipes were not installed at an elevation to allow water to drain.

Mr. Brodinsky stated, what confuses me is, you said that the Town could have taken the developer to court which suggests to me that the developer owed the Town some sort of an enforceable duty and I am just wondering if the developer owed some sort of a duty, private or public drainage easement. You suggested that a duty was owed to the Town to solve the problem but no bond was attached and is that standard procedure?

Ms. Bush answered, I might argue that I don't know if the Town legally had any, if we took them to court, if we could have won because it was a private drainage easement. We did not require it. It was there; it involved private property only, not even water from the Town road goes into it. Water from Route 68 is the only water that drains through it.

Mr. Brodinsky asked, who has been plowing the road?

Ms. Bush answered, they have and I think the Town may have a few times before releasing the remainder of the bond. I believe that they did, or the developer in the adjacent subdivision did.

Mr. Brodinsky asked, are there any other roads that are in the same situation; that have been hanging fire for five, tens years?

Ms. Bush answered, the one adjacent to this, which should be accepted within a month or two. It is not anywhere near as old as this but are getting as old as this. The Town doesn't plow. The residents of this road really want their road accepted because it is my understanding, until recently, the school bus is still going down it but the Board of Ed has adopted a policy that they will no longer go on private roads with school buses...unless the developer of the private road signs a hold harmless. These particular developers hadn't. The Board of Ed had written a letter to all the people on Quarry Run Court telling them that, as of November 1st, the Board of Ed bus would no longer go down Quarry Run Court. The residents want the road accepted. I have gotten all of this information second-hand.

Mr. Brodinsky asked, there are no other roads that you can think of that are in that situation where it is beyond five years and the residents still have to tolerate the developer doing the snowplowing other than that immediate area?

Ms. Bush answered, no.

Chairman Parisi asked, what about up around Marie Lane?

Ms. Bush answered, Marie Lane has only been there five years. If you go in Quarry Run Court you take a left onto Nathan Hale, then you hit Hemingway and then you hit Tammy Hill and then you hit Marie. Marie is the last road and that was paved yesterday, the sidewalks are in, it is all paved. The only thing that it is missing is property corner pins, which are not really a Town issue. Street line monuments, which I understand from the developer, are going to be going in and all of their driveway aprons are not paved. They have a punch list of other minor items. All the roads in that development, hopefully will be accepted by the Council before snow falls.

Chairman Parisi stated, I think the point that Mr. Brodinsky is trying to make and I am going to try and make is, why do we have to get to this point where many people are upset about it, including many councilors and we are getting bombarded with complaints and yet, they make it; they slide under the wire, why does it have to be so hard?

Ms. Bush answered, my office wants to accept roads. We try very hard. Some other departments, in my opinion, don't work hard to get roads accepted. I like to get roads accepted; I work hard with developers to get that acceptance, that's the best I can say.

Mr. Farrell asked, when was the subdivision was originally approved by Planning & Zoning?

Ms. Bush answered, I think it was 1988.

Mr. Farrell asked, but this has been going on for five years?

Ms. Bush answered, the drainage issue. Subdivisions are valid for five years; the Town can grant extensions for another five years. We could have called the bond but then we would have a bond and we cannot do work on private property. In this case, it would have gotten us nowhere unless the Town Attorney thinks we could have taken the bond money and done a drainage easement on private property and I think I talked to Adam (Atty. Mantzaris) and not Janis (Town Atty. Small) about this.

Mr. Farrell stated, sounds like calling the buses is a more effective means of getting it done. The only reason I asked the question was that that was prior in time to our adoption of the street name list. It does not apply to this?

Ms. Bush answered, this was long before that. Yes, it does not apply.

Atty. Small stated, we can't take a bond for private improvements on private property, however, I am researching the ability to require that certain things on a subdivision be done in a certain order and if you don't do them in that order then you don't get a building permit or a certificate of occupancy.

Jack Agosta, 505 Church Street, Yalesville suggested that the bond limit be raised then perhaps the developers will not abuse the Town.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

ITEM #9 Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Simpson School – Mayor

State Senator Brian McDermott, Executive Director of the Housing Authority, Stephen Nere, and Housing Authority Commissioners Robert Prentice and William Ulbrich were present for discussion on this topic.

Mayor Dickinson stated, as you know we put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Simpson School. We had nine organizations tour the school. One submitted a proposal, that was the Housing Authority, eight did not. The Purchasing Office dedicated some time to inquire as to why the others did not submit proposals. The reasons are varied but pretty much it was not a case of absolutely no interest. We have determined that three would be very interested in another chance to submit a proposal. The reason this is before us is, we should make a determination as to what direction we want to go; either with the Housing Authority or to put it back out for proposals pursuant to a public process. I believe there were efforts in the legislative session to obtain funding which were unsuccessful as far as \$3-4 million. For us to proceed with the state under the proposal submitted we would have to name the Housing Authority the preferred developer which would mean that no one else, no other entity would be able to do anything with this project until such time as a consultant, hired with state funds, would submit a report. That would be eight or nine months away. The question is, is it in our interest to go back out to the public or to stay with the Housing Authority and wait for a consultant's report without any guarantee of the \$3-4 million for construction. I think that is the bare bones of it.

Senator McDermott stated, it is a pleasure to be back in the Town Council Chambers again. It has been a little while. I miss serving with all of you but I am glad to be working with you, still. As you all know there has been a shortage of senior housing in Wallingford. All of us would love nothing more than to see senior housing built in the Town of Wallingford. You have gone through an exhaustive process of seeing what your options were for Simpson School and I applaud all of you for your efforts; where you are going and what you want to do with that. I want to be able to see how I can help on the state level and that is why the Wallingford delegation this past year has put in a bill looking for and seeking funding in the neighborhood of \$3-4 million. We have been working with Stephen Nere and the Wallingford Housing Authority members and we came up with some figures that could work and plan to put a number together with the state. As you all know, working with the State Bonding Commission can be difficult, a long process, and can be tedious as you have seen with other examples such

as Garden Road. It can take its time to get the grasp of funding released. Nevertheless, we still persevere and work on and we realize that this is a noteworthy goal to be able to bring senior housing to town. I have had several meetings with the Governor; I have had several meetings with the Commission on DECD (Department of Economic and Community Development); I have brought some of the Housing Authority members up and Steve Nere to meet with them. We have had a discussion in my office as to where we can proceed and how we can go forward. I think there is strong interest in moving forward on a state level on helping Wallingford to build senior housing. The situation and landscape has changed a lot in the last ten years since Jack Savage Commons was built. We no longer have a State Department of Housing, we eliminated that on the state level; we merged that with the Department of Economic and Community Development. That is all under one roof now and it is seen in a much different way. Back before the last recession, we had a policy of doing a lot of grants both helping business and housing starts in the state. That has all gone away with the economic downturn in the late 1980s and early 1990s, grants have gone away and we have tried to look at more creative and inventive ways of funding a variety of projects, housing is no exception to that. I applaud the members of your Wallingford Housing Authority for doing an outstanding job with the limited resources they have to be able to operate outstanding facilities for seniors in this community. We do need more but there is a much, much different process about going on that. I am learning that process and I know that the Housing Authority members are learning the process; you are going to be learning the process; the Mayor has learned the process. We are going through a different process of doing this. I wish there was an easy answer I could offer to you; to say that we can get \$3-4 million without any trouble. It is not as easy as it appears, although not possible. There is a good chance of being able to get that money; it's going to take time and I wanted to be here tonight to see if we can work together with all the Councilors and Mayor and Housing Authority to get us all on one page so that we can go forward. My recommendation is a result of my discussions with the Commissioner of the DECD to have... the Town grant the Wallingford Housing Authority preferred status. It would be a great help in the process of getting state funding. The state is looking for a preferred developer to work with. Once we get to the point of the Council agreeing on who the preferred developer is, then that makes my job and the rest of our delegation's job easier to go up and try to fight for all the funding they can. I know the members of the Housing Authority are eager and willing to get going. There is all kinds of funding that is out there, it just has to be put together in a package. It is not a one-stop shopping anymore; it has to go through a variety of mechanisms to get that funding together. I am committed to working on that level over the next year with you, if you decide to make this the preferred developer. If you go out and re-bid, that is your choice, but it is going to delay things another 3,4,6, months. We may be back in this very same position again six months down the line. You have a decision to make and I wanted to see if I can get us all on the same page.

Mr. Farrell stated, a number of months ago the Chairman had appointed four Councilors to be a sub-committee to meet with the Housing Authority; that we had had some news that this was

more of a possibility than it had been in the past. I had the opportunity to be on that subcommittee with Ms. Papale, Mr. Zappala and Mr. Rys. My own personal feeling is that I came away from those meetings with a great deal of confidence in what the Housing Authority can do and the research that they have done to see what is out there. I know they have an excellent consultant... who has done a lot of work lining up not only grants but tax credits that are out there to try and bring this together. While I am ordinarily the capitalist, free enterprise person, I think in this case that I would agree with Senator McDermott that if we want to get the state on board here, I think we should make the Housing Authority the preferred entity at this point. The reason that I am somewhat unwilling at this point to put it out to bid again is, we have gone through a fairly lengthy process where private enterprise did have an opportunity and did not necessarily respond. There will be a variety of reasons why they didn't. The one thing that is really in the Housing Authority's favor is the fact that they are not a for-profit entity. That means that, if indeed, they go forward, that will mean that the rents that they are able to offer people are going to be more affordable than other for profit entities could do. If that is our goal, which I think it is; to make affordable housing for our seniors; I would go with this at this point. I don't know if it is premature but I would like to put a motion on the table for discussion purposes, to select Wallingford Housing Authority as the preferred developer.

Motion was made by Mr. Farrell to Select the Wallingford Housing Authority as the Preferred Developer, seconded by Ms. Papale.

Ms. Papale stated, I did sit in on the meetings and I did receive a lot of information and I gained the confidence with the Housing Authority and with your consultant and everyone there. I gained the confidence I needed to really give you guys a push. My question is, if we go out to bid, this will be a problem for the Housing Authority? If we made the Housing Authority the preferred developer, that means we can't go out to bid?

Senator McDermott answered, that would be true for now, until we see if they get funding or we can go help them work together and get us all on one page to all fight for funding together on a variety of state levels. I think that is going to be the most expeditious way to proceed at this point; have a preferred developer that the state can work with and recognizes as having the Town of Wallingford's blessing.

Chairman Parisi asked, once the nine month period is over, this will expire, won't it?

Ms. Papale asked, did we give a timeframe?

Senator McDermott answered, there is no expiration period on this. We are looking to make it so that we have the Town of Wallingford saying "this is the preferred developer" that the Town wants to work with at the moment and as we go forward with it, the state delegation working with the Town delegation to secure funding as much as possible to build this senior housing,

there is no time limit on it. They are suggesting that it could take as long as six or nine months. We should have answers very shortly.

Ms. Papale answered, I have no problem with the six or nine months. All I want to see, in my heart, is the Housing Authority being there for the seniors. I would like to see that very much; it is one of my priorities. Savage Commons is so nice to me and I think this could be even better.

Mr. Nere stated, the timeframe that you are talking about, the six to nine months, we threw that out as a minimum timeframe, knowing what it is like working with the state. I hope everyone is not hanging onto their hat that in April or May of next year we are going to come back with all of these answers, because it may not be until summertime next year.

Senator McDermott added, this is a several phase-type of project. This is not a one-stop shop for funding. It could be a piece-meal process; funds may be obtained from a variety of different sources. I will say that I am 99% confident that if you make the Housing Authority the preferred developer we would be able to get, immediately, \$75,000 to \$100,000 in initial funding to go out and hire more consultants to move the process along. I feel confident that I can get \$100,000 of that first phase going within the next couple of weeks.

Chairman Parisi stated, I don't want to see \$100,000; \$100,000; \$100,000 and four years later...it is like Community Lake; we have had so many studies they are tripping over each other and have no dam.

Mr. Nere stated, the \$75,000 to \$100,000 is money to hire a consultant. This individual will then go out and ferret out the monies for us. Six to nine months, maybe even a tad longer, we will be able to come back to the Council and say, "we're sitting here now with \$3 million committed" or, "I am sorry, we only have \$1 million". We are not going to drag it out.

Mr. Zappala stated, I concur with Ms. Papale. Due to my personal experience with the Housing Authority I know how well they do take care of the citizens of Wallingford. I know they would do a good job if given permission to do something with that building. I don't mind waiting for the Housing Authority to come up with the money that is needed to do the job they are supposed to be doing. I would also like to see the building look somewhat better; take the plywood off of the back of the building? I know we don't want to spend much money on it, but can we do something to make it look better than it does? It is an eyesore.

Mr. Nere replied, I don't think anyone is going to argue that the building looks atrocious. The Housing Authority's monies are development specific. In other words, monies that may be in the elderly-side of our budget, may only be spent on existing elderly developments. Money on our family-side may only be spent in our family development. Consequently, it comes down to

the bottom line, there is no money in Housing Authority budgets to send out; if it is a matter of removing a piece of plywood, that's one thing. If we really want to kind of spruce it (Simpson School) up a bit until such a time as we begin renovations and occupy, I would think that we might have to turn to the Town and see what might be done on their end, given the fact that, at this point in time, it's their building.

Mr. Zappala asked the Mayor if the Town can do something to clean the property up a bit? He was not asking to spend a lot of money, just to make it more decent than it is.

Mayor Dickinson replied, I would disagree with your characterization. Public Works has consistently gone there every time there is a problem. The building department went over there and determined that it was not blighted property. It is property that is uninhabited at this point but, as things occur there, it is cleaned up. I don't agree with the characterization that it's terrible-looking property. Certainly, it is property that is not being used currently but, we have no plans to spend a lot of money painting and making it look as if it is a used building. It is not a used building at this time. The grass is cut; the broken windows are repaired; there is an effort to remove graffiti. If we weren't dealing with those things; if the owner didn't respond, there might be an argument that it is a blighted building. The owner does respond but, we shouldn't spend money to fix up a building that will, hopefully, undergo significant renovation and then the money that we have spent over and above what is necessary to remove hazardous circumstances; that money is totally wasted.

Mr. Zappala stated, I haven't been in that area since my mother moved out of there. Has the plywood been removed?

Mr. Nere answered, quite honestly, I am not sure. I don't tour our developments as often as I would like. I knew there were, at one time, a couple of pieces of plywood; there was a little bit of upper areas rusting, but I do have to agree with the Mayor in that, I have never gone by and seen the lawns not maintained or anything of that nature, certainly.

Mr. Zappala stated, I do know that the neighbors are not too happy. I know we don't want to spend a lot of money because you are going to knock it down, or whatever you are going to do with the building. But I thought if there was something we can do to make it more attractive than it is without spending a lot of money, it would serve both parties. In any case, I do go along with Mr. Farrell in waiting until you get some monies to proceed.

Chairman Parisi reminded everyone that the topic is funding for the Housing Authority.

Mr. Vumbaco stated, it is hard to carve out Simpson School when you are talking about giving the Housing Authority a multiple year process before we even do anything. Mayor, you said

there were three more private entities who might be interested in bidding? Why didn't they bid the first time and what would have changed their mind to re-bid now? What changed?

Mayor Dickinson answered, one of the firms indicated that; it looked as though they were confused in some way; it had to be a contract with the Town and they wanted to do it as an independent. There is some confusion over their interpretation of the RFP. They also indicated that they didn't have enough time for the type of project due to the RFP bid date. There was time factor for them. Another one; the partner backed out at the last minute and they were too busy with other work so they could not take on the project right at that point; the third, they indicated that they had a great deal of work at that time and it looks like they did not submit a proposal for that reason. At this point all three are indicating that they are interested in being able to pursue development proposals.

Mr. Vumbaco stated, I want to preference a few of my comments prior to this. There is no doubt in my mind that I would prefer to have the Housing Authority being the one sole organization to oversee as much of our senior housing in this community, so I am not against that. I am having a hard time trying to make an informed decision tonight because it was on the agenda; we have gotten no information, in advance, and it is sprung on us that we have to make a decision or attempt to make a decision whether we want to consider the Housing Authority a preferred developer. Senator McDermott, if we went out to bid, can you still do your work simultaneously? I know it would make it harder because you would like to have that status of preferred developer on it but would it be utterly impossible for you to also pursue other aspects in case we go out to bid and six months from now or three months from now when the bids come in that the Housing Authority still is the number one developer...

Senator McDermott answered, that is possible; I am not going anywhere and I don't think you guys are going anywhere. All I would be able to do right now is a lot of research which won't do any of us any harm to get myself fully educated. I am not a housing builder; I am not in the Housing Authority business; I don't know all the terms and definitions and I am learning quite a bit about it as I go along. The times are always changing on this and I would be able to do a lot more research and learn a lot more about how it all works and pulls together; what the applications processes look like but I am not going to be able to get any affirmative answers back from any state or federal agencies on what amount of money they can or won't or will give towards this process.

Mr. Vumbaco asked, will you be doing that research and application knowledge, etc., that you just stated, whether the Housing Authority was considered a preferred developer or not?

Senator McDermott stated, absolutely, but it helps to put in the application instead of getting the form and then trying to figure out what the form is to get the application in. We can put the application in requesting the money. That is the roadblock we ran into. We had meetings with

them...we thought we had approval to go ahead and get some initial monies; \$75,000; and then they came back, they filled out applications, they went through quite a bit of work on their side and it came back to them that nothing could be done unless they were designated preferred developer. That is when I began asking people how we get preferred developer status so that we could then move to the next step with them. Once we get the recognition for the WHA, it will save us some time. You can decide six months from now, if they have or don't have funding, whether you want to go forward with them or not. I think this will move it along a little faster.

Mr. Vumbaco asked, how long was the bid process initially? Three months?

Mayor Dickinson answered, I believe, initially the date was in September and I think we added another four weeks; it might have been two months.

Mr. Vumbaco asked, with that in mind, would we have any answers, dollar-wise, in two months if we considered WHA as the preferred developer?

Senator McDermott answered, I would love to answer that question in a more positive way than I can. I am going with putting my best work forward; give my 100% commitment to work in getting all funding available towards this project that we can. I know that the entire State delegation, with Mary Fritz, Mary Mushinsky, Jim Abrams and Brendon Sharkey, are all going in that direction and I wasn't aware that the Town Council does have a committee working on this and I want to work closely with that committee so that we will all be going all out on this thing, full steam, that way we will have the best shot at getting any state funding released. We all have to be on the same page. If there are different messages coming from different angles...it could make it that much more difficult. There is no guarantee that we are going to get 100% funding.

Mr. Vumbaco stated, I was just wondering if, over the next two or three months, is there going to be a hold back on getting anything or would there even be a possibility that we would be getting any money to hire the consultant?

Senator McDermott answered, there is no possibility of getting any funding unless they are considered a preferred developer. I think it might help move it along a little faster if we had agreed that the WHA would be the preferred developer.

Mr. Vumbaco asked, how great is the immediate need? I know we have a long list of people waiting to get in but, how great is the need? I have faith that if a private developer was to do this, it would probably be done a lot faster; just dealing with the funding sources at the state level, as Bob said, trying to get Community Lake done, it's been taking forever. Do we have an

immediate need? Do we have to have these things? If this turns into a two or three year process before we even put a shovel in the ground, that can be bothersome also.

Mr. Nere answered, unfortunately, working with various agencies, it does take longer than a private developer. Two points; to answer your question, the need is immediate. The waiting lists at the Housing Authority for senior housing runs right now one year to perhaps one and one-half years for an individual who applies today before they can be offered a unit. Yes, a private developer would be much quicker; they would not be able to offer the rent structure that we could.

Senator McDermott added, our goal is to be able to have our local income seniors be able to afford decent housing in Wallingford and there is a shortage of that. We can get it done faster probably with a developer, but it would be at a cost. If we want to be able to serve our constituents, the low income seniors who are on a fixed income, I think the only way to go is with the Housing Authority.

Mr. Vumbaco stated, I have no problem with that. I just wanted to get that on the table because there are going to be people sitting here thinking, if you build them now, maybe I will get my unit faster than if we wait and wait and wait. Senator McDermott, with the current financial condition of the state and the Governor projecting major deficits coming up and cutbacks...usually when you have a deficit situation, a lot of other things start getting slipped off to the bonding area. How is that going to affect the opportunity for you or the State Delegation or the Bonding Commission to get this through? Is this going to be on a high priority list? When Governor Rowland says that he needs \$100 million because deficits exist and he slips some projects that would have been funded through the taxes into the bonding, is this project going to fall down to the bottom of the list?

Senator McDermott replied, with a slow economy, all things are affected by that. We are...faced with a \$300 million deficit that we have to go back into special session and try to make up shortfalls for. Our economy is always uncertain and we are entering uncertain times with our economy and what the future picture is going to look like. That is also going to affect private developers' ability to go out and do the same thing; get money to do that. The bigger part that all of us in government knows, if the economy slips, the more need there is for this kind of housing. The more seniors who are on fixed incomes and are struggling to make it in a good economy, as the economy starts to go sour, we are going to need more and more of that opportunity to be able to provide for low income housing for our seniors on fixed incomes. We will have that demand rise and we are going to need to get on this regardless of what the economic element is; we really need to push for this.

Mr. Vumbaco asked, is there any consideration being given to the state offering low income housing tax credits again?

Senator McDermott answered, I am not sure. I would be happy to talk to you about that.

Mr. Rys stated, I agree that the WHA should be the preferred developer. I have sat in on a couple of meetings with them and the rest of the committee at which a lot of good ideas were brought up. I can remember back in 1985 we were talking about congregate housing, and that was all we did was talk about it. Finally, about 9-12 months later something did come up and it does come through. I don't think that is a heck of a lot of time to wait since we have been waiting since 1985 for it. I will whole-heartedly support this and the efforts of the WHA and Senator McDermott. Will you (WHA) pursue funding for elderly units versus congregate-type units or are you looking at a combination?

Mr. Nere answered, at Simpson School we would be looking to do conventional elderly. We do have some irons in the fire exploring congregate once again but that is a totally separate application and has nothing to do with Simpson.

Mr. Knight asked Senator McDermott to reiterate, once again, the processes that the Town Council would name the Housing Authority the preferred developer. You had meetings in Hartford already and all of a sudden that has been the wall that you have hit, that the WHA is not named the preferred developer. If we so designate the WHA, what are the odds that we will have the opportunity to get the \$75,000 you speak of to do the study which I think would be extremely valuable, regardless of the outcome? What do you think the odds on that are?

Senator McDermott answered, the \$75,000 is for a variety of things; to put the plan together to get the funding.

Mr. Knight stated, I am interested in where the \$75,000 is coming from.

Senator McDermott answered, it is coming from the State of Connecticut. If you make the motion tonight or sometime in the near future to have the WHA as the preferred developer, I feel 99.9% certain that those funds could come within a couple of weeks after that. I am being cautioned to say 30-60 days, not two weeks.

Mr. Knight asked, the \$75,000 is going to be used primarily to develop funding sources?

Mr. Nere answered, yes, basically to hire a consultant who will then go out and explore the various funding sources that are available at this time. Not only explore, but file the applications and, in essence, on behalf of the WHA, secure commitments for those monies.

Mr. Knight asked, are those largely pockets of state and federal funding where it is not in one pot anymore, but dozens of little areas?

Mr. Nere answered, yes.

Senator McDermott added, a lot of funding has changed in the course of the last decade. There are block grants that come to the state which are dispersed over a variety of different programs. You have to have people who are experts in knowing how to go after that funding. This is a specialized funding application which I think it would behoove us to be able to get that money, to put the package together and really filter through this and find out where all the funding is available.

Mr. Knight stated, would the author of the study would be shooting for funding that would be available to a housing authority or public entity? Once the study is made, is this all sources that might be available even to a private developer? This is a public city, it is public money.

Mr. Nere stated, I believe that the status that is necessary in order to receive these monies is either a public housing authority or a private non-profit entity. I do not believe that a for-profit group could go forward and acquire these monies.

Senator McDermott added, I don't know if you think you're going to get a tangible study back that is going to be something you would have to look at.

Mr. Knight answered, yes.

Senator McDermott answered, this initial \$75,000 is for hiring a consultant who will go out and who has expertise in putting together funding for housing authorities and non-profit housing groups. There is home funds... federal home loan bank funds, tax-exempt bonds, tax credits, housing trust funds, etc., there are a variety of funding mechanisms in the form of loans and grants. I still don't have the expertise to seek them out and I don't think this body has the expertise either. You hire a consultant who does have the expertise. You will not get a tangible study, a document. The consultant will file the applications with that money. It is not a study.

Mr. Knight commented, I am delighted with the direction that this is taking. I have been a proponent of this method of acquiring senior housing. I was skeptical of private development, the last time we discussed it here. I have great faith in the WHA. I think we are on the right track and enthusiastically endorse this method of attempting to add to the housing stock for seniors in this community. As Mr. Farrell said, low rents are critical to this. This is exactly the point of having a Housing Authority, to provide subsidized housing for people who cannot afford it. Going out to a private developer, and I yield to no one in my enthusiasm for capitalism and private development but, there are times when this is just not feasible and I truly believe this is one of those instances. I will enthusiastically support this.

Mayor Dickinson stated, private developers do provide affordable housing and I think Silver Pond is a good example of that. There are programs that they qualify under; at least there used to be such programs. Given the uncertainties of this, it is a close question but I would rather see us go out and test the private sector. We would still have time to deal with the legislative session if that did not bear something that we wanted to see. There are so many uncertainties with getting this back. Nine months would be May or June. If the funds aren't there, whatever, we're just not dealing with something that seems to, in my view as this point, have enough certainty to it to lock anyone into a position. With that said, I think everyone should clearly understand the status of preferred developer would be for the purpose of applying for the state funds and that any actual project would still have to receive the approval of the Council of the Town of Wallingford. The labeling of preferred developer does not, at this point, approve anything that might happen to be brought forward with whatever money the Housing Authority becomes eligible for in application process. We are not saying right now the Housing Authority is the preferred developer and from here on it is their property and hopefully something will happen on it. I think we all understand that, I just want to state that publicly so that there isn't confusion later on.

Mr. Brodinsky stated, I want to emphasize that I do recognize the need to dramatically and quickly increase the stock of senior housing and affordable rents; it is a very important issue which I support completely. The issue is, finding the most expedient way of doing it and doing it in such a way that the timeline doesn't get out of hand and instead of having a promise of affordable senior housing, we have Simpson School lingering three, four, five years down the road. It's that dilemma that the balance of those two problems that I think is a serious issue. When you first started talking, I thought the \$3-4 million was going to be state money. Then as you went on, I began to realize that only the \$75,000 to \$100,000 was going to be state money. Please clear that up.

Senator McDermott explained, housing money comes to the state mostly through federal block grants. Then there is some state bonding money as well. There are a couple of avenues we are trying to take. What we want to do is get the State Bonding Commission to say, "Here's \$4 million to go ahead and do this." That is not the most likely scenario. It will be more like a patchwork of a variety of different funding mechanisms with the potential for some bonding funds to make up the difference of that. It is going to be a patchwork design. It would be much easier in the old days when you would just go and get the money and it was done. It is a much more difficult process.

Mr. Brodinsky asked, you are saying that the \$3-4 million is not going to be State Bonding Commission money...not state dollars?

Senator McDermott answered, that would be my assumption, yes.

Mr. Brodinsky asked, the \$75,000 that is state money is to hire someone who will investigate and ferret out all these sources of funds?

Senator McDermott answered, correct.

Mr. Brodinsky continued, in the letter that Mr. Nere signed which states that the \$75,000 was a pre-development loan. Is it a grant or loan?

Mr. Nere answered, it is a loan, assuming that we get funds and we can re-pay it. I have been told, should we not get funds, then the loan is basically forgiven. That is a Housing Authority issue.

Mr. Brodinsky asked, have you identified the expert or consultant that you want to retain, is that correct?

Mr. Nere answered, we have spoken to a couple of consultants; we have asked for the input from DECD as to individuals who have been successful in their arena as far as finding funding. They indicated that they would be giving us a short list of persons that suggest we talk with. We are very happy with one individual we have initiated conversations with but, I really need to explore other avenues to ensure the fact that we get the best bang for our buck.

Mr. Brodinsky asked, is there a timeframe, not for hiring the guy because I think we are at sixty days to get the \$75,000 and within that timeframe you can identify the person and get them on board so as soon as he announces his availability, you can write him a check. Is there a timeframe after that where the consultant goes out into the market for sources of funding and he comes back and says, "it doesn't look good", is there a timeframe for that that can be identified?

Mr. Nere answered, deadlines on these various funding sources vary. I know that in May, 2002 applications have to be filed. That is a very competitive source but again, if he felt that was an avenue given the strength of our proposal that we would pursue, that might be one place we would apply for funding to do the redevelopment work. Home Funds has a January deadline, which we will probably miss. I do believe there is also a July deadline. Tax credits are something you work out through the private sector; that kind of develops as it comes about. Off the top of my head, I am not familiar with the other deadlines. There are various stages and timeframes that you would have to deal with.

Mr. Brodinsky stated, I am looking for a timeframe where, if we and I am sure we will, name the WHA the preferred developer, if you are not successful after a certain period of time that we re-visit the whole issue. I think that would be up to the consultant, to tell us what that reasonable amount of time is. I know the Federal Home Loan Bank does have an application due in the spring and I think they announce the results in July. I think that if you don't get that,

just by way of example, the consultant may come back and say, "the odds of getting money at any time are slim to none, pack it in." So I am looking at July or August to revisit the issue, does that seem reasonable to you?

Mr. Nere answered, July or August, 2002 would be quite reasonable for us to sit down again and explain where we are and the Council could decide where they would want to go from there.

Mr. Brodinsky asked, the proposal that you sent to the Town involved keeping Simpson School as part of the structure, is that correct?

Mr. Nere answered, that is correct.

Mr. Brodinsky continued, was that the Housing Authority's decision or were you trying to anticipate what we want?

Mr. Nere answered, it was the Housing Authority's decision. The sense that I received in speaking with council members and the general public is that they would like to see Simpson School, at least the façade remain, so consequently, when we had conversations and brought out architects through the building, we instructed him to work within the parameters that presently existed.

Mr. Brodinsky asked, is that decision negotiable or are you drawing a line in the sand on that?

Mr. Nere answered, my one and only concern is, honestly, is to provide housing for the elderly. If changing the façade, knocking the building down was going to facilitate or allow us to develop more elderly housing, I would not make that an issue, certainly not. It would be kind of a shame because I think Simpson School is kind of a neat building.

Mr. Brodinsky pointed out a few issues of concern to him that were referenced in Mr. Nere's letter. He stated, one was the number of units, which was thirty-six (36) in your proposal and I hope that is still negotiable because when you and I had a private conversation I was wondering whether or not we could get more units out of that. I am just going to forecast a concern that I have and when you take the cost of the project and the amount of living space that thirty-six units would provide, it is almost like \$200 sq. ft. of living space. I was thinking of perhaps a housing project on a somewhat grander scheme, but still consistent with the needs of the neighborhood.

Mr. Nere replied, that's fine by me.

Chairman Parisi asked, if we approve this preferred status, we are not locked into this forever are we?

Senator McDermott answered, I don't believe so. The Mayor stated that would not be the case. You are not turning ownership over to the Wallingford Housing Authority. This is just for the purposes of getting state money; that the Town recognizes that we are all on board, on the same page.

Mr. Parisi asked, if, at some point, the Council decided that this was taking longer than they preferred it would, then they could, in fact, just reverse the process and go out to the private sector?

Senator McDermott answered, from my discussions with the DECD, they have said similar things have happened with private, non-profit developers where they have gotten preferred status from the municipality as the developer, and then those plans fell through and they never materialized. That can happen with a private developer or the Housing Authority. It doesn't really matter, the state just wants to know before they go the work of looking through all the documentations and filing of applications that the Council wants the Housing Authority or if they get the money, you are going to want them.

Chairman Parisi replied, my concern is, I have no problem supporting this proposal but at some point, maybe two years down the road, nothing has happened...and this body decides that they want to out to a bid process, we suffer no penalties or whatever for any money that has been expended.

Mr. Nere answered, to the best of my knowledge, you can simply revoke our status and go forward.

Mr. Vumbaco stated, I am very concerned with what could happen if this takes too long. I know the Chairman doesn't want to discuss it, but, what will happen to Simpson School if this takes too long? If it starts deteriorating as a non-used building; we all know that buildings die if they are used; I am concerned that something is going to happen. I have no problem supporting this on a short term basis if it is the six or nine months that Mr. Nere just said. I think that we should revisit where we stand on this issue in July Of 2002. If something is not coming down then the body that is sitting up here at that point in time should make a hard decision whether they go out to a private developer or find out what they are going to do. That is the only concern I have. Is this going to go on for two years; two and one-half years. Stuff like that happens; you lose track; the Council loses track; it just progresses along its own little course. If this body is diligent enough in pursuing this, then maybe you could provide the Council with a quick update every three months as to where you stand and how things are going to ease their

minds that we are at least heading in the right direction and things are going along. My big concern is, what is going to happen to that building over there.

Senator McDermott answered, I can guarantee that as soon as we get funding, I will be holding a press conference.

Mr. Prentice stated, as Mr. Parisi knows, he can call me at anytime. If he needs an update, he can call me at home and I will let him know exactly where we are at and anytime anybody; Mr. Brodinsky has called me a number of times and we have discussed this so, at anytime any of the Councilors can call me; call Steve, and we will let you know what is going on as best we can.

Geno Zandri, 37 Hallmark Drive asked, if this goes to the Wallingford Housing Authority, will the units be restricted for Wallingford residents only?

Mr. Nere answered, given the fact that federal funds will probably be involved, we cannot restrict to Wallingford residents. Typically, when you do a development of this sort, you are allowed to establish a preference system. For instance, in our elderly developments right now, a Wallingford resident receives one preference point; a veteran receives one preference point. We clear each waiting list on an annual basis to ensure that everyone eventually will receive housing. To say that it will be restricted solely for Wallingford residents, we could not do that.

Mr. Zandri replied, I just wanted to make sure that everyone was clear on that. When people hear the "Wallingford Housing Authority" a lot of people think it is strictly for Wallingford so I wanted to make sure that everyone understood that. My second question is, is the Town of Wallingford going to get compensated in any way for the property by this transaction?

Mr. Nere replied, our proposal is that we purchase the building from the Town for \$1.00.

Mr. Zandri stated, again, I want people to understand that the Town of Wallingford is not going to get compensated for the property. My next question is, with regards to giving preferred status to the Housing Authority so they could seek funding, is there anything prohibiting the Town from also, simultaneously, pursuing the private companies to see what their proposals could be, knowing that they already have preferred status? You still might get someone who is interested in still making a proposal. I think if that is a possibility, I think it should be looked into.

Peter Adamo, 20 Bonnie Court asked, is it my understanding that you are going to get preferred status but, who is going to maintain the property and the building until such approval or development has begun?

Mayor Dickinson answered, the Town of Wallingford would still own the property. The Town of Wallingford will own the property until such time as an actual proposal is approved by the Town Council and the proper documents are signed and executed and ownership would be turned over to the Housing Authority.

Robert Sheehan, 11 Cooper Avenue stated, Simpson School has been going on for two and one-half years. I don't mean to be critical but, for over the last year we have been hearing that the WHA is going to have a plan; going to have a plan; going to have plan. Evidently, now we've got one. Evidently now, it is the eleventh hour for some reason, and it is not precisely clear to me why this has to be decided tonight. Somebody tell me why, is there a date by which you have to file an application with the state or else you will lose out or what? What is the dire need all of a sudden, now, since we have been waiting two years for a plan?

Chairman Parisi replied, I think the point has been made that they need this preferred status to move forward for funding.

Mr. Sheehan asked, why does it have to be decided tonight?

Chairman Parisi answered, so they can move forward.

Mr. Sheehan asked, six months from now they can't move forward? The Mayor said he has three other people, private concerns, interested. We run a business and exploring all your possibilities without at least giving the other people fair audience, is fiscally irresponsible. If we can add something back onto our Grand List with a private developer and it gets done faster, who is to say it is not a good idea? Silver Pond uses federal and state funds and they have housing for the elderly and it is available for low income senior citizens. A certain amount of apartments have to be set aside in that building for that purpose; the same thing with a private developer at Simpson School. They use the same funds that the WHA is going to use and if they qualify, they will get the money, too; they may get it faster than WHA. If there is no desire, no burning issue as to why it has to be settled tonight, I don't see why we can't take the time to investigate the other three opportunities. It may very well wind up that these people got the best idea but at least we should hear what other people have to say before we commit ourselves for an indefinite amount of time; it could be nine months; it could be a year; we have been waiting two years for the state to act on a little matter of who owns the dam in this town and I was just informed tonight that it is going to probably be a couple of more months or maybe longer.

Chairman Parisi stated, we won't have to wait. The other thing is, this was put out to bid and then the bidding period was extended for four weeks. The system is; if you are interested, you bid. There were no calls; no complaints; there was no problem at all, until after the bid was awarded. I don't think that is exactly what the bidding process should be.

Mr. Sheehan answered, I understand that but, evidently, these people made an effort to get in touch with the Mayor or someone else to inquire about the project and how it was going and they were given a, "why don't you come back and see again".

Mayor Dickinson clarified, they did not contact us. There was a request from my office for Purchasing to find out why they did not submit proposals. They didn't come looking for more time; we were asking them. They expressed continued interest but the Chairman is correct; they didn't submit proposals in the timeframe we initially had. They didn't come to us; we were asking them.

Mr. Sheehan stated, I am glad I stand corrected, because that is the way I assumed it happened; they became interested again or they were misinformed. I still say, it would be wise just to hear what the private sector has to say about it.

Jack Agosta, 505 Church Street, Yalesville stated, I could go back about three years ago how many times it has been brought up to this Council about the WHA. The Mayor says that it is not a blighted property...

Chairman Parisi stated, I don't want to get into the blight aspect because that is not the issue.

Mr. Agosta responded, this is about the property.

Chairman Parisi replied, that is not the issue; we are not discussing the blight anymore. We are trying to get this resolved. If you want to speak to this issue, that's fine; it is the agenda item.

Mr. Agosta continued, the property will be kept in limbo for nine months. WHA maintains some of the properties. Why can't we make a deal with them that they are to maintain the property because it seems that we are not going to do anything about painting or boarding up the windows back there. Why can't we...

Chairman Parisi replied, we are not into that. We are discussing the issue of preferred status for the Housing Authority.

Mr. Agosta accused Chairman Parisi of avoiding taking care of the property.

Chairman Parisi replied, I am not avoiding anything. You are avoiding the agenda item.

Mr. Agosta stated, you should be taking care of the property for the neighbors. An eyesore...

Chairman Parisi ruled Mr. Agosta out of order.

Howard Greenberg, 205 Center Street stated, we are all in agreement that something needs to be done to address the senior housing issue in town. If you approve WHA as the preferred developer, could we then go back to the three other interested parties for backup bids? I agree that the Housing Authority should be the preferred developer but I think that this also gives us a backup plan or a potential backup plan if something does fall through.

Mayor Dickinson replied, I don't think that we can represent to the state government that we are determining the Housing Authority to be a preferred developer and then, at the same time, go out to the private sector and represent to others, "give us a proposal, we are interested in what you might be willing to do." In part, it certainly misrepresents the status that we have given the Housing Authority but, I think from the private developer standpoint, the time and energy spent, money spent, in developing a proposal, knowing that we are locked in with the Housing Authority, would make it very unlikely that they would want to spend that kind of money and take it seriously. Certainly, that is from their standpoint and I don't need to argue their side of it. I would be troubled for the Town to be representing one thing to the State of CT. and then seemingly doing something else at the same time. I would be troubled by that.

Mr. Greenberg stated, I would think that these three developers would already have involvement in the project. As these gentlemen have already said, it wouldn't be the first time a preferred developer was changed at some point. With regard to the school itself, it has been deteriorating for fifteen years, that I am aware of, however, it is nice to see a consensus from all of you to finally go and involve a grant process which we normally are a little more reserved to do. I applaud your excitement on this.

Chairman Parisi requested that the motion be repeated for clarification of the Council. He offered the following amendment to the motion; that after a nine month period the Council have a review of the situation.

Senator McDermott advised against the amendment. He wanted a clear message sent to the State that the Town is on the same page. He did not want to cloud the situation by imposing a timeframe. He reminded everyone that at any time the Council so desires, they may rescind their action.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

ITEM #11 Executive Session Pursuant to Section 1-200(6)(D) of the CT. General Statutes Pertaining to the Purchase, Sale and/or Leasing of Property – Mayor

Motion was made by Mr. Rys to Enter Into Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Farrell.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

The Council entered executive session at 8:40 P.M.

Present in Executive Session were all Councilors, Mayor Dickinson and Atty. Small.

Motion was made by Mr. Rys to Exit Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Knight.

VOTE: Vumbaco was absent; all others, aye; motion duly carried.

The Council exited executive session at 8:56 P.M.

Motion was made by Mr. Farrell to Adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Centner.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:56 P.M.

Meeting recorded and transcribed by:

Kathryn F. Zandri
Kathryn F. Zandri
Town Council Secretary

Approved by: *Robert F. Parisi (by ER)*
Robert F. Parisi, Chairman

11-13-2001
Date

Rosemary A. Rascati
Rosemary A. Rascati

11-13-2001
Date

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 11-5-01
AT 3:00 P.M. AND RECORDED BY
Rosemary A. Rascati - TOWN CLERK