

OFFICE OF THE
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TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2010
BRUBECK ROOM, WILTON LIBRARY**

PRESENT: First Selectman William Brennan, Selectman Susan Bruschi, Selectman Richard Creeth, Selectman Ted Hoffstatter **ABSENT:** Selectman Hal Clark

GUESTS: Sandy Dennies, Chief Lombardo, Tom Thurkettle, Steve Pierce, Bob Nerney, Jennifer Fascitelli, approximately 15 members of public, Jan Andras

OTHERS: Joan Lownds (Bulletin), Kara O'Connor (Villager), Christian Camarota (Patch), T. J. Buzzeo (Daily Wilton)

First Selectman Brennan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

A. Informational Meeting – Plastic Bag Proposal

After statements by Mr. Brennan and Mr. Hoffstatter, the meeting was open to public comment.

Gerald Holdridge – He believes that retailers should charge for plastic or paper bags. Some of the large warehouse stores don't provide bags at all – perhaps that would be an option. He suggests that we investigate whether our municipal waste disposal rates will increase if our tonnage drops.

Michael Graupner, 91 Signal Road – asked why this issue has "gotten to the "top of the list" in Wilton. He feels that priorities are not in order. The issue of high property taxes is more important to him. He would object to paying ten cents for every check-out bag because that would be another tax.

Brian Perry – has been asked questions by others, including whether we have the legal right to charge for retail bags. Mr. Brennan replied that this meeting is to hear comments from the public. No legal opinion has been requested on anything at this point.

Ron Kashden – feels that even if he uses a re-usable bag, he is still being charged to cover the retailer’s cost of providing plastic and paper bags, so it is still an indirect tax to him. Westport has done the experiment for us.

Carlton Chen, 648 Nod Hill Road – feels that citizens should oppose any idea of a mandate for prohibition on plastic retail bags. The problem is more of a national issue – not a Wilton issue. We should encourage a voluntary compliance.

Jennifer Lowney – has seen the problem of bags in the ocean when she goes sailing.

Connie Tate – brought a bag from Keelers that is marked “bio-degradable”.

Kari Roberts – is in favor of an outright ban but feels that a ten cent charge for plastic and paper seems like a possible solution.

Bruce Hampson, 47 Lambert Commons – a member of the Wilton Energy Commission – read a statement on behalf of the Commission and the Go Green group who will be proposing an educational campaign to the Board of Selectmen, with a possible budget request.

Lynne Vanderslice – does not support a ban or a mandated fee by retailers. We should wait to see what action is taken by the State. In the meantime, she supports education as a way to change behavior.

Ed Papp – Supports charging for bags and believes all plastic we consume should be taxed. Pay as we go might help this country avoid borrowing 13 trillion dollars.

Katherine Armstrong, 35 Graenest – would be proud to say that she lives in a town that has a plastic bag ban or charges ten cents for each disposable bag.

Deborah McFadden, Westport Road – there are much bigger issues than just paper or plastic. We need to look at the overall problem.

B. Consent Agenda

Upon motion by Mr. Creeth, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved as follows (Ms. Bruschi abstained from approving the agenda as she was not present at that meeting:

Minutes

- Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting of October 4, 2010

Tax Refunds

- Motor Vehicle Taxes as per Tax Collector Memo dated 10/5/10

Gifts

- Donation of \$800 from The Greens to the Senior Newsletter.

This donation is very much appreciated.

C. Discussion and/or Action

1. Youth Citizen Police Academy

Police Chief Lombardo stated that this six week program is a way to reach out to the youth in the community. It covers the same things as the adult program but gives officers a chance to interact with youth. The program is being coordinated with Trackside.

2. Trackside – Report on Activity and Programs to Increase Utilization

Executive Director Mark Ketley and Board President Peg Koellmer reported on the recent initiatives to increase the utilization of the Trackside facilities by the community. Last month, there were 15 outside groups that came to the center for various meetings, etc, with 14 of those directly related to youth. Last month, the building was in use 28 of 30 days. Ms. Koellmer advised that she had not voted for the teen center when it was originally proposed but now she has seen so many changes in such a short time, she feels it is a great investment and can only grow.

3. Proposed Sale of 0.12 acres of Town –owned Land

Mr. Brennan advised that the procedures have been followed as per the Charter. This Board has been briefed at every step. The Planning & Zoning Commission has approved the 8-24 Mandatory Referral. There are only two realistic options for this unbuildable piece of property – to sell it to a contiguous property owner or to Wilton Retirement Housing LLC. The contiguous property owner has been contacted and is not interested. Separate appraisals

have been performed by the Town and by Wilton Retirement Housing and a price was negotiated from that information. A legal notice was published in the local newspaper advising that this matter would be discussed at this meeting and all property owners within 500' were notified by mail. The Board of Selectmen have the authority to sell this property since the value is less than 1% of the total annual budget. Mr. Nerney distributed aerial photos and advised that this is a "stand alone" parcel of only 0.12 acre. It was once the site of the original schoolhouse that was moved to Cannondale.

Mr. Brennan moved to proceed with the sale of the town-owned property on the corner of Olmstead Hill Road and Danbury Road (Route 7) to Wilton Retirement Housing LLC for the amount of \$55,000, subject to a utility easement to memorialize the current encroachment by the sewer lateral. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

4. Consideration of Request for Special Appropriation – Merwin's Meadow

Parks and Recreation Director Steve Pierce advised that for the past two years, there has been discussion of the dredging of the pond at Merwin's Meadow but it has been postponed because of budget restrictions. With the recent storms, Comstock Creek broke through again and deposited silt, making the dredging eligible for FEMA funds.

Mr. Brennan moved to request a Special Appropriation in the amount of \$245,000 for dredging of Merwin's Meadow. He noted that FEMA has approved a claim from Wilton's DPW, which will cover 75% of the dredging costs after claim forms are submitted. Motion seconded and unanimously carried. This item will be brought to the Board of Finance for approval.

5. Miscellaneous Other Business

Budget Calendar – A draft copy of the scheduling for budget meetings was distributed. Selectmen were asked to review and if they see any problems, to get back to CFO Sandy Dennies.

Refinancing Municipal Bonds – Ms. Dennies advised that she will be able to take advantage of any possible savings in debt service if that opportunity arises before the end of November. Along with the underwriter and our financial advisor, she will be watching the rates.

Special Town Meeting – The Special Town Meeting to vote on the extension of the Wilton Commons lease will be held on November 30, 2010 at 7:30 pm in the auditorium at Middlebrook School.

D. Public Comment: None noted

E. Reports

1. First Selectman's Report :

STEAP Grant – Several e-mails and calls were received regarding the article in the newspaper regarding the \$200,000 grant that we will be receiving, most congratulatory. A lot of work went into applying for these funds and our policy is to apply for every grant we have a reasonable chance of having approved. STEAP grants are for infrastructure improvements. There were 108 CT towns receiving funds ranging from \$5,000 to \$250,000. A letter was written by a resident suggesting that we “give back” this money because the town can afford to fund its own needs. For every \$1 of tax money sent to Hartford from this town, we receive 1.5¢ back from the state. There is no embarrassment in accepting this grant.

VMG – Project is slightly ahead of schedule and will be finished by Veterans Day. The community is invited to the dedication ceremony on 11/11 at 10:00 a.m.

405/415 Danbury Road – Work on these two town-owned buildings is almost completed. We will then be able to rent these refurbished properties, including two apartments and one four bedroom house.

Train Station – The station has been inspected and a few remaining punch list items should be taken care of this week. A press conference is being scheduled with DOT for 10/26.

Route 33/7 – DOT is working at the Crossways and on the bridge, expected to be finished by the end of the year.

2. Selectmen Reports

Mr. Creeth: The Wilton Energy Commission did refer the plastic bag issue to the Go Green group and a recommendation is expected to be brought to the BOS.

Mr. Hoffstatter: No report

Ms. Bruschi: No report

F. Adjournment: Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Jan Andras, Recording Secretary