

Town of Plymouth
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Plymouth Town Council
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Minutes

March 7, 2017

Call to Order: Mayor David V. Merchant called the scheduled March 7, 2017, Plymouth Town Council Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., in the Community Room, Plymouth Town Hall.

Roll Call: Present were Town Councilman Daniel Gentile, Town Councilwoman Ana LeGassey, Mayor David Merchant, Town Councilwoman Sue Murawski, Town Councilman John Pajeski and Town Councilman Tom Zagurski. Also in attendance was Director of Public Work Charles Wiegert.

Adoption of the Agenda

Mayor Merchant stated under Item #12 Tax Refunds, John or Jennifer Deforest's tax overpayment was refunded last month by the Town Council and needed to be removed from the agenda.

Town Councilman Zagurski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilwoman Murawski, to remove John or Jennifer Deforest from the overpayment of property taxes agenda item. This motion was approved unanimously.

Town Councilman Gentile made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to accept the March 7, 2017, Plymouth Town Council agenda as amended. This motion was approved unanimously.

Fire Exits Notification

Mayor Merchant noted the Fire Exits for the record.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Merchant led the Plymouth Town Council and the Public Audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation

Mayor Merchant stated, "May God Bless America and the Town of Plymouth" for the record.

Acceptance of Minutes: Plymouth Town Council January 3, 2017 Public Hearing Meeting Minutes; January 3, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes; February 14, 2017 Special Meeting Minutes

Town Councilman Zagurski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Gentile, to accept the Plymouth Town Council January 3, 2017 Public Hearing Meeting Minutes as presented. This motion was approved unanimously.

Town Councilman Zagurski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Pajeski, to approve the January 3, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. This motion was approved unanimously.

Town Councilman Gentile made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to accept the February 14, 2017 Special Meeting Minutes as presented. This motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

No report.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

No report.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Merchant reported on the following: Streetscape will continue in front of Lyceum (Start April/May) when weather breaks; the 2015 Audit draft copy is completed and working on 2016 Audit; Mayfair Garage is scheduled for demolition within the next week; a couple of new companies were interested in locating to the Business Park; and one interested in purchasing Prospect Street School; working with Board of Education for a Town-wide energy audit; the Allentown Road Paving Project is out to bid and should be back at the end of this month; North Street Bridge will go out to bid within the next week; discussion has taken place to demolish the OZ Gedney properties before someone gets hurt

Finance Director's Report

Mayor Merchant stated the Director of Finance was not present this evening, and noted if Council had any questions regarding the February 2017 Finance Report to give her a call or contact him.

Appointments/Reappointments/Resignations: To reappoint Jeffrey J. Bajek to the Police Commission with an ending term of January 1, 2020; to accept the resignation of James Benway from the Conservation Inland/Wetlands commission; to accept the resignation of Sally Bain-Picard from the Human Services Commission; to accept the resignation of Karen Saccu from the Human Services Commission

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to reappoint Jeffrey Bajek to the Police Commission with an ending term of January 1, 2017. This motion was approved unanimously.

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to accept James Benway's resignation from the Conservation Inland/Wetlands Commission with deep regret.

Discussion:

Town Councilman Zagurski stated he had worked with Jim Benway on this Commission 12 years ago, and noted he would be deeply missed.

Vote:

This motion was approved unanimously.

To accept the resignation of Sally Bain-Picard and Karen Saccu from the Human Services Commission

When questioned by Town Councilman Gentile, Mayor Merchant stated the Town Clerk was given updated appointments/resignations the day after the Council meeting and then she updates her Board/Commission sheets; a brief discussion followed.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated he had received an email today from Sally Bain-Picard stating she wanted to withdraw her resignation.

Town Councilman Pajeski stated he also had emails from both Karen Saccu and Sally Bain-Picard, noting both members wanted to withdraw their resignations from the Human Services Commission.

Mayor Merchant stated there were some issues in Human Services and briefly elaborated, noting he had informed both women they would have to reapply to go back on the Commission.

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated she was the Liaison and this was the second Human Services Director to leave in a short amount of time, noting it might be time for some fresh faces in there. She further stated she hated to put the next person in the same situation.

Town Councilman Pajeski stated both women had been on the Commission for years; had done a tremendous job and since the Council hadn't accept their resignations the matter was moot and they were both still members of the Commission.

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion to accept the resignation of Sally Bain-Picard; motion failed for lack of a second.

Town Councilman Zagurski and Town Councilwoman LeGassey both stated since both women had written they wanted to rescind their resignations the Council did not need to accept them.

Town Councilman Gentile stated if there was a problem in the future the Town Council should be kept informed, noting this was the first time he had heard there was an issue.

Discuss and take action to refund overpayment of Property Taxes to the following: Lorraine Babb \$108.06; CIS Financial \$367.82; Carolyn Ferland \$108.06; Kristiana or John Rinaldi \$103.49; Michael Mclane \$318.90; Paul Norton \$42.50; Richard Caron \$108.06; Yvonne Duff \$108.06; Joann Basile \$108.06; Nissan Infiniti LT \$267.16; John Dutkiewicz \$270.16; Christina Wilkus \$156.29; Lisa Snyder \$662.16; James or Phillis Drost \$108.06; Lucille Ceddia \$108.06

Town Councilman Gentile made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to refund overpayment of Property Taxes to the following: Lorraine Babb \$108.06; CIS Financial \$367.82; Carolyn Ferland \$108.06; Kristiana or John Rinaldi \$103.49; Michael Mclane \$318.90; Paul Norton \$42.50; Richard Caron \$108.06; Yvonne Duff \$108.06; Joann Basile \$108.06; Nissan Infiniti LT \$267.16; John Dutkiewicz \$270.16; Christina Wilkus \$156.29; Lisa Snyder \$662.16; James or Phillis Drost \$108.06; and Lucille Ceddia \$108.06. This motion was approved unanimously.

150 Main Street Discussion

Mayor Merchant stated he had sent the Council a timetable of what had happened to date with the 150 Main Street property in order to bring the Council up to speed and briefly elaborated.

Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated the basement/foundation of the building was secure and no signs of problems, noting they were sound. Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated she wanted to know what the price would be to clean up the property using Blight Fund monies and sell it verses tearing it down to balance out the funds money-wise.

Mayor Merchant stated the building could still be demolished even though the foundation was intact. He further stated water was leaking into roof, the copper had been removed from the building, and to keep it standing up the roof would need repairing, the chimney would need to be repaired, and the siding would have to be fixed, board up the bottom to keep entry out and a contractor would have to see what else.

When questioned by Town Councilwoman LeGassey regarding previous bids on the property, Mayor Merchant stated to the best of his knowledge there had been no bidders on the property and thought there had been a bank foreclosure on it. Mayor Merchant stated the Pequabuck River Study had recommended tearing the house down due to its close proximity to the river. Mayor Merchant stated when the house had gone through Planning and Zoning they had recommended demolishing the house, as did the Hazardous Mitigation Plan; a brief discussion followed.

When questioned by Town Councilwoman LeGassey, Mayor Merchant stated the actual size of the property was very small and he would like to see the garage property marketed with it.

Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated she wanted it to be clear that the Council had never said they didn't want to take the house down, they had asked for further information and their questions answered.

Mayor Merchant stated the Blight Committee had unanimously voted in favor of using Blight funds to tear the house down at 150 Main Street, noting when the two properties were marketed together the money would be returned to the Blight Fund.

Town Councilman Gentile stated he had read the Environmental Study; recapped the prices to tear it down and briefly elaborated on the abatement. Town Councilman Gentile questioned if the Town would consider a box culvert for the river portion. He further and questioned if it would be a major issue with Planning and Zoning, citing the city of Bristol had a similar situation with CVS Pharmacy.

Mayor Merchant stated the Town would not be handling a box culvert; it would be up to the new owner and briefly elaborated.

Charles Wiegert stated it would be feasible if a Developer wanted to put forth the effort to encompass the Pequabuck River in a box culvert, etc., noting it would have to go through the permitting processes, hydraulic reports, etc.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated he wanted a copy of the reports, including the bid proposal.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated the Planning and Zoning Commission had said the building should come down, but they also had said the Town should retain the property so they could have access to the river to clean it out, etc.

Mayor Merchant stated the Town had five bidders who had taken the packets, came to the pre-bid meeting, noting the winning bidder had stated he would hold his price until April.

Charles Wiegert noted the Contractor had stated he would honor his price through this Council meeting date and felt it would not be a big deal to table the issue until the next meeting.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated it because the amount was over \$50,000 Town Attorney Hamzy had stated it would have to go to a Town Meeting and he wanted that looked into.

Town Councilman Gentile stated the money in the Blight Fund was already budgeted (not new money) previously approved by the Council and felt we did not have to go to a Town meeting.

When questioned by Town Councilwoman LeGassey, Mayor Merchant stated the Town had not received the money from the bank as yet for tearing down the North Main Street burned out building and noted there was a lien on the property.

Town Councilman Gentile made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to table the 150 Main Street agenda item. This motion was approved unanimously.

To set a Public Hearing date regarding an Ordinance to create a Retirement and Pension Oversight Board

Mayor Merchant stated the Town Council had received a draft Ordinance for the Retirement and Pension Oversight Board, noting Town Attorney Bill Hamzy had worked on it. He further stated the previous Board had nothing solid that established it and briefly elaborated.

Mayor Merchant stated the Town Attorney was also drafting a RFP for a Financial Advisor who would work with the Board, noting the pension was not currently performing, as it should.

Town Councilman Gentile made a motion, seconded by Town Councilwoman LeGassey, to hold a Public Hearing on April 4, 2017, at 6:30 p.m., prior to the Town Council's Regular 7:00 p.m. meeting for an Ordinance to create a Retirement and Pension Oversight Board. This motion was approved unanimously.

Old Business

Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated she wanted to thank the Mayor for all of the job descriptions he sent her and that she felt the next step would be to get an Ordinance together to have the job descriptions up to date and then have job evaluations for every Town employee.

Mayor Merchant stated Town Councilwoman LeGassey could contact the Town Attorney with her request.

Town Council Liaison Reports

Town Councilman Gentile stated the Parks and Recreation had held a successful basketball season. He further stated Parks and Recreation wanted to thank the 300 volunteers and participants, many businesses and community sponsors for underwriting the cost and briefly elaborated. Town Councilman Gentile stated the Parks and Recreation wanted to thank the Board of Education, the teachers, the custodians, the staff, the supervisors, the administration and Central Office for their cooperation for allowing them to use their facilities. Town Councilman Gentile requested everyone mark down the following events: May 7th Rotary 5K at Lake Winfield, May 19th United Way Day of Caring, June 3rd Connecticut Forest and Park Association Paddle Day at Plymouth Reservoir Recreation area; June 3rd Friends of lake Winfield second annual Twilight Walk and many other events listed on the Town's website. Town Councilman Gentile stated he wanted to personally thank Paul Denis, Park and Recreation Maintenance employee for his 30 years of caring, time and service to the Town. Town Councilman Gentile stated spring registration was open and Parks and Recreation was currently taking applications for Summer Camp. Town Councilman Gentile stated Board of Education Superintendent Dr. Semmel had shared highlights from the Governor's proposed budget and that Legislatures were seeking to reduce unfunded mandates and requested everyone contact their legislatures for their support. Town Councilman Gentile stated the Board of Education had voted 7 to 1 to approve the Superintendent's budget.

Town Councilman Gentile stated the Board of Education was still working on their policies (certified and non-certified) Town Councilman Gentile stated Science Technology Engineering was looking for volunteers to serve on establishing a Wellness Committee and to contact s. Parsons if interested. Town Councilman stated the National Honor Society was holding penny wars between lower and upper classmen to support their programs and encouraged everyone to help the students out. Town Councilman Gentile stated the Charter Revision Commission was doing an excellent job and noted that he wanted them to bring back the Town Manager, who had previously spoken at one of their meetings, and briefly elaborated. Town Councilman Gentile spoke in favor a Town Manager for Plymouth, noting it would help with continuity stating he hoped the Town Council members would be in attendance at that meeting, as well.

Town Councilman Pajeski stated Gosinski Park had a full house with waiting list. Town Councilman Pajeski stated Inland/Wetlands had cancelled their meeting due to the lack of a quorum. Town Councilman Pajeski stated the Real Estate Committee had no business at this time and were waiting for the Tax Collector to do his foreclosures.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated the Planning and Zoning Commission had held a Public Hearing on Seymour Road to change residential to commercial, noting that quite a few neighbors had come out to speak against it. He further stated the meeting had been continued to this coming Thursday.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated the Planning and Zoning Chairman was looking into getting iPads for its members in order to save paper, noting they could be purchased from the State Bid cheaply and would be contacting the Mayor with this request. Town Councilman Zagurski stated the Library Board of Directors had developed the Phyllis Corsetti Fund and that grant applications for many grants and scholarships were currently available at both the Terryville Library and the Plymouth Town Hall.

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated the Police Commission was asking for a number of Capital expenditures for the next fiscal year including two new cruisers, 25 Taser Guns, a license plate reader and a second payment (of three) for their bullet proof vests. She further stated they were also requesting for an additional Police Officer who would function as the School Resource Officer (SRO) and the proposal would be that the Board of Education would pay the SRO for the school year and the remaining portion of the year's wages would be under the Police Department, noting this had not been discussed by the Board of Finance as yet. Town Councilwoman Murawski stated the Police Commission was reviewing job descriptions and a promotion procedure for the Assistant Chief and that a number of Officers, who had attended the January meeting, had asked very strongly to have some input in this process. Town Councilwoman Murawski stated the Police Commission had approved the Police Assistance Agreement with Watertown for Extra Duty, noting we already have an agreement with Plainville and Thomaston.

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated the Fire Commission was asking for Pager replacement under Capital Expenditures for the next budget, and also had requested a mechanical exhaust system and generator. She further stated they had been asking for these two items for several years now. Town Councilwoman Murawski stated three Human Service Commission members had resigned, but now would be back. Town Councilwoman Murawski stated Heather Burns had left after a couple years, much in the same way as the previous director left, and she hopes something will change down there, noting she couldn't see putting someone else in that same position. Referencing Town Councilman Gentile's inquiry, Town Councilwoman Murawski stated one of the Human Service Commission members had authorized an expenditure of Town money without any authorization and our previous director (who just left) had come up with guidelines so that doesn't happen again and hopefully that it has been taken care of. Town Councilwoman Murawski stated the Board of Finance was meeting on Mondays and Thursdays to work on the proposed 2017/2018 budget. She further stated the Board of Education would be presenting their budget to the Board of Finance on March 16th and as of now the Public Hearing on the finished proposal for next year's budget would be held on April 20th

When questioned by Town Councilman Gentile, Town Councilwoman Murawski stated one of the Human Service Commission members spent money, noting they do not have the authority to spend monies.

Mayor Merchant stated there was more information on this issue.

Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated the Economic Development Commission had cancelled their meeting in lieu of a Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) Workshop and briefly elaborated. She further stated it had been very informative and had a large attendance. Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated the meeting centered on developing the Town statistics and demographics in order to get an idea of what we want to do as a Town to bring in more monies. She further stated Thomaston Savings Bank had financed the event and that it was very well done. Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated the PVAC was currently discussing the Explorer's Post 30th Anniversary and needed more parent volunteers for the youth's activities. Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated the PVAC was also working on a tax abatement program for the people who have served the PVAC for a long time. Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated the WPCA's Superintendent, Terry Vigeant, would be retiring this month after having served the Town for 25 years. Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated she missed the February WPCA meeting so she didn't have any updates on the position. Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated the Public Works Board was currently working on their bylaws and fine-tuning how to run their meetings. She further stated Charles Wiegert had been very informative about the budget.

Town Council Comments

Town Councilman Gentile stated he had no Council comments at this time.

Town Councilman Pajeski stated he had no Council comments at this time.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated the Streetscape was beautiful, but he noticed that during the winter plowing the millings had been dug up and scattered about.

Mayor Merchant stated he noticed the millings, as well and that they would be cleaned up at some point soon.

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated she had no Council comments at this time.

Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated she wanted to begin looking at other blighted buildings in Town, not just 150 Main Street.

Mayor Merchant stated the Code Enforcement Committee would be bringing their Blight listing forward to Council next month and briefly elaborated.

Adjournment

There being no further business of the Plymouth Town Council, Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to adjourn at 7:59 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia A. Hale
Recording Secretary