

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

To: Members of the South Windsor Town Council
From: Matthew B. Galligan, Town Manager /VR
Subject: Town Manager's Report for 5/18/2015 Town Council Meeting
Date: May 15, 2015

Turf Field Resident Meeting

On Wednesday, May 13th, the Mayor and I met with the residents of Hillsdale Road and Mountain View Road as they are adjacent to the High School football field. I reviewed the bid specs with the residents, and while they are pleased that we are using nontoxic materials, they are still concerned about the bleachers, trash, and PA system as well as the alternate usage of the facility. We have noted their concerns, and they would like to see a more substantial noise barrier than a chain-link fence and a few trees. It has come to my attention that a few years ago, some trees were dropped off at their properties so they could plant them on their own land.

I would like to have an acoustic specialist measure the level of noise during a game at the field to assess what type of noise barrier would be needed. This barrier would need to be budgeted for in the future. If for some reason the turf field was finished under budget, we could go back to the Town Council for approval to use the funds for the barrier. I am arranging a meeting with the Superintendent as well as the Athletic Director, Principal, and Director of Parks and Recreation to come up with a plan regarding field usage and what would be the appropriate local activities that would be nonintrusive to the residents.

The discussion also came up regarding Sunday usage. I am in agreement with the residents that there should be no Sunday usage of the field. Usage on Sundays would create overtime issues with the Town and the High School staff, and we have to be cognizant of the fact that the residents would like to have a day of rest over the weekend.

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We also talked about dust during the construction period, and we would need to meet with the residents again before construction takes place so we can go over those issues. I have also indicated to them that there should be a contact person from the Town and Board of Education staff in case of noise disturbances instead of calling the police to mitigate the situation. We would need a memorandum of understanding between the Board of Education, Town, and residents regarding the level of noise and what we expect from users of the field with regards to trash and noise.

I will get back to you later as we develop policies and procedures for the Town Attorney to review.

Police Department Cell Tower

There is a discussion item regarding the collection of lease payments for the cell tower at the Police Department from our contract with SBA. They are paying us for a small parcel of land in order to have a cell tower on that land. When we first started this process, the Town received \$535,000 up front plus all the equipment on the tower for our repeater system in order for SBA to have a small 50' x 50' plot of land behind the Police Department for their cell tower. In year 11, we started collecting various leases of \$2,000 per month.

It has come to our attention that they would like to make an offer to us to buy our leases up front and have a four year lease so that they can continue the operation of that tower. The original offer to us was \$235,000 which I rejected. The offer is currently up to \$400,000, which would make more sense to take our leases up front. I think this is a good deal because not many companies are putting up new towers, and if the technology changes in the future, our revenue would be paid for us already. I might also add that our agreements still indicate that if for some reason the company backs out or technology changes, we have a choice to either take the tower down or take it over in order to keep our equipment on the top of that tower.

I would like to move forward on this deal, and if so, I would have to negotiate a contract for the Town Council meeting on June 1st, and maybe we can close this by the end of Fiscal Year 2014-2015.

Microbrewery

We are trying to open a microbrewery business in South Windsor with a small tasting room. The company has run into a few issues with the Department of Transportation. Although the property is ours, we have not officially had a closing because the contract calls for all permits to be completed before we can close. Jeff Doolittle and I will be meeting with the Department of Transportation on Thursday, May 14th, and hopefully I will have some answers for you on Monday as to how this project can move forward. The State Traffic Commission is the last hurdle for this project, and hopefully we can move past this so we can close and have the project move forward.

Sullivan Avenue House

I have met with the Department of Historic Preservation concerning the house on Sullivan Avenue and the construction that is occurring for a distribution center. It has come to my attention that there are many residents that are concerned if this house would be left there to deteriorate as Scannell Properties does not have to take the house per their contract. I have worked with this Department to determine a few things. They indicated to me that moving the house back would not be a good thing as it could jeopardize getting the house on the National Register. If the Town took the house over, we could apply for a \$15,000 Planning Grant but we would have to match that amount. This is the same Planning Grant that we have received for the Priest Property which is currently moving forward. Whatever the best use is, a budget would need to be put together to allow for the repair or construction for the decided use.

To me, this is an ideal piece of property, and I do not want it to be an eyesore as it is the gateway to our industrial zone. I have talked about a few things that we could do with this particular piece of property. One is to have a welcome center to South Windsor as it is an entranceway to the community, or maybe we can have chamber offices. We

have also been talking to Manchester Community College about bringing some of their economic development programs in South Windsor. As a welcome center, volunteers or chamber staff could work there, and it would enhance the business community. It is an ideal location; there are many industrial corporations that could use this as a meeting center as well.

I spoke with Jill Marquette from Scannell Properties who is willing to work with us on this project. I met with their attorney, Wayne Gerlt, to tell them what my expectations would be for financing these projects. He will bring these proposals back to Jill, and they will get back to me once they determine how much financial assistance they can give the Town. This is a great project for all, especially if the developer is willing to bring some funds to the table, and I think we can preserve that building so that it does not become a deteriorated eyesore.

I am willing to discuss this matter further on Monday night. If the Council wishes to move forward with this, I would like to get this solidified quickly so we can get funding and move forward.

Nevers Road Field

Another issue has come to my attention from some local contractors. We had a proposal a few years ago by Councilor Bazzano and his group to take 11 acres on Nevers Road and create fields with lights. This project did not move forward as funding was not available at that time. It has come to my attention that some people would like to leave the field as a grass field so that it could be used as a practice field for the High School with no watering or lights. Games would be held on game fields, and those game fields would be more pristine as practices could be held on this proposed grass field. There would be no referees or field conditions from CIAC. I would like to discuss this further with you as it was a local business that brought this to my attention. I feel obligated to let the Town Council know before there is a rumor about this property, but I feel this should be discussed if the Council wants to move forward with this endeavor.

We are doing the same project at the Barton Property with no lights or water but just letting people line up and play whatever they want to play. This was suggested as an avenue for Nevers Road at my meeting on Wednesday night with residents that the practice field would be a good idea to give them some relief from noise. This is something to discuss, but I would like your input before I move forward with anything of that nature.

Avery Heights Gas Service

During our last bond issue, we were looking into doing construction work in the Avery Heights area and other areas in Town to fix road and drainage issues. It has come to our attention from Kimberly Davis, a resident in Avery Heights, that Eversource Gas will not bring gas into Avery Heights unless they get upwards of 60% of residents requesting gas service. It is now or never to get the gas service to that area because if we are repaving in that area, we do not want to dig up the fresh pavement to put in gas service to the residents. Many residents are changing over to natural gas or would like to do so. I wanted to inform the Council that we are researching this possibility, and if any residents are watching the Council meeting at home and would like natural gas service in their area, they would have to contact Eversource Gas. The residents could also put a petition together and send it to Eversource Gas. If the residents in Avery Heights want gas service, we need to have Eversource Gas put the lines in before we do any construction work to repave the roads.

Dzen Tree Farm

I have met with Attorney John Bond regarding the Dzen Tree Farm access issue. There are some negotiations that need to be completed for this particular project, and I will need to discuss this in more detail in an Executive Session.

Energy Committee

The Energy Committee held a meeting the other day, and an item came up regarding a Municipal Technical Benchmarking Assistance Program. This program is done through Energize Connecticut. This is a program that the Committee would like to enter, and

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the deadline is June 2nd. This item is on for discussion at the Council meeting. At this point, the issue is that the official representative for the program should be in an office of an executive official, finance department, facilities department, board of education, or an energy task force. I need to discuss this with the Council as we need to ask the Board of Education if they want to be included in this program as it seems to be a criterion of the program. I think this is a program that we should consider as it could get the Town some additional energy ideas or savings.