

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

To: Members of the South Windsor Town Council

From: Matthew B. Galligan, Town Manager

Subject: Town Manager's Report for 6/18/19 Town Council Meeting

Date: June 13, 2019

Economic Development

Please find enclosed a memorandum that was sent to the Economic Development Commission and the Redevelopment Agency concerning our future economic development programs and how we are going to face some of the strategic issues of bringing retail and other development into the Town of South Windsor. It has been a very educational process to look at new ways to promote positive growth in the community, provide new jobs, and enhance existing businesses in the community.

On another note on economic development, I attended the June 11th Planning & Zoning Commission meeting to show support for two projects: Geisslers and a project in Evergreen Walk. I do feel that these two particular projects will be beneficial for taxes and for economic development, and that they will help to create a synergy where people will be able to participate in our local restaurants. Hopefully this will help to expand some of our restaurants and additional retail establishments that would match up with these particular projects.

Property Purchases

We have closed on the Burnham property, and on the church property next to the Pleasant Valley School. The closing was on Friday June 7. Now that we have access to the church property, we can get a jump start on some preliminary work to manage the construction on new buildings for Pleasant Valley School.

Bond Refunding

We recently had a conference call with Standard & Poor's concerning our bond refunding. I do believe we will keep our standard of AA+ as indicated by the fact that

S&P did not see any major changes that would warrant any type of reduction in our rating. They were quite amazed that we used less fund balance, and also that we continue to make our payments to the pension fund, health fund, and OPEB. I do feel very confident that we will be able to maintain our rating for this funding. We did advise S&P that there may be some additional funding in February with the schools taking out bonds to replace notes, so we made them aware of any future debt that may arise from incoming projects.

I-291 Corridor

A full set of plans and blueprints has been submitted to the Planning & Zoning Commission for the project coming in to the I-291 area. I will be setting up a meeting with our State representatives and DEEP to go over the full plans and details, and we will see where we stand at that point. Scannell and Town staff have done everything possible to move this project forward, and now we are just waiting for DEEP approval.

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

On June 13th I will be attending a meeting with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to learn about the grant opportunity that they are proposing for various communities in the Hartford region. We do have a charitable organization here, the South Windsor Community Foundation, which has already been set up to take on these kinds of funding opportunities. After I meet with HFBG I will be able to get back to the Council to explore what our next steps are.

Solar Projects

I would like the Town Council to be aware that there are two solar projects that we are currently looking at. One is with the Shepard Company, who is working with a particular solar energy developer. They are looking to use some of their property to provide solar from what I understand will be a 5 megawatt distribution center. I am meeting with them on June 11th to determine how the Town can help.

Also, as you remember, in East Windsor we have virtual net metering provided by LodeStar. Apparently LodeStar has obtained additional funding for our net metering program, which may help us to reduce our energy costs. I will be investigating that with the help of the Energy Committee to determine if we can do some additional net metering, which will affect our future budget. Once these meetings have taken place, I will advise the Council on these two programs.

Town Buildings Security

Councilor Hockenberry recently brought up the matter of security for Town buildings. When Chief Reed was here, we did a security analysis of all Town buildings. Since that analysis we have set aside money in the budget every year to take care of some of those security issues. The Police Department building has always been secured. In Town Hall, all of the doors have electronic locks and there are security cameras set up throughout the building. We have also made changes to the Treatment Plant. We are looking now at the Community Center and the Library to see how we can take care of security at those buildings. Again, this is a report that was done about five or six years ago, and it is an issue that we have been taking care of through our facilities manager as we move from budget to budget.

Hemp Farming

There is an opportunity for the Town to be part of a new farming technique for growing hemp. We have met with some executives from a company called Incredible Edibles who have now obtained a license from the State of CT to move forward with hemp farming. We are also working with a local farmer and some local businesspeople, and we may be looking at the Priest property land for a potential location for the farm, possibly by working with the farmer who is already using that land for hay. This is an opportunity for there to be more farming available in Town, and a potential for the Town to be in on the beginnings of a multi-million dollar industry providing the extracted oil that can be used in food products. The Mayor and I have a meeting planned on Friday June 14th with some of the people involved in this project. After this meeting, we will get

back to the Council as to how we can move forward. I will not be at the June 18th Town Council meeting, but the Mayor will be able to update the Council on this matter.

Employee Benefits – New 457 Plan

In your meeting packets you will find information on a new 457 plan that we have put together. For employees with less than three years of service there will not be a Town contribution. We have increased some limits in the later “years of service” categories, as those individuals are closer to retirement. I do think that the plan is good, and I am hoping that the Council will be ready to approve it so that we can put the Management Fringe Benefits package behind us.