

PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

**July 6, 2020
8:00 p.m.**

South Windsor Town Council

Virtual Meeting

PURPOSE: To receive citizen input on supporting the use of absentee ballots for the General Election in November 2020.

Mayor Paterna called the Public Hearing to order at 8:00 p.m.; and requested that the Clerk of the Council read the call of the meeting (a copy of which is attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

Mayor Paterna reiterated that although the public hearing has begun tonight at 8:00 p.m., emails can be sent, and public comment can be given through Thursday, July 9, 2020, at 4:30 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Pendleton requested the Clerk of the Council to read the phone number that the public can call to make comments. Mrs. Ashley Booth stated that the number the public can use to make comments is 855-925-2801, Code 9502. Mayor Paterna then stated that comments could also be emailed to TownCouncilComments@southwindsor-ct.gov.

Mayor Paterna requested Town Manager Michael Maniscalco, to read public comments into the record. Mr. Maniscalco read the comments from the public into the record as follows:

Richard and Amy Hubeny (**Exhibit B**)
Clifton Perkins, 85 Valley View Drive (**Exhibit C**)
Bryn Chandler (**Exhibit D**)
Ram Prasad (**Exhibit E**)
Mukiese Nsakala, 10 Linda Lane (**Exhibit F**)
Karell Rose, 10 Linda Lane (**Exhibit G**)
Cynthia Acanto, 20 Robert Drive (**Exhibit H**)
Elizabeth Olson (**Exhibit I**)
Amy Beaulieu, 30 Riverside Drive (**Exhibit J**)
Stephanie Dexter, 15 Larkspur Lane (**Exhibit K**)

The public hearing will remain open until Thursday, July 9, 2020, at 4:30 p.m. Public comments will close on Thursday, July 9, 2020, at 4:30 p.m., and results of public comments will be given at the Town Council meeting scheduled on Monday, July 20, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,


Deborah W. Reid
Clerk of the Council



OFFICE
OF THE
TOWN COUNCIL

Town of South Windsor

1540 SULLIVAN AVENUE • SOUTH WINDSOR, CT 06074-2786

AREA CODE 860/644-2511

FAX 860/644-3781

TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL INQUIRER

June 29, 2020

LEGAL AD

TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR

Notice is hereby given that the South Windsor Town Council has set **Monday, July, 6, 2020, at 8:00 p.m. through Thursday, July 9, 2020, at 4:30 p.m.**, as the time for a Virtual Public Hearing to receive citizen input on supporting the use of absentee ballots for the General Election in November 2020. The public hearing will be open on Monday, July 6, 2020, at 8:00 p.m. during the Town Council Meeting and will remain open until Thursday, July 9, 2020, at 4:30 p.m. for the public to comment. The public is welcome to call 855-925-2801, Code 9502 to make comments or email comments to TownCouncilComments@southwindsor-ct.gov. Results of public comments will be given at the July 20, 2020 Town Council Meeting.

Dated at South Windsor, Connecticut this 25th day of June 2020.

Attested to by:

Deborah W. Reid
Deborah W. Reid
Clerk of the Council

PUBLIC NOTICE LEGAL AD TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR	
<p>Notice is hereby given that the South Windsor Town Council has set Monday, July 6, 2020, at 8:00 p.m. through Thursday, July 9, 2020, at 4:30 p.m. as the time for a Virtual Public Hearing to receive citizen input on supporting the use of absentee ballots for the General Election in November 2020. The public hearing will be open on Monday, July 6, 2020, at 8:00 p.m. during the Town Council Meeting and will remain open until Thursday, July 9, 2020, at 4:30 p.m. for the public to comment. The public is welcome to call 855-925-2801, Code 9502 to make comments or email comments to TownCouncilComments@southwindsor-ct.gov. Results of public comments will be given at the July 20, 2020 Town Council Meeting.</p>	
<p>Dated at South Windsor, Connecticut this 25th day of June 2020.</p>	
Attested to by:	Deborah W. Reid Clerk of the Council
Journal Inquirer	June 29, 2020

Perry, Vanessa

From: TownCouncilComments,
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 7:09 PM
To: Perry, Vanessa
Subject: FW: Absentee voiting

From: Richard-Amy Hubeny [hubeny76@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, July 06, 2020 7:04 PM
To: TownCouncilComments,
Subject: Absentee voiting

To South Windsor Councillors,

We support the use of absentee ballots for the upcoming November elections. As senior citizens who are enjoined to stay at home during the coronavirus pandemic, plus with the upcoming coincident flu season, many public health experts predict that going to the polls could be risky for seniors. Moreover, there are younger people with comorbid health conditions or who are immuno-compromised who shouldn't go to the polls for the protection of their health. It would be unfortunate to disenfranchise voters because of their age or health. To ensure full voter participation, please support absentee voting in November 2020.

Thank you.
Richard Hubeny
Amy Hubeny

Booth, Ashley

From: Reid, Deborah
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 3:49 PM
To: Maniscalco, Michael; Booth, Ashley
Subject: Fwd: [Town of South Windsor CT] mail in voting (Sent by Clifton Perkins, CLIFFP97@GMAIL.COM)

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Contact form at Town of South Windsor CT <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>
Date: July 6, 2020 at 3:11:31 PM EDT
To: Town Council <TownCouncil@southwindsor.org>
Subject: [Town of South Windsor CT] mail in voting (Sent by Clifton Perkins, CLIFFP97@GMAIL.COM)
Reply-To: <CLIFFP97@GMAIL.COM>

Hello Town Council,

Clifton Perkins (CLIFFP97@GMAIL.COM) has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.southwindsor-ct.gov/user/606/contact>) at Town of South Windsor CT.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <https://www.southwindsor-ct.gov/user/606/edit>.

Message:

In reference to tonight's meeting about mail in voting I want to say that I'm against it. I feel that there is too much opportunity for something to go wrong for votes to be miscounted or just end up missing.

Thank you for your consideration

Clifton L Perkins

85 Valley View drive

Perry, Vanessa

From: TownCouncilComments,
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 6:54 PM
To: Perry, Vanessa
Subject: FW: Absentee Ballot

From: Bryn Chandler [bryrchandler@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, July 06, 2020 6:53 PM
To: TownCouncilComments,
Subject: Absentee Ballot

Hello-

While allowing those who wish to mail in votes is a great thing - forcing everyone to mail in their votes is against constitutional rights. If we can walk up to communal gas stations and get gas - we can vote in person. Being able to go to the grocery store and stand in line should not be placed above in priority to being able to go vote. Both are essential and should have options of being done in person or by absentee ballot. People should be free to choose.

Bryn Chandler
South Windsor Resident

7/6/2020

Absentee ballot

Reply Reply All Forward

Exhibit E

Absentee ballot

Ram Prasad [prasad.ram@cox.net]

To: TownCouncilComments,

Monday, July 06, 2020 6:11 PM

I am for town sending absentee ballot request to all

Ram Prasad

Sent from my iPad

7/6/2020

Support of voting by absentee ballots in the General Election.

Reply Reply All Forward

Exhibit F

Support of voting by absentee ballots in the General Election.

mukiese2000@yahoo.com

To: TownCouncilComments,

Monday, July 06, 2020 3:28 PM

To the South Windsor Town Council Members,

I am writing in support of the use of absentee ballots for the general election in November 2020.

Given that the current COVID-19 pandemic will be concurrent with an emerging flu season, it is in the interest of public health and safety to ensure that our communities can vote by absentee ballot. It is the right thing to do to safeguard our communities, especially our most vulnerable members as well as those who have been historically disenfranchised from voting. Voting is the most basic of civic engagement activities and one of the most important. If we as a community ensure that people can vote by absentee ballot, we can prevent people waiting in lines to vote and risking exposure to a potentially deadly disease. Let us not play lip service to democracy, but reimagine a world where everyone can ensure that their vote counts. In addition, voting by absentee ballot also maximizes voter participation. It ensures that people do not have to choose their health over their right to vote. Please support voting by absentee ballot in the general election in November 2020 and beyond.

Thank you.

Mukiese Nsakala

10 Linda Ln, South Windsor, CT 06074

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

[Reply](#) [Reply All](#) [Forward](#)

Support of Voting by Absentee Ballots in the General Election of 2020

Karell Rose [knsakala@gmail.com]

To: TownCouncilComments,

Monday, July 06, 2020 3:09 PM

To the South Windsor Town Councillors,

I am writing in support of the use of absentee ballots for the general election in November 2020. Given that the current COVID-19 pandemic will be concurrent with an emerging flu season, it is in the interest of public health and safety to ensure that our communities can vote by absentee ballot. It is the right thing to do to safeguard our communities, especially our most vulnerable members as well as those who have been historically disenfranchised from voting. Voting is the most basic of civic engagement activities and one of the most important. If we as a community ensure that people can vote by absentee ballot, we can prevent people waiting in lines to vote and risking exposure to a potentially deadly disease. Let us not play lip service to democracy, but reimagine a world where everyone can ensure that their vote counts. In addition, voting by absentee ballot also maximizes voter participation. It ensures that people do not have to choose their health over their right to vote. Please support voting by absentee ballot in the general election in November 2020 and beyond.

Thank you.

Karell Rose

10 Linda Ln, South Windsor, CT 06074

7/6/2020

please support Nov. 2020 absentee voting

Reply Reply All Forward

Exhibit H

please support Nov. 2020 absentee voting

Cynde Acanto [cyndeacanto@gmail.com]

To: TownCouncilComments,

Monday, July 06, 2020 1:15 PM

To the South Windsor Town Councillors,

I am writing in support of the use of absentee ballots for the General Election in November 2020.

Given that the current COVID-19 pandemic will collide with the flu season, it is in the interest of public health and safety to allow voting by absentee ballot. It is the right thing to do to safeguard our communities. In addition, voting by absentee ballot also maximizes voter participation by ensuring that people do not have to choose their health over their right to vote.

Please support voting by absentee ballot in the General Election in November 2020.

Thank you,
Cynthia Acanto
20 Robert Dr.

[Reply](#) [Reply All](#) [Forward](#)

Exhibit I

Absentee Ballots

Elizabeth Olson [eisolson@gmail.com]

To: TownCouncilComments,

Monday, July 06, 2020 10:57 AM

To the South Windsor Town Councillors,

I am writing in support of the use of absentee ballots for the general election in November 2020.

I want to point out that our poll workers generally fall into the high-risk and very high-risk categories for COVID-19, and therefore may not choose to (or be able to) fully staff our many polling locations.

Given that the current COVID-19 pandemic will collide with the flu season, it is in the interest of public health and safety to expand voting by absentee ballot, as it is the right thing to do to safeguard our communities.

If we are forced to reduce the number of polling locations, the normally quick and easy voting (with little or no crowds) that we are used to here in South Windsor might become more crowded, require a longer time commitment, and might cause delays and an increase in COVID-19 risk that make it hard or impossible for people to vote in person. This is especially a concern for those with less flexible work schedules, such as our front line workers like grocery and medical personnel. After all they have risked for us, not always voluntarily, we should take extra care to ensure they are able to vote safely this year.

In general, voting by absentee ballot this year maximizes voter participation by ensuring that people do not have to choose their health over their right to vote.

In this time of renewed efforts to obtain racial equity, we should also be aware that absentee voting is especially critical to support the hourly, gig, and shift workers, who must give up pay for any time spent voting, and who are least able to choose when they can go to the polls, and therefore more susceptible to the effects of reduced polling locations because of COVID-19 concerns by poll workers. We cannot pretend that everyone, especially racial minorities, have the flexibility and time that a white, work-at-home, salaried employee like me has.

Please support voting by absentee ballot in the general election, in November 2020, and beyond.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Olson

7/6/2020

Absentee ballots

Reply Reply All Forward

Exhibit J

Absentee ballots

Amy Beaulieu [amy.beaulieu1218@gmail.com]

To: TownCouncilComments,

Monday, July 06, 2020 10:09 AM

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my support of absentee ballots in the upcoming election and every election. It supports the needs of a diverse voting population.

Thank you,
Amy Beaulieu
30 Riverside Dr
South Windsor, CT

July 5, 2020

Re: July 6th Public Hearing on the use of No-Excuse Absentee Ballot's for the Presidential Election in November 2020

Dear Town Councilors,

I personally feel that to continue to use the current Absentee Ballot (AB) as a No-Excuse Absentee Ballot in November 2020 is a mistake.

You may remember that in 2014, every CT registered voter was asked in a statewide referendum to vote on the following and I quote:

"Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to remove restrictions concerning absentee ballots and to permit a person to vote without appearing at a polling place on the day of an election?"

The vote failed to pass with 52% voting no and 48% voting yes.

Now six years later and in the new environment in which we live, this Constitutional amendment should be brought up again. Currently the Secretary of the State (SOTS) cannot mail AB applications to all voters for the November Election because the Governor's Executive Orders expire on September 6th. So what should we do?

Also, to ask South Windsor's Town Clerk and Registrars of Voters to handle the volume of AB's in a Presidential Election year, which is mostly a manual process by the way, is ludicrous. What are the plans to automate?

One might ask why South Windsor is holding this Public Hearing at all? There is nothing we can do about the SOTS regulations or State of CT Constitution. Perhaps our State politicians are looking for guidance? Frankly, they should all convene the Special Session and do the work we voted them in to do. Let's change the State Constitution and allow Mail in Voting. The clock is ticking. Where are they?

There is a lot of data out there that suggests that this does NOT benefit one political party over another.

If you are a voter - you vote.

In conclusion, I feel that using the current Absentee Ballot in this way is a Band-Aid and **NOT** the way to solve the larger problem of Voter accessibility and Election security and confidence. We can do better.

Submitted
Stephanie Dexter
15 Larkspur Lane
South Windsor, CT