

TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR

Revised Minutes

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September 7, 2021

TOWN COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS – SOUTH WINDSOR TOWN HALL

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Paterna called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

3. Roll Call

Members Present: Mayor Andrew Paterna
Deputy Mayor Liz Pendleton
Councilor Erica Evans
Councilor Steven King, Jr.
Councilor Philp Koboski
Councilor Cesar Lopez
Councilor Karen Lydecker (arrived at 7:35 p.m.)
Councilor Lisa Maneeley
Councilor Janice Snyder

Others Present: Michael Maniscalco, Town Manager
Scott Roberts, Asst. Town Manager/CIO/Emergency Mgmt.
Vanessa Perry, Asst. Town Manager/Director of H.R.

4. Mayor's Remarks

Mayor Paterna requested that the Council take a Moment of Silence for Connecticut State Police Sergeant Brian Mohl, who passed away in the line of duty during Hurricane Ida.

Deputy Mayor Pendleton requested that the Council take a Moment of Silence to recognize all of the lives lost during 911; and asked for a Moment of Silence to recognize and acknowledge fellow veterans who lost their lives during a humanitarian mission in Afghanistan.

5. Adoption of Agenda

Councilor King made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Councilor Snyder seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

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6. Communications and Reports from Town Manager

Town Manager Maniscalco reported on the following:

- There have been a total of 1,917 cases of COVID-19 in South Windsor, with 1,813 past quarantine at this time. Fifty-three individuals in South Windsor have passed away due to COVID-19.
- The Town has moved forward with a mask mandate. The mandate aims to keep kids in-person in school, and ensure that businesses are not closed, or capacity limits do not have to be imposed.
- Masks are also required in all Town buildings. In the event of a large gathering on Town property, masks will be required.
- All Town offices will remain open to the public to provide all of the services.
- Hurricane Henri hit the Town on 8/21/21, with the largest impact being significant rainfall. The Town mostly experienced flooding issues. The State declared a State of Emergency, and evaluations are currently being done for FEMA to determine if there was a large enough impact in terms of cost to the Town to warrant FEMA reimbursement.
- The Town provided a tour to the Metro Hartford Alliance, a regional economic/community development agency, showing them multiple locations in Town where redevelopment is being focused.
- Construction on the COSTCO site is moving along. Their estimated opening date is November 11, 2021.
- Through the bankruptcy of Carla's Pasta, the company was bought by Tribe 9 Foods out of Wisconsin. The Town is reviewing the tax abatement that was put in place for Carla's Pasta which can be transferred to the new entity. Tribe 9 Foods is not planning any layoffs or to downsize, but will look in the future to maybe increase production.
- I have been asked to serve as a board member on the Crumbling Foundations Insurance Captive Board. Through this membership on this board, it is hopeful that additional attention will be given to South Windsor residents suffering with crumbling foundations.

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6. Communications and Reports from Town Manager (Continued)

- Elected officials have inquired about offering closed caption services and/or sign language for Town Council meetings and other public meetings. It would cost approximately \$1,000 per meeting to have sign language at public meetings. The Town is looking into additional closed caption options. Most computers and televisions offer this service if an individual is watching the meeting at home, but it is not always accurate. The Town is trying to get additional costs for these types of services.
- A Planning & Zoning Commission item related to the State Legislature – Accessory Apartments will become legal starting January 1, 2022. Our Planning & Zoning Commission has been exploring the possibility of opting out of that law which they can do if a supermajority of the Planning & Zoning Commission members votes in favor of it as well as the Town Council votes in favor of it with a supermajority. Accessory Apartments are currently allowed in Town through a special exception, and the Town has regulations around that, but the new law would make it legal across the board. It may warrant additional review.
- The speeding on Laurel Street has been brought forward to the Traffic Committee. They said two lit signs could be put up that will flash the speed of the oncoming traffic. Those signs have been ordered but it will take 6 to 7 weeks for the signs to be received by the Town.
- The Town completed its tax sale bringing in a total of \$1,100,000 in revenue for the Town.

Answering questions from the Council, Town Manager Maniscalco explained that the State Department of Emergency Management had requested municipalities to input the costs for damages associated with Hurricane Henri. If those damage amounts equal a specific dollar amount then FEMA will start to reimburse the municipalities for those costs. Usually, FEMA will reimburse at 75%. The Town reports the hours that Town staff work during a storm which also includes the Fire Department. There are rates for the hours of work for staff as well as the use of equipment. Town Manager Maniscalco stated that when FEMA reimburses the Town, those funds go back into the fund balance. Town Manager Maniscalco said he would speak with Chief Cooney to see if the Fire Department expended any funds during the storm.

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6. Communications and Reports from Town Manager (Continued)

Answering further questions, Town Manager Maniscalco explained that the Town reached out to Hartford Metro Alliance to take a tour around the Town to look at various Town facilities in the South Windsor community. Additional funding through the State has been received for crumbling foundations of approximately \$40,000,000.

Councilor Evans requested an update on the status of the pickleball courts and dek hockey court.

7. Public Input

Mrs. Thespina Buganski, 133 Cliffwood Drive, came before the Council to voice her opposition to the Town of South Windsor mask mandate. This should not be a political or control issue. Residents and businesses of South Windsor should have the freedom to make the best decision for themselves while being respectful to others.

Mrs. Corrine Bordua, 373 Pleasant Valley Road, stated that the virus did not close businesses last year; the government did. Mask mandates hurt small businesses. The Town Manager's intentions may have been good, but that does not mean these actions are correct. Executive Order 13A says that any business or municipal government, or agency may require the universal use of masks in settings under their ownership or control. Private businesses are not under municipal ownership or control. Mrs. Bordua requested that the Town stop the mandates and overreaching into private businesses.

Mrs. Kathy Kerrigan, 1838 Main Street - **Exhibit A**

Mr. Tom Dillon, 34 Barber Hill Road, explained that the definition of PPE through Google is personal protective equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury or infection. Mr. Dillion stated that not once in 45 years of wearing PPE as a firefighter did he wear PPE for the victim; it was always for him. Mr. Dillon voiced his opposition to the mask mandate explaining that the masks do nothing unless someone is wearing an N95 mask that has been fitted to you by a medical provider. Mr. Dillon then stated that he feels the Town spends too much on fire trucks and requested a forensic audit and consultation on how the Town could be run more efficiently. There is an election in November, and the taxpayers should have Councilors that will listen to the taxpayers and spend the tax dollars wisely.

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At 7:38 p.m., Mayor Paterna called for a 15-minute recess and the Council left the Council Chambers to discuss a safety concern. No Executive Session was held, and no business was conducted while the Council was out of the Council Chambers. The Council reconvened at 7:50 p.m.

7. Public Input (*Continued*)

Mrs. Ginny Macro, 1828 Main Street, explained that as Chairperson of the Historic District Commission for 20 years, she was delighted to hear last year that in Money Magazine, South Windsor was number 12 in its list of the 100 best places to live in America. Historic Main Street was cited as one of the main attractions. The Historic District Commission does its best to protect these iconic homes, but it takes a village to ensure that it is accomplished. Mr. Frisbee's proposal for a large 24-hour gas station with trucks would threaten the tranquility of the historic district, which is already bombarded with the noise of truck traffic day and night. The Town Council can and must help to protect our impressive heritage. The Planning & Zoning Commission has the power to decide on granting the required zone change for this development, but Mrs. Macro stated that she fears without the protection of the northern part of Main Street closest to the intersection of Sullivan Avenue and Rte. 5, South Windsor will lose its attraction of the desirable place to live due to the diminished quality of life. The preservation of the Schweir house on the corner of Sullivan Avenue and Route 5 has gotten a step closer with the formation of a 501C3 entity and a board to oversee its restoration and use. Descendants of the Schweir family have stepped forward and outlined a detailed proposal for a combined use, quiet facility featuring South Windsor's agricultural history. I hope the new board will also be receptive to making the Schweir house part of the East Windsor Hill Historic District.

Mrs. Kim Cirigliano, 70 Poquonock Avenue, Windsor, explained that her maiden name is Schweir and her family resided in the Clapp/Schweir home. Mrs. Cirigliano explained that she is at the Town Council meeting tonight on behalf of herself and her two cousins. Mrs. Cirigliano expressed her opposition to the gas station proposal for the area located at 59 Sullivan Avenue, also known as Clapp/Schweir home. This is the entrance to the historic district, and it should be kept welcoming, peaceful and attractive to appeal to visitors and the citizens of South Windsor by making that home stand out as a pivotal structure to the historic district. If the decision is to renovate the home, then let's make it purposeful with

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7. Public Input (*Continued*)

style, class, and breath life back into that home by making a destination, not a place for people that need gas. Mr. Cirigliano stated that she is passionate when asking the Council to please respect the honor and those that worked so hard for the history and beauty of this Town by denying this gas station.

Mrs. Mary Beaulieu, 2780 Ellington Road, came before the Council and stated that the governments role is to truthfully, completely inform. Every member of South Windsor has the right to assess for themselves what is right for themselves.

Mayor Paterna asked that Mrs. Beaulieu please keep her mask on while she spoke. Mrs. Mary Beaulieu said no because it blocks her glasses and stated that the Town Manager has once again been calling the residential phone numbers, and he is feeding the hype. Mayor Paterna asked once again to have Mr. Beaulieu put her mask on while she was speaking. This is what we have agreed to here in this room. Mr. Beaulieu stated that she had already been harassed and was told the Council would end the meeting, this is harassment. Mayor Paterna said, no, we are asking for compliance to the simple rules that protect everyone in this room.

Councilor Evans made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Councilor Maneeley seconded the motion, and the motion was approved with Mayor Paterna, Deputy Mayor Pendleton, Councilor Evans, Councilor King, Councilor Lopez, Councilor Lydecker, Councilor Maneeley, and Councilor Snyder saying Aye to adjourn; and Councilor Koboski saying Nay to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,



Deborah W. Reid
Clerk of the Council

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September 7, 2021

Town Council Members
Town of South Windsor
Sullivan Avenue
South Windsor, CT

Dear Mr. Mayor and Councilors:

I'm a 45-year resident of South Windsor, living in the Main Street Historic District for most of that time. Our home is within eye-sight (and hearing) of the two distribution centers constructed in 2015 on the old Schweir property, located at 59 Sullivan Avenue. This is also the address of the Schweir homestead (aka Increase Clapp house), built in 1808, listed on the State Registry of Historic Places, and lived in by members of the Schweir family until 2015.

I come before you tonight with 3 topics of concern – all three have to do with the Schweir house:

1. the fuel station project proposed for the tract of land immediately behind the house
2. concerns for the future of this historically significant home
3. the new welcome-to-South Windsor Gateway being designed for land immediately opposite the Schweir house on Sullivan Avenue.

Fuel Station Project

This gas station would be located immediately south of the Schweir house property, facing Rte 5 and the Historic District.

Highlights:

- A new 24-hour diesel gas station for trucks
- A deli sandwich/convenience shop
- An ice cream parlor located inside the Schweir house

On June 11, I sent a letter to Mr. Michael Frisbie of Monroe Noble Gas Inc., outlining worries I share with my neighbors concerning these plans. I wrote this about the historic district:

We are a tiny community within a larger town, with properties owned by people dedicated to preserving their homes in perpetuity – for the long-term benefit of South Windsor residents, the State of Connecticut, and an even broader national historical community. We do that at significant personal and monetary sacrifice – and, sadly, without any direct help from our Town or the State.

In the past 10 years, my neighbors and I have seen "East Windsor Hill" buffeted by a significant increase in truck volume due to the construction of multiple distribution centers on or just off of Sullivan Avenue. The result has been both a dramatic, 24/7 increase in the number of trucks on the two roads closest to our neighborhood, AND a stunning increase in the noise levels generated by those trucks. We are understandably gun-shy.

A diesel truck fueling station with its attendant activity, noise and lighting would be intolerable. And perhaps most importantly – we believe that the introduction of any kind of a fuel station in the vicinity of the Historic District is simply unacceptable.

This project would impact an already congested intersection which has seen a dramatic increase in accidents over the past few years. In addition, it would require a **change in zoning** from Industrial to Commercial – when in fact, there are several Commercially-zoned properties along Rte 5 that would much better accommodate a fuel station, and offer multi-direction entries and exits.

The Future of the Schweir House

With doors and windows boarded up and the yard overgrown, it doesn't look like much today – but underneath it's a two-storey brick residence in the Federal style, with two tall brick chimneys located at each gable end. The original owner was a blacksmith who made irons for the town jail, then located at the Town Farm on Ferry Lane. This was an important home in the community – and an important link between Main Street and Wapping residents – with more than 113 years of stories to tell.

The Schweir house and its property were "given" to the town by the developer of the distribution centers in 2015. It was placed in a 501(c)(3) for which a new Board of Directors has just been named. This new Board will be charged with the restoration, care and future use of the house; it will bring together the Historic District Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office to obtain funding for needed restoration work, including the possible relocation of the house further back on its property.

Gateway

A new gateway is being proposed on the small tract of land directly opposite the Schweir house on Sullivan Avenue. Simple in design, it would welcome visitors to South Windsor with visual references to our rich history, and landscaping designed to reflect and complement a restored Schweir house. It will offer an impressive welcome – one fitting the Historic District it looks back on!

The Gateway design – with cost estimates and commitments for donations and in-kind services – will be presented to the Town Council for approval.

Conclusion

Thank you for your time. Thank you for your service to South Windsor. (The Town is worth it!)
And thank you for considering:

NO ... to a new fuel station for trucks next door to the historic Schweir home, and alarmingly close to a priceless collection of historic structures in the Town's Historic District

YES ... in support of a new Board guiding the restoration and future use of the Schweir house

YES ... to a new Gateway for South Windsor

Sincerely,

Kathryn H. Kerrigan

Cc: Bart Pacekonis, Chairman, South Windsor Planning & Zoning
Michele Lipe, Town Planner, South Windsor
Michael Maniscalco, Town Manager, South Windsor
Elizabeth Burgess, Chair, Historic District Commission, Town of South Windsor
Residents of "East Windsor Hill"