

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING OF OCTOBER 3, 2023 MINUTES

Town Council President calls the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilor Honan, Councilor Fucillo, Councilor Munson, Councilor Belcher, Councilor DeMarco, Councilor Flockhart, Councilor Aiello, Vice President Ruggiero, President Letterie

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Belcher

MINUTES

Motion by Councilor Belcher to Approval of Minutes July 25, 2023, as circulated

2nd by Councilor DeMarco

Passed Unanimously

Motion by Councilor Belcher to Approval of Minutes September 19, 2023, as circulated

2nd by Councilor DeMarco

Abstain-Vice President Ruggiero

Passed Unanimously

GENERAL INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Town Council President had talked to National Grid representative Tammy Sporito in reference to the gas company having to enter homes that have been discovered to have older wires that has to be replace up to code These homeowners were concerned with this procedure...please see email from Tammy Sporito in reference to these homes

PUBLIC HEARING(S)

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Morgan discusses White Cane Month. The day for White Cane month is held at the State House on October 13, 2023

White Cane gives a person who is blind the independence to travel and move forward. If you see any person in the world with a white cane, this indicates that person is blind.

Marci Hamilton P2-Thanks for remembering the Jewish Holidays. Remembers the dog park is being named after Mike McDuffee, when will this take place and asks about a memorial bench at Ingleside Park near his home

She had concerns about the new fire station and had a conversation with Town Council President and most questions were answered, but as far as for the for exit, there is no 2nd egress for the fire trucks right now...just one way...this is concerning.

She Comments on DPW workers and how they are down on employees....maybe contracts with new employees should have a stipulation that if trained by town they must provide a certain amount of time, maybe include an incentive to keep them.

Vasilli Mallios P5-Asks if there has been any major problems with Zoom? Since not any major, he feels that there is no reason that important meetings should not be held on zoom. He believes that the town manager should be hosting a tech meetings on how to run a zoom if the board is not aware as to how to do this. There are meetings that all cannot attend. We have been using this for years and now all of a sudden some committees have stopped. Why is this?

Regarding the Middle School site...we have been sitting on property for over 9 years....a plan was presented a couple of months ago which would bring revenue into our town with no cost to our town...now some Town Councilors want to search for more avenues? Different aspects have been introduced to the town in the past and they have not been done, now we have something and it should be done as soon as possible, why are they delaying?

Political Canvassing- Who oversees the political signage or doing wrong? The Town Council President is aware of the concern for the sign problems and candidates should also be aware of the legalities.

Town Council President states that the Town paid close to \$50,000 for Zoom technology and it should be used as often as possible.

Jack Dowd P1- complains about a pick-up truck by Sea view that sped by him going ridiculously fast on the wrong side of the road

Also, as leaving town at the curve (short beach) on the opposite side of the street on a scooter, the person had a child on the front of the scooter wearing no protective equipment. Is this considered child endangerment or abuse? Hopes Chief Delehanty can put a stop to this...stop this person from maybe hurting a child.

He claims the Fire House can be built at the site it is currently on. The police can add a 2nd floor at a fraction of the price of going ground up with new.

He states the property at 141 Pauline St. is owned by the town...1.19 acres, would cost about \$5,000 for a survey..why not sell to a developer who would be responsible for these costs including the demo. Exclude the rest as it is Ingleside Park. It is well documented that it is a park. There are grave circumstances with the state if this use changes...there is a procedure that must be done.

Bill Schmidt P5- Sent an email earlier about +55 living apartments, he believes that new councilors should be involved...or wait until after election to make any final decisions on the Middle School

CORRESPONDENCE

Scott Mahoney Wright wrote in reference to the Fire House Building....please see attached

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Rules & Ordinance

Vice President Ruggiero is currently reviewing the Air BnB Ordinance with the Town Manager and Town Counsel

Committee will be reviewing a draft and would like more public input.

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

No Meeting to report on

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Chief Wiley, sitting in for the Town Manager reports that the Town Manager has been working with the tenants of the Wadsworth building about possible relocation...

Town Manager continues report on Zoom

He reports that The Ferry has been extended until 11-30-2023...the Lynn Ferry Service will end on 10-31-2023
The MVP Grant of \$291,000 has been awarded, the total will be \$368,000 which can be used for natural living
levies along marsh area, the flooding at Morton St. He is in current communication with the community
engagement on Morton St. Neighbors and Belle Isle Marsh
Town has submitted the complete streets grant asked for 3 things
Bump out with curbs on Walden
Curb ramps and 16 total pedestrian crossings and ramps on river road

Councilor Aiello—As for Transportation front, ferry and complete street grants is great news...clearly some
political signs are over and above what should be allowed...these do not look good. A reminder for next
meeting a presentation of the Capital Liabilities...We have a big road ahead of us and will need help with this
revenue, find money outside the community so we are not increasing taxes.

John Munson state's great work and great news. The Air BnB's need to be reviewed and safety enforced...

Town Council President reports that there are basically 128 unknown Air BnB's that have not been inspected for
safety, we need enforcement.

OLD BUSINESS

Middle School RFI- Will remain on Agenda

NEW BUSINESS

Motion by the Councilor Fucillo to accept the Town Council Presidents appointment of Hannah Belcher on the
Fire House Building Committee

2nd by Councilor Flockhart

Passed Unanimously

PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Mahoney Wright...thanks the town for the safety improvements on Pleasant St.

Discusses Rte 145 from Veterans to Shirley...there needs to be more safety....curve by WYC and Yirrell Beach
is hazardous, he has witnessed buses have to cross over line to make curve...these two curves need signage as on
Pleasant St. Requests flashing pedestrian flashing sign on Yirrell to Shirley....it is very unsafe.

Jack Dowd P1-He has lived down the point and agrees Yirrell Beach and Shirley St. is a very unsafe curve.

Questions asked if all water services complete in Highlands with no lead services? All copper?
Town Council President will get a list of these

Todd Sacco P2-Regards to scooters, as Candidate for Councilor at Large, while campaigning he also notices
these scooters daily and agrees that these are not safe, there should be regulations.

In regards to the Air BnB situation, he thinks Councilor Aiello has a point that we want to live in our town as we
want

9 people should not be able to decide the Air BnB, there should be more public involvement.

Shannon Poulous P3-Agrees that Zoom should be done and not just up to committees to decide

Would like to see more information on the Schools, a teacher just resigned leaving a class with no teacher, this is
something that should have been reported.

Before asking for motion to adjourn, Council President Letterie asks each Town Councilor if they have anything further to discuss

Councilor Honan- None
Councilor Fucillo- None
Councilor Munson- Country Night on Saturday at the CPYC
Councilor Belcher- None
Councilor DeMarco- Reminds us of Columbus Day and Italian Day is Oct. 9th
Councilor Aiello- Remind public last day to register to vote is 10-26-23 and the 40th Belle Isle Fair Festival will be held on October 14, 2023
Councilor Flockhart- None
Vice President Ruggiero-None

Town Council President reports WCAT channel changes....Old #3 is now #9 old #15 is #8 and #22 will stay

A firetruck happened to come by and helped with a raccoon out as they were just passing by, this is the town we live in

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Councilor DeMarco to adjourn at 8:00 PM
2nd by Council Aiello
Passed Unanimously

Public Documents used in the meeting are available at Town Managers Office.
Documents Used in this Meeting: Handwritten Notes / Committee Openings Documents Roll Call Log
Written Motions / Verbal Motion
Respectfully submitted
Denise Quist, Council Clerk

INCLUDED IN MINUTES

From: Tammy Saporito <Tammy.Saporito@nationalgrid.com>

Date: October 3, 2023 at 11:48:38 AM EDT

To: Jim Letterie <jimletterie@gmail.com>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Winthrop

Good afternoon Jim,

As requested, please see the update/timeline below. This information is from the gas supervisor that is working the project on Revere Street.

We have a total of 7 services that will require the fitters to transfer, 2 of them are done last week. As of right now we have 5 services remaining to relay which will also require fitting work for the inside portion. We also have 5 main connections to do as well. With the fitters involved and the 5 main connections remaining, I can estimate the completion of this project in 3 to 4 weeks, which would put us at the end of this month. Once again, that's if the customers allow the fitters to get in to do the transfers.

I will text you to let you know that I emailed you, just due to the length of the details.

Thanks,

Tammy Saporito
Principal Program Manager
Community & Customer Management
National Grid
978-270-5205

Please add this into the correspondence during the October 3rd town council meeting.

Thank you.

To The Winthrop Town Council:

As a Winthrop resident, I, like so many other residents, am navigating my way through our two most recent very complex town-related issues. The desperate need for a new fire station that will replace our current outdated and inadequate fire station buildings which are unhealthy to Winthrop firefighters. The second, how to best make use of the old middle school parcel on Pauline Street. These two potential projects have a great deal of overlap, as many residents feel that our fire and police departments should be merged into a new facility built on the existing unused middle school site. If the current fire station proposal does not pass on the November 7th vote, we need to have an alternate plan in place beyond going back to the drawing board, so that our Winthrop firefighters are not continuing to work in unhealthy conditions.

Regarding the current proposal for the old middle being developed into a sports complex; Other towns across Massachusetts have had some success with the sports complex concept, but the locations of these facilities are not situated within a neighborhood such as the proposed site here. The Boston Sports Institute facility seated on Route 9 in Wellesley is a multi-use recreation complex. The Wellesley facility is in close proximity to Route 135, another heavily trafficked thoroughfare. That location of the old middle school site on Pauline Street is quite different. It is in sharp contrast.

As I stated in a prior email to the council, a post-secondary vocational / trade school could prove viable. Not only would it provide an educational path for those graduating Winthrop High School students seeking to learn a specific trade as a career choice, but it could also draw students of all ages from other communities who opt to learn an actual trade. A post-secondary institution like this could potentially access both state and federal educational funding. Trade schools have financial viability, credibility, longevity and prepare students for a career while assisting them in gaining credentials, licensure and accreditation in the trades industry. We have many business owners in Winthrop who are in the trades industry; construction, electricians, plumbers, HVAC technicians, automotive technicians', etc. There is potential for these businesses in taking on apprentices from the trade school and perhaps building community partnerships.

On a different note, there was an idea brought forth last year regarding placement of a new public safety complex on Kennedy Drive. This would be accomplished by repurposing the Gorman School at Fort Banks. There would be modifications made and reuse of the building, which of course would in the long run save the town considerable money. An addition would be constructed to create bays for fire truck apparatus, firefighter training facilities, etc. To counter the impact of taking this building for a public safety complex, a new school would be constructed on the existing site of the former middle school on Pauline Street. There are many benefits to this idea. The Gorman School is not densely surrounded by residences. It would alleviate the ongoing concerns of residents when having to drop off and pick up their children from school and the traffic congestion on both Kennedy Drive and Revere Street during school hours. This undertaking would provide these students with a new school facility in a safer, readily accessible, location that is zoned for a school. It would potentially serve to prevent overcrowding in our existing schools. It could serve to benefit those residents on Overlook Drive who are subjected to the constant backup of traffic and congestion, and illegal parking due to the Gorman School situation.

The emergency operations center for the town could be relocated to the new public safety complex. It would also provide the Winthrop Public Health Department with the proper facilities needed to perform their jobs and have the resources they desperately need. And, it would give the firefighters and police officers in our community a physically healthy and updated workplace in which to carry out their daily job functions. In addition, the Parks and Recreation Department could be housed at this complex, which would allow them to continue serving at full capacity in a functional environment. Another benefit to utilizing the Gorman School for a public safety complex is that the Winthrop Department of Public Works is housed directly across the street. This would allow many of our town department leadership (Fire, Police, DPW, Public Health, Parks & Rec) to strengthen their communication and collaborative efforts. The Gorman School is 80,000 square feet, which seems more than adequate to house the police, fire, public health, parks & rec and the town's emergency operations center.

There may be other alternatives as well amongst the leadership and citizens alike. The ideas mentioned here are just that. Ideas. But we should be researching and looking at these issues from every possible angle and taking every idea into consideration. There isn't a single path to success here with the old middle school site. In addition, as a community, we should be looking at solving multiple underlying issues impacting the broader community through the development of all future projects.

Scott Mahoney-Wright

