

**TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING**

June 20, 2023

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A meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Tuesday, June 20, 2023. This was a hybrid meeting held both in person and electronically via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 7:37 P.M. by Council President Dominique Baez. The Clerk took the roll followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Sweet then read the Land Acknowledgement followed by a moment of silence.

Z= On Zoom P= In Person

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dominique Baez (P)	Abdul Osmanu (P)
Ted Stevens (P)	Jeron Alston (Z)
Lesley DeNardis (Z)	Katie Kiely (P)
Laurie Sweet (P)	Adrian Webber (Z)
Cory O'Brien (Z)	Kristen Zaehring (Z)
Sarah Gallagher (Z)	Betty Wetmore (Z)
Justin Farmer (P)	

MEMBERS ABSENT: Paula Irvin; Bob Anthony

PRESIDING: Dominique Baez, President

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Sean Grace, Chief of Staff; Curtis Eatman, Finance Director; Sue Gruen, Town Attorney; Carol Hazen, Manager of Grants & Capital Projects; Tim Wydra, Acting Chief of Police

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION: There were 16 speakers in person and 2 speakers on Zoom.

(Written comments can be sent to LCpublicinput@hamden.com)

CORRESPONDENCE: None

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Farmer said it's pride month and despite legislation all across the country oppressing the lives of trans and queer he's very proud of what our Town is

doing to strengthen our community.

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS: None

REPORTS OF COUNCIL LIAISONS: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: Ms. Baez requested a motion for approval of the minutes of June 5, 2023. Moved by Ms. Kiely, seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

CONSENT CALENDAR: Mr. Farmer requested all items be removed from the Consent Calendar.

REGULAR AGENDA:

1. Order authorizing the Town of Hamden to make application and to accept and expend funds from the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic & Community Development Community Investment Fund 2030 – Affordable Housing Project 2980 State Street

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Kiely. DISCUSSION: Mr. Grace gave an update of the item as given in committee. He said this was the first public meeting on this and they will have as many meetings as the public thinks they should have saying there will be other meetings for them to weigh in on. He said this is simply asking to go ahead and request the funding.

Ms. Kiely said she thinks the Council, need to work on is putting things out there before hand and letting people have an actual conversation about what's happening and figuring out a way to better decipher for the public what is an input meeting and what is just hey, we want to start a discussion, because it's hard to have people come and comment on something before having information.

Mr. Farmer asked what discussions we had with Selectman Frieda. Mr. Grace said they haven't discussed it with him. Mr. Farmer said in the past he's worked on an ordinance, a good neighbor ordinance, and it is his intention to bring it to Council to alleviate some of this confusion and misunderstandings about these borderline properties.

Ms. Zaehringler asked the administration to explain the project and the Towns responsibility. Mr. Grace said the developer expressed their willingness to work with the Town officials on any particular request that they may have to alter their plans. He went on to say that these are two story building, not three, and there's a line of mature trees that will be left intact as a buffer. He went on to say from the States perspective it's affordable housing development at 80% market rate but they are starting lower at 60% and going as low as 30% for some units, and some units at 50%. These units are geared towards a workforce population and are needed. Mr. Grace said they are at the early stages of this and no official application has been put in for this but by the Towns end they would ask that the development be taxed at a rate consistent with the affordability of

the units. Ms. Zaehring asked if there would be a timing issue if they table this. Mr.

Grace said yes. He said this is not the approval of the development, just starts the process and is very detrimental to not missing the application period. Ms. Zaehring stated they had a number of community meetings for other projects and she wants to do the same here.

Mr. Stevens stated he's familiar with the neighborhood and thinks this project is appropriate for this neighborhood saying there are plenty of residences there. He said although he wishes there were more amenities, grocery stores and things walkable nearby, there are plenty of other residences in this area so he thinks it fits in. He also mentioned it's on a bus line.

Ms. Kiely said she thinks what makes that area and that neighborhood so strong is that it has such a strong mix and is not completely homogeneous as far as people who need to commute, and she thinks one of the things they should look to when they look at neighborhoods is diversifying them and not put everybody all in one area. She then said she'll be supporting this tonight to have future discussions.

There was discussion on zoning and discussion on the process.

Ms. Gallagher said she supports putting in this application. She said she was at last week's meeting and heard directly from the developers and members of the community and she thinks it's really important for them to be at the table for this conversation which allows them to really be a partner and to put their priorities as a Town in writing in proposals and contracts.

Ms. Zaehring moved a motion to revise the Order to make it an application for fund and if awarded come back to Council to accept and expend. The motion was seconded by Mr. O'Brien and approved with 2 opposed (Baez) (Kiely) and 2 abstentions (Sweet) (Osmanu)

Ms. Baez took the vote on the item as amended and it passed with 2 abstentions (Zaehring) (DeNardis)

- 2 Order authorizing the Town of Hamden to make application and to accept and expend funds from the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic & Community Development Community Investment Fund 2030 – Community Campus

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Kiely and approved with 2 opposed (DeNardis) (Wetmore) and 1 abstention (Zaehring)

- 3 Order authorizing the Town of Hamden to make application and to accept and expend funds from the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic & Community Development Community Investment Fund 2030 – Sewer System Project

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Sweet and approved unanimously.

4. Amendment to Chapter 150: Building Code

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Kiely and approved unanimously.

Items pulled from the Consent Calendar:

1. Order approving the purchase of unleaded gas, diesel fuel and #2 fuel oil and authorizing the Town to enter into agreements Fiscal Year 2023-2024

-- Moved by Ms. Wetmore, seconded by Ms. Kiely. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer asked if we missed the deadline for fuel savings. Mr. Grace said the Purchasing Agent said we're looking good.

A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

2. Order authorizing intradepartmental transfer 2022-2023 Fiscal Year Budget – Police Dept. \$200,000 (Overtime)

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Stevens. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer asked what the plan is to deal with our shortage, staffing, and/or reallocating of police. Chief Wydra said they have hired a considerable amount of people over the last 12 months but one of the problems is a lot of them aren't on the road or counted yet, it takes a lot of time. They continue to have people retire. He said right now, today they have 78 working police officers and are budgeted for 103. They have 98 in the budget, however, over 21 of them are unavailable for duty right now due to whether they're in the academy, field training, out injured, military leave, etc. Mr. Farmer said he wants to understand, outside of the monetary consideration, what is our deficit mitigation plan is because we're losing more officers than we're getting. He said he knows we have special units but all he hears about from people are patrols so he wants to better understand how we get to patrol because special units aren't what people want. Chief Wydra said they have empty specialized units right now. They have no real ancillary units that they used to have that help with service calls and help with calls that residents want like more traffic enforcement, traffic division. It's non-existent. Everyone, outside of he thinks 4 officers, are on patrol right now. He said they don't have a street crime or a street interdiction team anymore because of the shortages and they don't have a traffic division. They have like 4 officers that are doing other functions like the evidence room, the permit officer, the court liaison officer, and there's an officer assigned to the DEA task force. Mr. Farmer then asked for traffic data.

A vote was taken and the item passed with 2 abstentions (Farmer) (Osmanu)

3. Order authorizing interdepartmental transfer 2022-2023 Fiscal Year Budget – Finance Dept.- \$45,000 (Prof./Tech.)

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Kiely. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer said he said back when that they should have spent more time on this.

A vote was taken and the item passed with 1 abstention (Baez)

4. Order authorizing the Mayor to accept and expend funding up to \$350,000 in State of Connecticut Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP) funds for a Capital Improvement Plan

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Kiely and approved with 1 abstention (Zaehringer)

5. Resolution authorizing the donation of street name signs and the placement of the signs above a stop sign pole located at Laurel View Drive and West Shepard Avenue

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Sweet. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer thanked the administration for this and for honoring Mr. Gagliardi.

A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

At 10:14 P.M. Ms. Baez called the meeting into recess.

At 10:31 P.M. Ms. Baez called the meeting out of recess.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Baez moved a motion to add the following items to the agenda, seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved with 1 abstention (Zaehringer)

PUBLIC INPUT for new business: There was 1 speaker

1. Order authorizing the Town of Hamden to make application and to accept and expend funds from the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic & Community Development Community Investment Fund 2030 – Ice Rink and Tennis Courts

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Sweet. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer asked if this is approved will there be free skating. Mr. Grace said he's not sure. Ms. Wetmore asked what the money will be used for. Mr. Grace said there's a lot of needed repairs, both at the ice rink and the tennis courts. He said over the years there's been a lot of patch jobs that haven't worked and there seems to be a range of issues like some water issues underneath the whole facility of where the tennis courts are and his understanding is that whole area will need to be redone. He said there's also a lot of work that needs to be done at the ice rink.

Ms. Sweet thanked the administration for this saying she saw firsthand how bad the issues were.

A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

2. Order authorizing the Town of Hamden to participate in the State of Connecticut Elderly & Disabled Demand Responsive Municipal Grant Program - \$57,919

-- Moved by Ms. Baez, seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

There being no further business, Ms. Baez closed the meeting at 10:39 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta
Clerk of the Council