

## EAST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

### COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTER AUDITORIUM

May 16, 2023

**PRESENT** Vice Chair Donald Bell, Jr., Majority Leader Sebrina Wilson, Minority Leader John Morrison, Councilors Angela Parkinson, Awet Tsegai (via Teams- arrived in person at 8:06 pm), Travis Simpson, Thomas Rup and Harry Amadasun, Jr.

**ABSENT** Chair Richard F. Kehoe

**ALSO PRESENT** Mayor Michael P. Walsh  
Melissa McCaw, Finance Director  
Connor Martin, Chief of Staff (via Teams)  
Laurence Burnsed, Director of Health and Social Services  
Eileen Buckheit, Development Director  
Sarah Morgan, Library Director  
Vincent DiCarlo, MVPProperties

#### CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Bell called the meeting to order at 7:38 pm. The Vice Chair stated that this meeting was also available to the public through the "Teams" platform.

The Vice Chair announced the exit locations in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §29-381, after which the Council joined him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

**MOTION** By Sebrina Wilson  
seconded by Tom Rup

to remove item 8I (1) "Hartford Riders Bike Night" from the agenda.

Motion carried 8/0

#### RECOGNITIONS AND AWARDS

##### Connecticut Library Association Special Achievement Award: Sarah Morgan

Mayor Walsh took a moment to recognize Library Director Sarah Morgan and commend her for the Special Achievement Award she received from the Connecticut Library Association. The CLA has recognized Sarah's achievements in bridging the digital divide in Connecticut through her leadership in the statewide coalition and her own library's digital navigator program. Ms. Morgan is a member of the steering committee of Connecticut Libraries & Partners for Digital Equity.

The Vice Chair expressed the Council's appreciation for the Director's leadership and efforts to provide valuable resources to Town residents.

The Vice Chair took a moment to acknowledge the efforts of the Police and Fire Departments on a recent call for service which led to the rescue of a number of residents and quickly putting out a fire at 50 Hillside Avenue.

Joanne Bittner, 23 Rowland Drive spoke against the amusement application entitled “Imperio Portuguese Festival” submitted by the The Holy Ghost Portuguese Society. Ms. Bittner also presented letters of concern regarding the application on behalf of residents Rick and Liz Harvey, 68 Rowland Drive, Karen Ramos, 36 Rowland Drive, and Claudette and Larry Flanigan, 7 Rowland Drive.

Sandy Ferrante, 15 Rowland Drive, also spoke against the amusement application.

The Vice Chair stated that two additional letters were provided to the Council via email regarding the same issue. One was supportive of approving the permit and the second asked general questions regarding the application.

### OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL ON AGENDA ITEMS

#### Mayor Walsh

- Wished all a good evening
- The Garden Club of East Hartford will hold their annual Spring Plant Sale Saturday May 20 from 9 am to 1 pm at Sunset Ridge School.
- The Administration unveiled a new tag-line, “GETting THings Done By Doing It Differently!” with the goal of further uniting the community.
- Parks and Recreation will offer guided hikes at East Hartford Nature Park (340 Long Hill Street) in celebration of Connecticut Trails Day on June 4<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 11:30 am.
- Encouraged all residents to participate in Memorial Day festivities on Monday, May 29<sup>th</sup> at 10 am, including a parade from 9 Riverside Drive to the Fallen Star Memorial at Goodwin University.
- The Metropolitan District Commission will host Hazardous Waste Collection Day at the MDC facility located at 65 Pitkin Street on Saturday May 20 from 8 am to 1 pm. A list of acceptable items is available on the MDC’s website.
- The Town has partnered with EnviroShred to host a paper shredding event on Saturday May 20 from 8 am to Noon at 22 Prestige Park Circle.
- Reminded all residents that June is “Dog License Month.” All dogs in the state that are six months or older must be licensed each year with the Town Clerk.
- The Town Clerk’s Office is hosting a low-cost rabies clinic behind Firehouse #1 (726 Main Street) on Saturday June 3 from 10 am to Noon.
- The “Sounds of Summer” concert series will begin on Thursdays at Great River Park from June 15<sup>th</sup> through July 27<sup>th</sup>. Concerts are held between 6 pm and 8 pm.
- All Town Offices including the Transfer Station will be closed Monday May 29 in observance of Memorial Day. Trash and recycling will be delayed by one day for the remainder of the week.
- Parks and Recreation will be offering summer camp programs for the 2023 summer season, opening June 19<sup>th</sup>.
- The State of Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) has upgraded the town-owned traffic signal at Main Street/Maple Street/Broad Street. The Town has also changed the detour to accommodate travelers during the construction of Pewterpot Brook bridge and the Brewer Street road closure.

- The Town proclaimed May 14, 2023 as Childhood Apraxia Awareness Day, and encouraged all to work to increase awareness and understanding of the speech disorder.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 2, 2023 Regular Meeting

**MOTION** By Sebrina Wilson  
seconded by Travis Simpson

to **approve** the minutes of the May 2, 2023 Regular Meeting.

Motion carried 8/0

May 4, 2023 Special Meeting

**MOTION** By Sebrina Wilson  
seconded by John Morrison

to **approve** the minutes of the May 4, 2023 Special Meeting.

Motion carried 8/0

*To accommodate those present, the following action was taken.*

**MOTION** By Sebrina Wilson  
seconded by John Morrison

to take Item 8A “Agreement Between Health and Social Services and Charity Tracker re: Case Management Platform” out of order.

Motion Carried 8/0

Agreement Between Health and Social Services and Charity Tracker re: Case Management Platform

## Waiver of Bid

**MOTION** By Harry Amadasun  
seconded by Awet Tsegai

in accordance with Section 10-7(c) of the Town of East Hartford Code of Ordinances, the Town Council **waive** the bidding procedures required by Section 10-7(b) for the purpose of entering into an agreement with Simon Solutions, Inc., for town personnel to utilize Charity Tracker for case management service delivery, including client record management, referrals, and program evaluation, for the sum of \$9,000 for one year.

Motion carried 8/0

## Authorization to Contract with Charity Tracker

MOTION        By Harry Amadasun  
                         seconded by Travis Simpson

to **authorize** the Town of East Hartford to enter into a contract with Simon Solutions, Inc., effective July 1, 2023 to provide the Department of Health & Social Services a case management platform for Town client data collection and reporting purposes as recommended by Mayor Michael P. Walsh in a memo to Council Chair Rich Kehoe dated May 5, 2023.

Motion carried 8/0

## COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

### Update from Department of Social Services Re: Community Outreach for Renters' Rebate and other programs.

Mayor Walsh shared that under the guidance of Health and Social Services Director Laurence Burnsed, Social Services coordinated with the East Hartford Housing Authority to offer on-site renters' rebate application processing, as well as provide information to other services the Town offers. A number of residents located at Hartford East (886 Main Street) and St. Mary's (1451 Main Street) were able to complete rebate applications. Additional events are scheduled at 10 other locations throughout East Hartford.

In addition, an on-site event for residents at 1183 Main Street was scheduled in response to a number of distress calls from residents. Staff from the Police Department and Social Services along with a representative from Intercommunity participated to share resources to services and referrals to programs in an effort to better assist residents of need.

The Mayor stated that the Department's efforts are an example of the Administration's pledge to better communicate with residents and improve access to service.

### Youth Sports Facility Presentation by MVProperties

The Mayor stated that he believes the community has a need for a Youth Sports Facility and feels that development can occur at no cost to taxpayers. On August 16, 2022, the Council passed a Motion to approve a Memorandum of Understanding between National Development and the Town, which included a \$3 million impact payment that may be allocated towards the planning, design and construction or renovation of athletic facilities including, but not limited to a "bubble" athletic complex. Combining this payment with a proposed \$7 million in bond funding, the Town would be able to invest \$10 million in the development of a Youth Sports Facility. To acquire the additional funds, the Council would need to approve a bond question that would be placed on the November ballot which would then be voted on by the public to approve the funding.

The Mayor introduced Vincent DiCarlo of MVProperties, developers of a sports complex in Windsor, CT. Mr. DiCarlo shared a presentation that provided a plan for development that the Mayor feels will be entirely self-supportive as bonds will be paid for by revenue generated through programs and other sources related to the facility.

In the presentation, Mr. DiCarlo stated that a +/- 60,000 square foot indoor facility located at McAuliffe Park with multi-purpose courts, walking track and other amenities could be developed which leverages previously built baseball fields and the accompanying land. Given the anticipated demand and ability to use the indoor space throughout the full 12-month calendar, Mr. DiCarlo stated that the facility would provide the Town with a financially stable resource to families as well as a source of long-term community pride.

The Mayor provided the Council with annual revenue and expense projections including servicing the debt on a \$7m / 20-year bond that he feels shows further proof of the lack of burden on tax payers. Mr. DiCarlo stated that the projections for income are conservative relative to the potential usage of the facility.

To achieve next steps, the Mayor requested that the Council consider an appropriation of funds from the impact payment provided by National Development to begin planning of the facility over the summer that could produce architectural renderings of the proposed project and the Council's approval in August to place a question for funding on the November ballot.

Councillor Rup suggested that the Administration consider the Silver Lane Plaza area as a possible location for the facility given its accessibility and the amount of space.

Councillor Amadasun questioned the impact on financial profitability of the facility should the Town make efforts to prioritize accessibility for East Hartford residents. *Mr. DiCarlo stated that a nonprofit organization has been created related to the Windsor project. The goal of the nonprofit is reach out to corporations to support local youth through sponsorships. A similar organization could be considered in East Hartford. Discounted rates could also be considered but would affect overall income.*

Councillor Simpson recommended that in financial considerations of the project, the Town account for long-term maintenance on the project to assure the facility does not fall into disrepair over time.

Councillor Tsegai feels that the Town also needs to take into consideration the impact of traffic and extended hours to any local residential neighborhoods as a part of site planning.

Councillor Bell requested further evaluation and a needs assessment of the programs and financial balance to accommodate local residents to consider the project in a way that most effectively serves the community. The Vice Chair also stated that more conversation will be required as to where this project fits as a priority related to other necessary projects in Town.

#### Silver Lane Plaza Update by Development Department

Development Director Eileen Buckheit provided a presentation on the current status of the properties recently acquired by the Town via eminent domain and options for future development. There are three properties on the site: 794-810 Silver Lane, 818-830 Silver Lane and 832-850 Silver Lane.

The administration has recently enlisted the services of a management company for day-to-day tasks of managing the Plaza, including regular with the remaining tenants, general

maintenance and clean-up activities and collecting rent. After conducting inspections at the property including one by Colliers International, The Town is looking to proceed with the demolition of the rear building (818-830 Silver Lane) after the two tenants who remain have relocated, as the current condition of the structure is beyond repair.

The Director provided two options for the Council to consider regarding the other two buildings. The first option is to demolish 818-830 Silver Lane and retrofit the other two, which would lower demolition costs and not displace additional tenants. This project would require an estimated \$8.8 million investment by the Town plus the cost of demolition, and the tenants who remain in the building are currently paying rent that is below market for the area. The second option would be to demolish all three buildings which would provide a clean site that would provide for a wider net for RFP responses on development projects for the land. The challenge with full demolition would be in the relocation of current tenants of the buildings, potential delays in sale of the site to a new owner and increased demolition costs.

The Director feels that in the current market for development and given its location and access to Route 84, there is opportunity for change in the neighborhood. The Director envisions a plaza with smaller and more diverse commercial use that can complement Concourse Park.

Councillor Simpson is not in favor of renovating the existing buildings and feels that they should be stabilized, but left for a private developer to consider next steps. *Director Buckheit stated a decision on whether to demolish the other two buildings on the site would be helpful as on-site businesses would be entitled to compensation and time for relocation should the Council vote on complete demolition.*

Councillor Parkinson stated that while she feels the buildings should be taken down, the tenants should be provided adequate time to assure their affairs are in order if forced to relocate and as much financial assistance as possible.

Councillor Bell agreed with Councillor Parkinson on providing time and resources to current tenants and stated that after reading the report, demolishing all buildings would provide the corridor with a new opportunity to revitalize the area.

#### Church Corners Inn Update by Development Department

Director Buckheit shared that Town took ownership of the building at located at 860 Main Street on January 11, 2023 and immediately enlisted the services of a management company to manage the building and its tenants. Due to a cold weather event in February, a boiler failure which led to a fire system pipe failure and water damage, which caused the building to be closed for use. The site has remained closed since.

Relocation of most tenants to new permanent locations is complete, and a conditions assessment of the property has found the building to be in a major state of disrepair. As the building was initially built in 1913, ceiling heights are below standard, there is no elevator in the four-story building, and infrastructure is not code compliant. Rehabilitation would require full replacement of the electric and plumbing systems. In addition, the site's footprint allows for minimal parking.

Given the results of the assessment, the Director feels that the only viable outcome for the property that will be supported by the market is a complete demolition of the building, with the recommendation that knockdown occur before the winter to prevent further deterioration of conditions.

The Director feels that redevelopment of the site will prove to be challenging given the small size of the lot (0.4 acres) and that combining the parcel with adjacent property through either the acquisition of the Post Office building (850 Main Street) or connection to Raymond Library's parking would make the site more attractive. Demolishing the building and leaving the site as open space until adjacent sites can be acquired is recommended, but will require additional time and strategy.

Councillor Simpson is in support of demolition of Church Corners Inn given the safety concerns and to eliminate further blight issues.

Councillor Amadasun feels that given the amount of development projects currently in the works, a combined meeting of the Council, Administration and stakeholders to discuss economic development on a holistic level would be useful. *Director Buckheit stated that in the coming weeks a new plan of conservation and development will begin for 2024 and encouraged Councillors to participate.*

Councillor Tsegai asked if there has been an update on the status of the sale of the neighboring Post Office property. *The Mayor stated that a Letter of Intent by the Town was issued at the appraised price of the building but was not accepted. Regular emails have been sent regarding the sale of the property without response.*

#### Resignation/s From Boards and Commissions

The Vice Chair briefly mentioned the vacancy on the Commission on Aging as a result of the passing of Maryann Larson, therefore creating a vacancy on the board.

*To accommodate those present, the following action was taken.*

MOTION        By Travis Simpson  
                     seconded by Sebrina Wilson

to take Item 11 "Opportunity for Residents to Speak" out of order.

Motion Carried 8/0

Frantz Innocent, 71 Manning Lane, spoke in support of the sports bubble facility.

Bridgitte A Prince, 41 Bodwell Road, expressed concern over the Metropolitan District Commission's "Regulatory Compliance Fee." Ms. Prince also voiced concern over blight in the area of Bodwell Road.

Gary Roy, 61 Matthew Road, spoke with concern over the potential traffic of a sports bubble at MacAuliffe Park and is in favor of considering Silver Lane Plaza as a possible location for development. Mr. Roy also supports securing the Post Office property if possible to further enhance development along Main Street.





**AND, FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town Council does support and authorize the submission of the Forty-ninth Program Year Action Plan, and Grantee Certifications to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and authorizes its Mayor, Michael P. Walsh, to act as representative of the Town and to enter into contract and any amendments thereof with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Memorandum of Understanding with Goodwin University, Interval House and YWCA of New Britain re: Coordinated Community Response Team for U.S. Dept. of Justice Office on Violence Against Women Grant Application

to **adopt** the following resolution:

**WHEREAS;** Goodwin University has requested that the Town's Police Department serve as the local law enforcement agency partner on the Coordinated Community Response team to ensure timely, culturally relevant and respectful response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking committed on campus.

**NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED;** that Michael P. Walsh, Mayor of the Town of East Hartford, is authorized to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Goodwin University, Interval House and the YWCA of New Britain to allow the East Hartford Police Department to serve as the local law enforcement agency partner on the Coordinated Community Response team proposed in Goodwin's grant application

## Agreement with Titan Energy re: Solar Landfill RFP

to **adopt** the following resolution:

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utility costs and CCM's offerings include procurements for the purchase of utilities, a program which was competitively bid, resulting in the award of the CCM energy purchasing program to Titan Energy; and

**WHEREAS**, as part of the partnership between Titan and CCM, CCM extended by non-competitive agreement the Renewable Energy program to Titan Energy for member municipalities; and

**WHEREAS**, the goal of the CCM Renewable Energy Procurement program is to guide clients through every step of the renewable energy procurement process and ensure high-quality outcomes; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town intends to issue a Request for Proposals for solar energy opportunities at the Town's landfill in order to meet the Eversource deadline for applications under the Non-Residential Renewable Energy Solutions (NRES) and Shared Clean Energy Facility (SCEF) programs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town desires to contract with Titan Energy to obtain assistance and consultation on the issuance and award of a Request for Proposals for a solar energy project; and

**WHEREAS**, in the event the selected bidder's application is awarded and approved by Council, such bidder will be responsible for compensating Titan for their services at a rate of \$0.07 per kilowatt hour, of which \$0.02 per kilowatt hour must be paid by Titan to CCM as a "Success Fee" consistent with the agreement between Titan and CCM; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Town Ordinance 10-4a "no person shall charge a fee for a service provided to the public, which service utilizes Town owned or leased equipment, facilities, property, data, or goodwill, without approval of such service contract by the Mayor and Town Council;" and

**WHEREAS**, this council determines that such agreement is in the best interest of the Town in order to pursue solar energy opportunities; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the East Hartford Town Council does hereby approve the following items:

1. Pursuant to Ordinance 10-4a, Mayor, Michael P. Walsh may enter into a contract with Titan Energy and execute all necessary secondary documents to work exclusively with Titan to draft, issue, and evaluate RFPs related to the solar opportunities within the Town.
2. Such contract shall be prepared and approved in a form suitable to the Office of Corporation Council.
3. Any such solar arrangement, shall return to this Council for approval.
4. Titan and CCM shall receive a fee for Services rendered at the rate of \$0.07 per kilowatt for renewable energy procurement. Titan and CCM have determined that \$0.02 of the \$0.07 per kilowatt fee shall be paid to CCM. Such

On call of the vote, the motion carried 8/0

Motion carried 8/0

Motion carried 8/0

Motion carried 8/0

**MOTION** By John Morrison  
seconded by Travis Simpson

to **approve** the outdoor amusement permit application entitled “Imperio Portuguese Festival” as submitted by Scott Sansom, Chief of Police, to conduct the a religious celebration on Saturday, May 27, 2023 from 7:00 pm to 10:30 pm and Sunday, May 28, 2023 from 2:00pm to 10:30 pm on their premises located at 341 Forest Street, with food and liquor served, a DJ playing music and a small procession on the premises, subject to compliance with adopted codes and regulations of The State of Connecticut, the Town of East Hartford, and any other stipulations required by the Town of East Hartford or its agencies.

Motion carried 5/3 (Nay Parkinson, Tsegai, Amadasun)

#### Walk Your A1C Down

MOTION        By Sebrina Wilson  
                     seconded by Awet Tsegai

to **approve** the outdoor amusement permit application entitled “Walk Your A1C Down” as submitted by Scott Sansom, Chief of Police, to be held on Saturday, June 3, 2023 from approximately 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. beginning at Sunset Ridge School (450 Forbes Street) with a walk to to East Hartford High School (857 Forbes Street), retracing its steps back to Sunset Ridge School with information, games, music, refreshments and a possible collaboration with a medical organization or with the East Hartford Health Department, and a rain date or Sunday, June 4, 2023; and under the provisions of Town Ordinance 5-6(a), **waive the associated permit fee** due to the Town of East Hartford as this is a not-for-profit event; subject to compliance with adopted codes and regulations of The State of Connecticut, the Town of East Hartford, and any other stipulations required by the Town of East Hartford or its agencies.

Motion carried 8/0

#### East Hartford Back to School Rally

MOTION        By Sebrina Wilson  
                     seconded by Travis Simpson

to **approve** the outdoor amusement permit application entitled “East Hartford Back to School Rally” as submitted by Scott Sansom, Chief of Police, on Thursday, August 17, 2023 from 3:30 pm to 6:00 pm with set up time of 1:30 pm and clean up by 7:00 pm and a rain date of Friday, August 18, 2023 with the same hours; located at the Town Green and Gazebo, in partnership with the East Hartford Public Schools with community providers sharing information about their services, back pack giveaways and activities for school aged children and youth; subject to compliance with adopted codes and regulations of The State of Connecticut, the Town of East Hartford, and any other stipulations required by the Town of East Hartford or its agencies.

## Hartford Marathon Foundation “RIMaConn Relay”

Motion carried 8/0

## OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO SPEAK

## ADJOURNMENT

Motion carried 8/0

Attest \_\_\_\_\_  
Jason Marshall  
TOWN COUNCIL CLERK