

Robert J. Paik

EAST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL 2020 MAY 26 A 8:48

MICROSOFT "TEAMS"

TOWN CLERK
EAST HARTFORD

MAY 19, 2020

ATTENDING Chair Richard F. Kehoe, Vice Chair Donald Bell, Jr., Majority Leader Sebrina
VIA TEAMS Wilson, Minority Leader Esther B. Clarke, Councillors Connor Martin, Angela
Parkinson, Awet Tsegai, Patricia Harmon and John Morrison

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kehoe called the meeting to order at 7:44 p.m. He explained that the Council is, once again, meeting via Microsoft Teams in order to comply with Governor Lamont's ongoing executive order for social distancing. The Chair stated that residents may call in to access this meeting. Chair Kehoe then led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL ON AGENDA ITEMS

Since Mayor Leclerc was unable to attend this meeting, Chair Kehoe, addressed the Council on her behalf on the following matters: (1) this week is National Public Works week and National EMS week as well. Public Works employees are volunteering at the FoodShare distribution site at Rentschler Field for two weeks in May to emphasize their commitment to the town; (2) due to the Memorial Day holiday this Monday, May 25th, trash pick-up will be delayed one day; (3) the transfer station schedule will remain the same; (4) since restaurants are now open to allow outside dining, town staff have been working with the owners to make this happen; (5) the East Hartford Eats contest had 15 winners; (6) the town has partnered with the CT Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to help local businesses with the various resources available to them during the reopening period; (7) on Saturday May 23rd, the Veterans Commission will be placing flags on gravesites at Hillside Cemetery @ 8AM – volunteers are welcome; and (8) eight new police officers were sworn in on May 12th.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 5, 2020 Regular Meeting

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
seconded by Pat Harmon
to **approve** the minutes of the May 5, 2020 Regular Meeting.
Motion carried 9/0.

OLD BUSINESS

Outdoor Amusement Permit Application: Gengras Spring Open House

Rescission of Original Motion from the April 21st Town Council Meeting:

MOTION By Angie Parkinson
 seconded by Awet Tsegai
 to **rescind** the motion made at the April 21, 2020 Town Council meeting
 approving the outdoor amusement permit application for the Gengras
 Spring Open House.
 Motion carried 9/0.

Revised Outdoor Amusement Permit Application of Gengras Spring Open House

MOTION By Angie Parkinson
 seconded by Esther Clarke
 to **approve** the outdoor amusement permit application entitled "The
 Gengras Spring Open House", submitted by Steve Bray, Events
 Coordinator for Gengras Motor Cars, Inc., to conduct an open house at
 221 Governor Street with sales and vendor tents, music and free food, on
 Saturday, June 20th from 9AM to 5PM, with music from 11AM to 3PM;
 subject to compliance with adopted codes, regulations and executive
 orders 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 9/0.

NEW BUSINESS

Applications to CRCOG for Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LoTCIP) Funding:

Silver Lane Pedestrian Safety and Mobility Project

MOTION By Don Bell
 seconded by John Morrison
 to **adopt** the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROG) is inviting municipalities to submit proposals for transportation projects to be funded under the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTIP); and

WHEREAS the Silver Lane Pedestrian Safety and Mobility Project is eligible for funding under this program.

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the East Hartford Town Council strongly supports the Silver Lane Pedestrian Safety and Mobility Project and that Marcia A. Leclerc, Mayor of the Town of East Hartford, is authorized to make application to, and execute and approve on behalf of this corporation, any and all documents, contracts, and amendments as may be required by CROG as they pertain to the above project and the LOTIP Program.

On call of the vote, motion carried 9/0.

MOTION By Connor Martin
seconded by Don Bell .
to **adopt** the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is inviting municipalities to submit proposals for transportation projects to be funded under the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP); and

WHEREAS the Goodwin Street Reconstruction Project is eligible for funding under this program.

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the East Hartford Town Council strongly supports the Goodwin Street Reconstruction Project and that Marcia A. Leclerc, Mayor of the Town of East Hartford, is authorized to make application to, and execute and approve on behalf of this corporation, any and all documents, contracts, and amendments as may be required by CRCOG as they pertain to the above project and the LOTCIP Program.

On call of the vote, motion carried 9/0.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCILLORS TO DIRECT QUESTIONS TO THE ADMINISTRATION

Linda Trzetziak, Finance Director, updated the Council on the town's financials as of April 2020.

Revenues:

- ✓ Tax Collections revenue in April was down but it was noted that lien notices this year were issued in May as compared to April last year which may have resulted in larger April 2019 collections compared to this year.
- ✓ Building inspection fees for April 2020 were understandably down, as well as building rental fees – which are collected by the Parks & Recreation Department – due to the closing of town buildings.
- ✓ Investment earnings were down due to the town's spending bond monies on capital bonded projects so we had less cash invested than in 2019.
- ✓ The town received from the state of Connecticut the April ECS payment of approximately \$21,300,000, which is about \$500,000 more than the budgeted amount.
- ✓ Year to date through April 2020, the town has collected 94.4% of the revised budget tax revenues as compared to 96.3% in April 2019.
- ✓ The State of Connecticut informed the town that they will receive COVID-19 relief funds through OPM and the Federal CARES Act. The town has activated the FEMA Grant Portal for 75% reimbursement of COVID-19 expenses, but it may not be necessary to depend on this source of funding if the money that comes from OPM and the CARES Act will provide 100% reimbursement of such costs.
- ✓ The Board of Education will be receiving separate grant funding as well from the State and Federal governments, which could be substantial.
- ✓ PILOT funds are expected to be deposited in the General Fund by June 30th.

Expenses:

- ✓ Finance Director Trzetziak continues to track costs attributed directly to the pandemic such as overtime, PPE's and supplies. The estimated Covid-19 related town and Board of Education expenses through June 30th is \$750,000.
- ✓ Retirements of the Human Resources Director and the Director of Health & Social Services have impacted the operating budgets of those departments.
- ✓ At April 30, 2020, 93.3% of the town's budget is expended and encumbered as compared to last year at the same time, when 92.8% was expended and encumbered.

Councillor Connor Martin inquired on the financial strength of the OPEB and Pension Funds. *Finance Director Trzetziak reported that, while there was a downturn in those areas due to the poor performance of the stock market, they are rebounding slightly and believes that more progress will be made by the end of the calendar year.*

Chair Kehoe is concerned about the possibility of lost revenue from the Woodland School's Special Education program and the impact that will have on the Board of Education's budget. *Director Trzetziak stated that the Board is billing for the services rendered to outside districts and revenue continues to come in.*

John Lawlor, Public Works Director, updated the Councillors on what is happening in his Department:

- ✓ Thanked the Chair for recognizing that May 17th through May 23rd is National Public Works Week.
- ✓ In recognition of National Public Works Week, Mr. Lawlor reported that several employees within the DPW, and its various divisions, decided to demonstrate their commitment to the town by volunteering to be part of the FoodShare distribution program. Due to the efforts of those employees, the FoodShare drive was staffed every day for two weeks. Local TV news channels were on site at Rentschler Field to capture their efforts on film.
- ✓ The DPW is assisting with mass distribution of commodities during the Covid-19 pandemic. As national stockpile items come in to this region, East Hartford serves as a distribution center for locations east of the river. DPW is working with the town's Health Department to secure the items and then distribute them to surrounding communities.
- ✓ Four new flowering pear trees have been planted on Main Street, along with planters containing flowering annuals. Also on Main Street, the American flags have been installed in recognition of Memorial Day.
- ✓ The façade at the East Hartford Community Cultural Center is under renovation and is progressing nicely. The subcontractors are getting ready to pour the new concrete stairs on the front of the building.
- ✓ Mr. Lawlor invited all to attend the flag placing ceremony hosted by the town's Veterans Commission at Hillside Cemetery on Saturday, May 23rd at 8AM in honor of Memorial Day. Additionally, Mr. Lawlor, along with Chair Kehoe, will be speaking at Centennial Park on Sunday, May 24th 6PM. All are invited.
- ✓ The Veterans Memorial Clubhouse renovations have begun. The chimney has been removed and the conversion of the mechanical systems from oil to gas is underway.
- ✓ The south end Senior Center project is going well – the project is on time and on budget.

Eileen Buckheit, Development Director, updated the Council on what is happening in her Department:

- ✓ The Showcase Cinema RFQ was posted last week with a due date of mid-June.
- ✓ The real estate advisors, Goman & York, will be assisting with the RFQ for the Showcase property.
- ✓ The East Hartford Eats contest was a "Facebook Live" event that was a success, with 15 winners.
- ✓ Ms. Buckheit is working with the Inspections & Permits Department helping restaurant owners comply with the Governor's Executive Order 7MM for outside dining. All restaurant owners will be receiving letters by the end of this week informing them of the viewpoint cloud process and the rules that are attached to the Executive Order.
- ✓ Solidus, the owners of 1450 Main Street, are opened for business.
- ✓ Director Buckheit explained that the town is pursuing an EDA CARES Act grant for the new outbuilding at the Public Safety Complex. In addition, the town is applying for a regular EDA grant for the third phase of the storm water/sewer management for Goodwin University's building at the corner of Main and Ensign Streets.
- ✓ Director Buckheit is in charge of the Mayor's Recovery Committee, which was formed to "reopen" East Hartford from the Covid-19 quarantine. There are 3 subcommittees under this plan:
 - Summer Programing – will oversee the programs offered to its residents during this phase of the pandemic.
 - Business Committee – assists East Hartford business owners with re-opening while still adhering to the Governor's Executive Orders.
 - Employees and Facilities – deals with employee mental health and wellness, employee safety, adjustments necessary to public buildings, i.e., re-opening Town Hall, Library, etc.
- ✓ The Development Department is in charge of distributing the supplies provided by the State (masks, thermometers etc.) for businesses in East Hartford.

Councillor Clarke (1) inquired on where residents can be tested for Covid-19 in East Hartford. *Ms. Buckheit stated that there is a mobile test site that will be set up this weekend, May 22nd at New Covenant Church. Chair Kehoe offered that there are no permanent locations in East Hartford yet. (2) what is being done to bring a permanent test site to East Hartford. (2) Ms. Buckheit will ask the unified command team about a permanent test site.*

Councillor Tsegai asked where on the town's website is the recovery information posted. *Ms. Buckheit indicated that everything is posted on the Development Department's homepage under the red bar across the top of the page that says: Covid-19 Information.*

Councillor Martin inquired on the turnaround time for business owners who apply for any type of permit needed to reopen their business. *Ms. Buckheit said that Greg Grew, Inspections & Permits Director, can approve the permit within a day or two, if there are no problems.*

Vice Chair Bell (1) asked what the makeup is of the Recovery Committee, i.e., town employees, business owners, residents, etc. *Ms. Buckheit said that initially the Committee was comprised of town employees, but soon realized that a broader range of individuals was necessary. To that end, a community asset map is being developed so that the community can be incorporated into the Recovery team. (2) inquired if the Recovery Committee will be involved in the opening of East*

