

**REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF DARIEN, CONNECTICUT
FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a Special Meeting Held on October 19, 2010
“DRAFT”**

On October 19, 2010, a special meeting of the RTM Finance & Budget Committee was held in Room B-3 of the Darien Town Hall with thirteen of sixteen members present.

Present were:

Preston Bealle
Charles Brode
Jack Davis
Terry Duffy
Michael Harman
Ted Hawkins
Kirk Hoffman
Bruce Orr
John Price
Anita Rycenga
William Smith
Marc Thorne
Reilly Tierney

Absent were: Nora McIlree, Tim Schwarz, John Wolcott

The Chairman, Bruce Orr, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Guests included First Selectman David Campbell, Selectwoman Jayme Stevenson, and Selectman Gerald Nielsen, Jr.

* First Selectman Campbell began his facility relocation discussion by saying that back in 2005 a study was done to renovate the existing senior center at a cost of 2.5 million dollars. In 2008 a budget was put forth by AP Construction Co. for building a new facility on the existing site at a total cost of \$6,350,223. First Selectman Campbell pointed out that site work alone comprised 1.2 mil within that budget. He suggested that the shuffle in locations for the BOE and the Senior Center would entail interior construction costs only, therefore be the most fiscally prudent way to move forward. A study was conducted to determine the space requirements for the BOE and budget estimates were prepared by APC (A. Pappajohn Company) indicating that the cost to move the BOE to 35 Leroy would cost \$1,598,801 and the cost to move the senior ctr. to Town Hall would cost \$1,833,795. The park and rec dept. and possibly the arts ctr. would also be housed at Town Hall with Senior Ctr. The probate court may be relocated to 35 Leroy freeing up a room in Town Hall that could be utilized as a meeting room. First Selectman Campbell noted that the YMCA expressed interest in raising money for a community pool that they would operate. He felt that this was favorable over having the Park & Rec dept. operating the pool. Preliminary plan indicates that this would require a 9,000 sq.ft. addition to Town Hall. A committee will be formed to hire the architects and other professionals for the relocation project. The Edgerton location's proposed use would be for a 20 unit senior housing project to be built by a not-for-profit and by raising private funds there is more flexibility for eligibility than if State or Federal funds are granted. It would be run like Clock Hill Homes. Bob Calve, a reputable Darien builder is involved in researching this project. The total facilities relocation project is estimated to cost 4.5 million including furniture, fixtures and equipment. Bruce Orr asked if the cost to demolish the old senior center was included in the budget and First Selectman Campbell said it was. Jack Davis expressed concerns about leaving the building abandoned too long as it would present health and safety issues as many children play there and rodents would likely overrun the building. First Selectman Campbell said that the priority would be to get 35 Leroy set up for BOE, move and then the Town Hall.

* At 7:30 p.m. the committee moved to room 119 to join the District V caucus regarding the abandonment of Allen O'Neill Drive. Concerns were expressed regarding density, traffic, cost to Town for additional students, flooding, and safety of children.

* At 8:34 p.m. the committee moved back to room B-3 to continue the meeting. Joe Warren was present as a member of the Housing Authority to answer any questions. Marc Thorne moved to accept the resolution on the abandonment of AON Drive and John Price seconded. Bruce Orr called for discussion. Reilly Tierney asked if Town could sell the road to HA thus realizing a monetary benefit. The sense of committee members was that the land would not have the same value as land on which homes could be built. The DPW would no longer be responsible for the maintenance of the road including snow plowing, so in that regard the Town would save money. When the ability of the HA to maintain the road was raised it was noted that the special permit granted, is contingent upon maintenance being done and certain guidelines being followed. Anita Rycenga asked if the drainage requirements for the new configuration of the road was included in the HA budget and Joe Warren said it was. Joe Warren added that the HA would be applying to the Town for a tax abatement and it would gradually be reduced over fifteen years.

* ***Bruce Orr called to vote and the vote was unanimously in favor of the resolution to abandon Allen O'Neill Drive.***

* Discussion turned to the last agenda item having to do with the proposed changes to the Town Ordinance as it relates to employees retirement dates and pension vesting requirements. The RTM voted to change the pension vesting requirements for members of the Town's pension plan from ten years to five years on 7/1/03. The plan however, defines the normal retirement date as the later of turning 65 or completing ten years of service. Modification to acknowledge the change is being requested. According to Mr. Crary's 2004 memo the Town utilizes age 65 with five years vesting when calculating the Town's required annual contribution. John Price interprets this as costing the Town more money simply based on the fact that more money will be paid from the fund and he feels that in this economic climate it is not the prudent thing to do. Bruce Orr encouraged committee members to research this matter as it will come before us again in early 2011. He also suggested he would invite Karl Kilduff and others to elaborate on the details for us so we can conduct an educated and informed review.

Marc Thorne moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Dated: October 20, 2010
Respectfully submitted,
Anita M. Rycenga, Clerk
RTM Finance & Budget Committee