

**Town Improvements Committee  
Windsor Town Hall  
December 15, 2016  
Special Meeting**

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**1) CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Alan Simon called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Also present were Councilors Jill Jenkins and Kenneth Wilkos.

**2) PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Marcus Mason Maronn of Bristol, Connecticut, read aloud a statement about John Mason and the John Mason statue on the Palisado Green.

Ms. Christine Ermenc, Executive Director of the Windsor Historical Society, spoke about John Mason. She advocated against the John Mason statute being removed or neglected.

Mr. Brian Jones, Connecticut State Archeologist, read aloud a letter from Connecticut State Historian Walt Woodward on the subject of John Mason and the John Mason statue. Mr. Jones expressed his concern about the Town Council's recent decision to remove the John Mason statue from an assessment project.

Ms. Jenn Fields of 19 Parkwood Drive spoke about John Mason and the John Mason statue and the need to reconsider John Mason and the John Mason statue from today's perspective.

Mr. Kevin McBride of UConn and Director of research at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum spoke about John Mason and the war that Connecticut had with the Pequots. He spoke against altering and changing symbols. He said the Pequot Nation did not request that the John Mason statue be removed from its original location in 1996. He said the people that lived in Mystic resented the fact that the statue was moved from their part of Connecticut to Windsor. Mr. McBride went on to say that the Pequot Museum wanted the John Mason statue until Governor Rowland stepped in and said the statue was to go to Windsor. He encouraged members of the Town Council to have a discussion about the statute, and not to remove the statue.

**3) DISCUSSION REGARDING REQUEST TO CHANGE NAME OF NORTHWEST PARK**

Ms. Terry Langevin, President of the Friends of Northwest Park, spoke about the Friends' request to change the name of Northwest Park Nature Center (Northwest Park) to the Northwest Park Preserve and Nature Center.

Councilor Jenkins asked why the current name is not preferred. Ms. Langevin referenced the need to have a name that aligns with people's internet searches.

Councilor Wilkos said a Google search using the term Northwest Preserve does produce results that direct someone to the park. He questioned if the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) or the Northwest Park stewardship plan should address this issue. Town Manager Souza said adjusting the Town's land-management plan lies with Town staff.

Councilor Wilkos asked what changing the name of the Park would accomplish. Ms. Langevin said the name change would allow people to maintain the park's character and remind people of its special status. Ms. Langevin said there are a lot of people that want to do things in Northwest Park that are not appropriate for the site.

Councilor Simon stated that everyone refers to the park as "Northwest Park" and that would not change if the name was officially changed to Northwest Park Nature Preserve. Ms. Langevin said that the allowed activities at the park do not include active recreation. Councilor Jenkins asked if the Friends would bear the financial cost of changing the name of Northwest Park. Ms. Langevin said she thinks the Friends could handle the cost of the name change, but she would have to run that by the Friends' Trustees.

Councilor Jenkins said the Friends have provided huge support for Northwest Park. Councilor Jenkins asked if another group could collaborate with the Friends group. Ms. Langevin said the Friends is a 501c3 group and that anyone can join.

Councilor Simon said he equates the relationship of the Friends to the Town as a Parent-Teacher Association to a School District. Councilor Simon said he is concerned that granting the name change request would limit the use of the facility in ways that cannot be foreseen.

Councilor Wilkos echoed Councilor Simon's sentiments. Councilor Wilkos asked if the land was protected. Town Manager Souza provided details about the protected nature of the Park. He suggested that the land management plan be updated by staff and outside consultants that are paid and unpaid. Town Manager Souza said the beginning steps of updating the land management plan is putting together a general scope of work and then having conversations with the Friends and universities about their concepts and ideas.

Councilor Simon asked if initial steps to update the plan can be taken in the next few months. Town Manager Souza answered yes.

Councilor Simon said no other Committee member wants to alter the uses of Northwest Park and that updating the land management plan will allow for future uses of the Park to be clarified.

Councilor Jenkins expressed appreciation for the work that the Friends Group does.

#### **4) DISCUSSION REGARDING THE JOHN MASON STATUE ON PALISADO GREEN**

Councilor Simon provided a recap of the Town Council's recent actions concerning the John Mason Statute.

Councilor Jenkins thanked members of the public for coming out tonight and speaking about the John Mason statue. She said that Windsor has become a place that is inclusive and welcoming.

Councilor Jenkins said that as a Native American, the John Mason statue is a symbol of the atrocities that have been placed on her people. She said that the John Mason statue is a symbol of the fact that her people were desecrated. Councilor Jenkins said that John Mason's history is not going away. She said that Native American Indians taught the English colonists how to survive, and that the conflict between the two groups occurred when it became clear that the English colonists were here to stay. Councilor Jenkins said she would like the statue off the Windsor town property because it is too controversial. Councilor Jenkins explained that she thinks an event could occur today that is very similar in nature to the historic massacre of the Pequots at the hands of John Mason.

Councilor Wilkos said the John Mason statue topic has brought about incredible learning. He thanked people for coming to tonight's meeting. Councilor Wilkos said that he understands Councilor Jenkins' thoughts on the matter. He said the concern about moving the statue is moot at this point since the statue is owned by the state. Councilor Wilkos said the statue should be looked at not as giving honor to John Mason for killing Pequots, but rather as a way to keep American history alive and as a means to have people learn from the history.

Councilor Jenkins said she was surprised that not one person suggested building a monument to commemorate the Native Americans that were here. She said the statue commemorates an atrocity that was done to a group that is currently not in power. Councilor Jenkins said that the statue glorifies a genocide that was committed by John Mason.

Councilor Simon said there is no proposal to remove the statue from the Green. Councilor Simon said he takes exception to claims made tonight by members of the public that the Windsor Town Council wants to erase history. He said that statues do not teach people about history, they give honor to people. Councilor Simon noted that no one from Windsor put up a statue of John Mason. He questioned why the John Mason statue went up in 1889.

Councilor Simon said that current values are different than values of hundreds of years ago.

## **5) UPDATE ON FY17 CAPITAL PROJECTS INCLUDING PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX PROJECT AND MULTI-YEAR DEBT SERVICE PROJECTIONS**

Town Manager Souza provided an overview of FY17 Capital Projects that require future funding authorization from the Town Council.

Councilor Simon said that with respect to the Self Complained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) purchase, some alternate cost information should be provided along with a request to purchase from a sole source vendor.

Councilor Govoni expressed his frustration with bidders knowing the amount of money the community has appropriated for projects in advance of the projects being bid. Town

Manager Souza said that on occasion, the Public Building Commission has rejected proposals they received based on qualifications or bid prices.

Councilor Jenkins asked if there is precedent for extending the Town Hall renovation project without going out to bid. Town Manager Souza answered no. He mentioned that the per square foot price offered by the current vendor for the next phase of the project is less than the per foot price offered for the previous two phases of the projects.

Councilor Jenkins asked for information about the Self Complained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Fire Chief Lewis described the SCBA and what it is used for. Town Manager Souza outlined a multi-phased approach to meet the needs of the Police Department, Fire Department and Public Works Department (and possibly the Windsor Volunteer Ambulance Association) via the acquisition property at Addison Road. Town Manager Souza distributed draft floor plans.

Councilor Jenkins asked about whether the draft floor plan would work well for Team Paragon. Town Manager Souza explained that the draft floor plan is malleable. Councilor Jenkins asked about the ability of police cars to adequately enter and exit the site. Police Chief Don Melanson explained how police cars could enter and exit.

Councilor Simon asked how staff would respond when extra officers would need to leave the site to assist with an emergency off-site. Chief Melanson explained how officers would respond.

Councilor Simon suggested that the topic of a new Public Safety Complex be addressed as a stand-alone item at a future committee meeting.

Councilor Wilkos asked how soon Public Works could utilize the building. Town Manager Souza explained the four proposed phases of the project and the cost of each phase.

At Town Manager Souza's request, Finance Director, James Bourke, presented a summary of the multi-year debt service scenarios.

Councilor Simon asked for clarification regarding cost differences between Scenario B and Scenario C. Mr. Bourke provided clarification. Mr. Bourke also provided information about the interest rates projected in the various scenarios presented tonight.

Town Manager Souza went on to discuss the notice to the landlord that would be necessary to get out of the current lease at Addison Road.

Councilor Jenkins expressed concern about financial "hiccups" that could occur and negatively impact the debt scenarios presented. Town Manager Souza said the first decision point is the acquisition of the Westinghouse property on Addison road.

**6) STAFF REPORTS – None**

**7) APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a) July 11, 2016

Councilor Jenkins MOVED and Councilor Wilkos seconded to approve the unapproved minutes of the July 11, 2016 meeting as presented.

Motion passed 3-0-0

**8) ADJOURNMENT**

Councilor Wilkos MOVED and Councilor Jenkins seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Motion passed 3-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Luiz  
Assistant Town Manager