

**TOWN OF WINDSOR
TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING
OCTOBER 17, 2022
PUBLIC HEARING**

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:20 p.m. by Mayor Trinks.

Present: Mayor Donald Trinks, Deputy Mayor Lisa Rampulla Bress, Councilor Black-Burke, Councilor James Dobler, Councilor Ronald Eleveld, Councilor Kristin Gluck Hoffman, Councilor Kenneth Smith, Councilor Jody Terranova, and Councilor Len Walker (arrived at 7:25 p.m.)

Mayor Trinks read aloud the notice of the public hearing to hear public comment on:

“AUTHORIZING THE CREATION OF THE WINDSOR CENTER TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT AND ADOPTING THE WINDSOR CENTER TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT MASTER PLAN.”

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

Coralee Jones, 1171 Matianuck Avenue, stated although she loves the town green and is in favor of ideas that would benefit the town and favor the green, she is not confident that the TIF plan is how to do this. The Tax Increment Financing District Master (TIF) plan carves out money to benefit a few. Based on today’s assessments, the town’s budget would get about \$650,000 less revenue per year for 20 years. She is wondering how the Town Council will address that short fall. She and Linda Alexander were part of First Town Downtown (FTDT) when it was first created. A road diet was discussed then. It was decided at that time that the best way to handle this was to do a trial basis and see how it worked. Individuals living in the Wilson area have complained about the traffic issues they have getting onto Route 159 since the narrowing of the road. The next 20 years is a long time. She knows we need to build a fund, but with the uncertainty of what things will look like even in the next few years, 20 years is way long time to speculate what can happen. She is in favor of improving the town center, however, she is not convinced this plan is a fair way to accomplish that objective.

Linda Alexander, 155 Fieldstone Drive, echoed what Coralee Jones said. She also was a part of when FTDT was first established. She is opposed to the TIF plan. This plan will divert tax revenues from the usual beneficiaries, the taxpayers of Windsor, and the services they depend upon. It will instead give it to a select group of people, namely developers and contractors to pay for things the taxpayers don’t support, want or need. Among the items for consideration is \$4.5 million to narrow Broad Street, which can be

done on a trial basis which will cost less money and will determine if it would help or hurt businesses. She asked how a person would shop for groceries, etc. in the town center without a car. Overall, the plan will take money away from taxpayers, residents and existing town businesses who are struggling to recover from COVID mandates. It may sound great on paper but it doesn't take into account the needs of the majority of Town of Windsor taxpayers. It's selective and discriminatory. It does not support businesses in Wilson, Deerfield, Hayden Station, Poquonock or Rainbow Road where you'll find many long-time business owners operating in older buildings that can use some rehab.

Richard Esposito, 4 Batchelder Road, stated he is the President of the Board of Directors of FTDT, was a past member of the Windsor Chamber of Commerce for many years and was also on their Board of Directors. He has lived in Windsor for over 12 years and appreciates and enjoys the Town of Windsor as a wonderful and diverse community to reside, work and play in. Windsor is a very welcoming, vibrant and well run town due to the wonderful work and high standards of its town residents, town officials and town staff. This excellence is exemplified by the town's AAA S&P credit rating, its reputation as a business-friendly environment and significant tax base, all of which are the envy to surrounding towns and beyond. This evening he speaks for himself and FTDT stating that they both support the TIF district plan. He believes that innovative programs like the proposed TIF district plan are essential elements for a comprehensive town strategy to maintain the vitality and to build upon the existing potential that exists in the town's center.

Michele Vannelli, 1152 Poquonock Avenue, stated she will not pretend to understand all the intricacies of the TIF plan. It seems complex and confusing as to how and where generated funds would be channeled within the confines of this new tax district. Frankly, she views this plan as fractionalizing Windsor's taxpayers. If you want to generate and track tax money for exclusive use in a targeted zone, she suggested that generating a plan that would facilitate the joint Department of Transportation construction of the long overdue Day Hill North flyover would be a good start. The creation of a tax district inclusive of Day Hill Road and Kennedy Road would benefit everyone if we are to create a targeted funding mechanism for the continual maintenance and possible redesign of town-owned roads such as Day Hill Road and Kennedy Road. Like it or not, we will soon experience an expansive explosion of tractor trailer traffic as we've never seen it before. Their use of the roads will make them deteriorate more quickly. This is a much more pressing issue than the targeted downtown zone. Also, there will be 17 more tractor trailers using Day Hill Road once the Town Planning & Zoning approves the proposal at the 415/425 Day Hill Road site. She asks that the Town Council forgo this TIF plan. We need to avoid telling tax payers that their taxes have to increase to offset the amount of money allotted for road way destruction caused by Amazon and other tractor trailer traffic.

William Pelkey, 133 Portman Street stated he is not in favor of the TIF plan due to the way it is currently written. He feels the town should rewrite it. When you start looking at this type of district, you'll be thinking there will be more development. There is always a potential issue when you start creating one district only. There may be more

development, but it may be moved from somewhere else that it would have landed in town. I think if someone were looking to have a restaurant or build some housing in the town, it may move to the center opposed to somewhere else. Where do we start to focus ourselves? He is concerned with the current 75/25 split. We know that property values tend to appreciate over time. From a mathematical standpoint, when you start out, it takes a while to gain some funds but it takes a while to build or develop as well. So in the first few years, we are stealing from town funds for this. He'd like to see the language changed so that in the first few years we aren't taking what could have been normal appreciating growth that would have just gone to the town as a whole and having to split it off. One other concern is to do with some of the phrasing from town staff and other boards and commissions on how we can 'lock in' our current priorities and goals. He thinks that is the problem as it is our 'current' priorities and goals. Over 20 years, things can change. We won't have the flexibility. Lastly, a lot of what the district does, as per the proposed TIF plan, are things that other tools like the Property Tax Abatement already do for the town. He does not see the full benefit from that portion of the TIF plan. He encouraged the Council to listen to what the citizens are saying tonight.

Donald Jepsen, 495 Palisado Avenue, stated that he is generally in favor of the TIF. Going back to the grand list of last year sounds wonderful, but it was really four years ago. That was our last revaluation. In a few months, we will have another revaluation. As we all know, residential values have sky rocketed post COVID as have vacancy rates. He wishes the baseline would be on the next revaluation. He feels that would be more fair. He asked how the Council would spend the money during the annual budget process. Would this budget go before the voters as a part of the process during the referendum? If it failed, what would be the mechanisms? Either way, if the referendum did fail, the mill rate will change and will affect the way the Council uses the money for the TIF plan. There was a lot of talk about a TIF Advisory Commission. He does not see anything about this Commission anywhere. How do you get on it, who is on it, etc? There was a redevelopment agency years ago that perhaps we can reactivate for that purpose. Those are his observations.

Alfred Loomer, 5 Sarah Anne Lane, stated he is a member of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) that worked on that policy through the summer. The EDC is a bipartisan committee which painstakingly went through and reviewed the TIF plan with the thought of what they can do to help the town center. The purpose of the TIF policy is to segregate property taxes of Windsor town center residents and reinvest it. It is merely an accounting mechanism. It does not specifically designate money. It does not take policy away from Town Council to segregate that money but it incents the EDC for providing incentives to possible developers and other developments in town. We spent a lot of time on this. He thanked the Council for their time and hoped that they consider this policy in their deliberations.

Paul Panos, 48 Brookview Road, stated that if there is any government money that will be used to encourage a developer to do anything, they should be rejected. This is his overall view of the TIF plan.

3) ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trinks declared the Public Hearing closed at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary