

MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
SIXTH TAXING DISTRICT, City of Norwalk
December 10, 2008
Rowayton Community Center
33 Highland Avenue
8:00 p.m.

ATTENDEES: Commissioners Ed Kweskin and Mike Barbis, Treasurer Andy Conroy, District Administrator Jack Robson, Property Manager and Fire Marshal Ed Carlson and District Clerk Andrea Woodworth.

Commissioner Ed Kweskin called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m. He welcomed those in attendance and wished them all Happy Holidays. He said he was especially happy to see Officer Joe Jensen in attendance after his accident in the line of duty on Sunday.

Mike Barbis made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 12 Commissioners' meeting with the following corrections. Ed Kweskin seconded the motion. On page 3 of the November 12 minutes, line 5 should read "truck, and there has been a 14% **price** increase for the fire truck that they wanted. So they have". Line 7 should read "by 3%. The Districts has \$200,000 set aside to help to purchase the truck. They're". Paragraph 2, line 3 should read "would require less manpower at **incidents**. During the week when there are fire calls,". The previous motion also included acceptance of the minutes of the Special Meeting of November 24, 2008, with corrections to be made later by Mr. Barbis. The minutes of both meetings were accepted as corrected.

Communications and Report of the District Clerk – December 10, 2008

1. Per our discussion at the November 12 meeting, I sent letters to SOS, the Rug Hookers, Rowayton Paddle Tennis Association, Rowayton Gardeners and the Goodwives Quilters outlining our parking concerns. I asked all of them to leave the upper parking places for patrons of the Library when it is open. I also suggested some alternative parking/carpooling, etc. strategies that might help alleviate our sometimes crowded conditions. I asked the Rowayton Paddle Tennis Association to let me know when special clinics, tournaments, socials, etc. are scheduled so that we might plan parking and other events accordingly.

2. There was a private 70th birthday celebration here on Saturday evening,

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December 6. The hostess asked me to extend her thanks to the Commission and, especially to Ed Carlson, for his help in making this such a successful event.

3. Pursuant to the previous item, the Gardeners' had their Christmas Market that same day from 10 – 1. Even though we were all in agreement that it would be all right to schedule another event that day, we may have learned a lesson that two events in one day is not necessarily such a great idea.
4. I have cleared one person from the RR parking permit wait list. We now have 44 people on the wait list. I have exchanged numerous permits for changes of cars and will be providing updated lists to the guards shortly.
5. There has continued to be an infrequent problem with local groups who have scheduled meetings at the Community Center and then have either cancelled or postponed them without notifying me. This creates a problem of the Community Center being left open with lights on all night on those occasions. When I call to ask what happened, they are always very contrite and have forgotten to inform me. I could send letters to the groups reminding them to let either Ed or me know in advance if they won't be using the room. A small fine (\$25) for no notification may be in order – at least, if it's a second infraction after a warning. I don't think we can look at past history in assessing any fine. But, if they are made aware of a policy, that might trigger better notification. (The Commissioners and those present discussed this issue. A decision about how to best handle the problem will be made soon).
6. This weekend is again busy at the Community Center. The Rowayton Parents' Exchange is having a children's craft time on Friday afternoon. The Library has their Saturday morning craft time from 10 – 12. Then, the RPE is holding a large fundraiser on Saturday evening.
7. I received a call from a resident who is a certified counselor for people who have attention deficit disorder, as well as for their families and friends. She would like to explore the possibility of having bimonthly support group classes at the Community Center. She would not be charging a fee, but would like to explore the possibility that there would be an interest in such sessions. Since she would not be charging a fee, would she be able to fall into the category of "meetings of local organizations whose membership and service is primarily for the District"? (Taken from the fee schedule for the use of the Community Center). If that were the case, there would be no fee charged. This is also a group that might be able to use the Underground. Before she makes any plans or tries to determine if there would be any interest in such a group, she wanted to know if she could use the space. (She previously

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taught an exercise class here several years ago and paid the District 2/3 of what she charged for the class). This group would not be charged any fee by her. (The Commissioners were in support of the idea and support her not being charged a fee).

8. I received a letter from the library thanking the District for installing the temporary speed bump at the driveway entrance. (Letter read).
9. The Rowayton Library is in the middle of their annual fund appeal. They would like to ask the permission of the Commissioners to hang their fund raising “thermometer” on the fence at the entrance to the Community center. (Cynthia Johnson, the Director of the Library, was present and commented that the fund drive would finish on January 19. The Commissioners agreed to allow the sign to be put on the fence at the entrance to the Community Center. There was some discussion about “sign pollution” generally. The sign indicating the new bump was especially mentioned. It was decided to remove the second sign regarding speed and to add the sign about “No Parking on the Grass” to the “Speed Bump” sign).
10. Tammy Langalis had given me a copy of a communication from the water department which affected the Ambler property. There was some confusion as to what the bill referred. Mr. Conroy noted that we had stopped paying the bills because we had terminated the service. The water used to irrigate the Ambler lot does not come from that meter. Andy Conroy will look into this issue and get back to the Commission.
11. The Commission received a request for the use of Pinkney Park for the 2009 season of Shakespeare on the Sound. The only condition missing from the request this year relevant to last year’s request was the intention of having low temporary fencing along the road side of the park for the purpose of crowd control. The Clerk is asking the Commissioners if they still want that provision in the agreement. (The Commission does want to have an agreement with SOS for provisions for crowd control, probably including the fencing as in previous years).

TREASURER’S REPORT – Andy Conroy **(See attached report)**

Mr. Conroy said that the highlights of the report are that we don’t have a lot of operating money on hand. Our next receipt of tax money from the city will be in February and March, at which time we will be financially healthy again. That being said, we have more than enough in our capital funds to fulfill our obligations. Mr. Conroy has

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moved some of the funds between banks, so that we are not overly exposed in any one bank.

The Railroad funds are in great shape. The funds invested in Darien have been moved to Wachovia and Webster.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mike Barbis - Mr. Barbis noted that he had signed off on the HVAC work at Pinkney House. The contractor is CELCO and Mr. Conroy is to sign the check to the contractor.

Mr. Barbis wished to address the vacation policies for our full time staff. He noted that, unlike other surrounding municipalities, we do not give our staff Columbus Day, Veterans' Day and Good Friday off. Mr. Conroy noted that we might add a personal day or two and let the employee decide when to take it off. It was noted that Good Friday is a Connecticut State holiday. Mr. Barbis is in favor of adding the above three holidays and would recommend going from one to two floating personal days.

Regarding vacation policy, ours now allows ten days of vacation after one full year of work. We have no provisions for additional days earned after lengthier years of service. **A motion was made by Ed Kweskin and seconded by Mike Barbis that the Commission add the three additional holidays and one personal day. The motion also included the provision that after 5 years of continuous service, vacation days would go from ten to fifteen. After 15 years of continuous service, vacation days would go to twenty. The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Barbis asked Jack Robson for current railroad parking lot usage reports to see if there would be a possibility of selling more permits in order to reduce the wait list.

Mike also said that the City of Norwalk has to do a revaluation. The new assessments will be going out in the mail very soon. The tax assessor has come out with a mil rate. As of October 1, 2008, an organization, the "Coalition for a Fair Tax Assessment", has been formed. They have hired an attorney and an independent assessor. This group is pretty serious and the numbers are still being modified. They feel that the assessments need to be fair given the current economic situation which affects the real estate market. Save for a few minor land transactions, there have been no real estate transactions in Rowayton since August 11, 2008. Mr. Conroy noted that if someone has a serious issue with a revaluation, they should take it to Superior Court where they are much more likely to have a favorable outcome on relief than going through the municipal process.

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DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR – JACK ROBSON

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The new Seawall vs. Canadian Geese-
I have been in touch with A. C. Morgan, who lives at 73 Five Mile River Road, opposite the Pinkney Park property seawall.

Mr. Morgan, with the help of Round Meadow Landscapers, devised a method to keep the Canadian geese from his property, as well as his neighbors'. They both applied the same method to deter the geese from landing on their land and depositing their waste all over the lawns. All other previous methods failed, except this one. Mr. Morgan said he has been able to eliminate the invasion of the Canadian geese by **95%**.

The method is simple. One inch PVC pipe 24" long with a single hole drilled in the top and the bottom, was inserted into the ground right behind their seawall. A very thin vinyl coated wire was strung through the two holes (top and bottom) the length of their property. The pipes were placed approximately 10 ft. apart. Mr. Morgan added small flags to each pipe, for added effect.

Since installing this barrier the geese have not returned. He is very happy with the results.

The estimated cost to install a similar barrier on our seawall would be **\$1,350.00**. Right now the geese have made their mark on our wall and newly seeded lawn. I have walked the park in this area and it's not pleasant when you have to clean your shoes after leaving, let alone, not be able to sit on the grass for at least 20 ft back of the seawall, because of the unpleasant mess. (Mr. Robson recommended pursuing this remediation. We still have some landscaping to be done. The pipe would be placed right next to the wall with rebar with PVC over it. Before we reconstructed the wall, there were a lot of plantings next to the wall, which probably explains why the geese weren't coming around before the reconstruction. Now those plantings are gone and the geese have moved in. The Commissioners are in favor of doing it early in the spring. **APPROVED**

Pinkney Park Irrigation

I feel that the newly landscaped area of the park next to our new seawall needs to have a sprinkler system installed. In doing so, I also feel that the area adjoining this section, being the part that is used for the Shakespeare on the Sound, also needs to have an irrigation system. The pressure needed would be handled by installing a booster pump.

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I do not see the need to install a system on the west side of the property where the apple trees and barn are. A new irrigation system for the south and west side of Pinkney Park would cost approximately: (still working on the estimate). The iron pipe that is there now is weeping. It's a very old pipe. If we would connect an irrigation system to the pipe, we would need a booster. We might be able to have our own water meter put in from the street for this purpose. If we should have to replace the pipe for Pinkney House we can connect to the new pipe. Mr. Kweskin suggested that we will reconsider it for the next Fiscal Year. Ed Carlson estimated that we would need 70 sprinkler heads. If we attach to the old pipe, we could only have five sprinkler heads per zone. If there were to be a new pipe, 10 heads per zone could be accommodated).

New Lawn maintenance:

In the spring it will be necessary to top dress the new lawn and re-seed with a product that will establish a more permanent lawn. The seed used for the first application was a fast starter, but not meant to be the final result. The starter seed has established a firm foundation; we need to take it to the next step, in the spring, to assure that our previous efforts were not wasted. The approximate cost for this service would be determined later.

I recommend that the barriers protecting the newly seeded areas, which are in place at the west end of the seawall and gazebo, be left in place until spring. This seeded section has not established itself due to the climate change. It will need more work in the spring. Therefore, I don't wish to have the land disturbed by traffic and find it necessary to repair the lawn next spring.

Pinkney Park Cedar Tree:

The cedar tree, by the water's edge next to the cherry tree, has been removed by American Tree. Mary Ann Jones, our neighbor on Rowayton Avenue, has covered the **\$350.00** cost of removing this tree.

Pinkney House Foundation:

The exterior foundation has been repointed. **Cost: \$550.00**
A new stone retaining wall, at the end of the wash house, has been built to replace the decaying wooden form that was there. **Cost: \$500.00**

Rowayton RR Parking Lot:

The two guard shacks have had new carpeting installed on their floors.
The two guard shacks have had the old chairs in each shack replaced.
One set of chairs came from the **Underground** collection, the other two matching chairs

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came from the Stamford Office Furniture Warehouse. The Underground chairs were **free**. The Warehouse chairs were **\$98.00 each vs. \$159.00 each**, as proposed at our last meeting.

A new heater was installed in the NY side guard shack. The old one failed. We found there was a short in the wiring. The heater in the New Haven side shack works, but the thermostat on it does not. I am recommending we replace that one as well.

The ornate railing on the New Haven side of the Rowayton RR Parking Lot will be saved by the contractor. This part of the construction will not take place for at least 1 ½ years. I will remind the contractor when we get close to that time table.

Snow Plowing:

Public Parking Lot:

Jordan Grant has been the contractor that has serviced both the Public Parking lot and 140 Rowayton Avenue Parking lot. I asked Jordan to give me an estimate for a one-year contract and an estimate for a **fixed** two year contract.

One year contract: **\$765 per visit**

Two year fixed contract. **\$725 per visit.**

In each case he would use snow melt.

Mike Hazzard will be the contractor for the Rowayton Railroad Station. I have asked Mike to give me an estimate for a one year contract as well as a two year **fixed** contract.

One year contract: (no figures provided)

Two year fixed contract: **\$700 per visit – he does not use snow melt.**

Community Center Underground:

The floor is now finished. The furniture that was in storage is back in the Underground. Rugs for some floor areas are needed. We have one rug, but I feel that it needs cleaning. (It is in such a state that it may not pay to have it cleaned). There is a piece of remnant rug left over from the RR guard shacks. It measures 7 ft x 12 ft. There are a few places where this piece might work. If it doesn't work in the Underground, it could work in Ed Carlson's office area outside of the Underground. (Mr. Robson would look into the sizes that are needed. New carpet may be cheaper to buy than having the old one cleaned. Mr. Kweskin agreed and it was decided to buy new carpet for the Underground).

(The Community Center stairwell still has a leak. Mr. Robson wants the contractor to come over to look at it when it's raining hard. It is coming in on the side wall, but it's hard to tell where the leak originates. It may be seeping into the outside wall through the stone. So far, the contractor hasn't shown up when it has been raining).

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As far as what seems to be excess water/sewer charges at the Pinkney property, Mr. Robson has attempted to look into it. The information is not easy to come by. He has been to SNEW and has reviewed bills going back to 1990 until October 2008. Andy Conroy offered to go to SNEW and try to get it straightened out. The bill seems to be way too high for the amount of water which is used at Pinkney. There will be more to report at the next meeting.

PROPERTY MANAGER – Ed Carlson – December 2008

Community Center:

- 1. The new phone has been installed to replace the pay phone.
- 2. The plastic speed bump has been installed in the driveway near the Library.
- 3. The fall cleanup of leaves has been completed.

Bayley Beach

- 1. The furniture has been stored for the winter.
- 2. The entrance has been cleared of leaves.

Pinkney Park:

- 1. The fall cleanup of leaves has been completed.
- 2. The memorial benches have been stored in the barn and will be reinstalled in the spring.

R. R. Station:

- 1. New sensor lights for the guard shack have been purchased and will be installed.

FIRE MARSHAL – Ed Carlson – November 2008

| Type of Activity | # | # Man Hours |
|-----------------------------|-----|-------------|
| Blasting Permit(s) | *** | *** |
| Blasting Site Inspection(s) | *** | *** |
| Building Inspection(s) | 2 | 3 |
| Clerical (office) work | | 18 |
| Fire Marshal Conferences | 1 | 3 |
| Career Development Training | 1 | 3 |
| Investigation(s) | 1 | 1 |
| Meetings: District Monthly | 1 | 2 |
| Hilltop Homes | 1 | 2 |
| Total Man Hours: | | 32 |

Remarks to the Commissioners: I wish all of you a safe and Happy Holiday!
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Mike Barbis commented that he and Ed had met with Chief McCarthy from Norwalk FD and one of his mechanics as to looking into the feasibility of adding another mechanic so that Norwalk FD might do outside maintenance for other departments. This would especially benefit us as we are so close. We would not be charged a road trip fee and a fuel surcharge as we are now. They need to look into the liability such an arrangement would have for the city. If the Norwalk FD mechanics would work on others' equipment, who would have the liability? Such an arrangement would certainly save the Rowayton FD money. Even if Norwalk FD didn't hire another mechanic, they would probably be able to do the maintenance work for the Rowayton FD. Mr. Barbis noted that it would be a win/win situation for RFD. As of now, 20% of their budget is expended on maintenance. Their maintenance costs should come down with the purchase of a new truck and getting rid of one of the older trucks. Even if the cost would turn out to be even, operationally it would be better for the Rowayton FD.

Mr. Barbis went on to say that the Rowayton FD had dropped their first choice of Seagrave as the supplier of their new truck. Their price increase was insupportable. They are now considering one additional vendor. He indicated that the difference in price between a 2008 model and one ordered in 2009 would be less than \$10,000. So, the RFD is not rushing into a decision to get in under the 2008 deadline. Mr. Kweskin indicated that he agreed with the decision not to rush into a commitment.

REPORT FROM OFFICER JOE JENSEN

Officer Jensen reports that our community is healthy and wonderful. He did mention that two bicycles have been left for an extended period of time on the Eastbound side of the Rowayton Train Station lot.

Mr. Kweskin urged that we post a sign indicating the limited time for bicycle storage at the train station. Mike Barbis asked if we need a policy for charging for the parking of bicycles. It was agreed that there would be a sign posted that any bicycle left for over a week would be considered abandoned and would be removed.

Officer Jensen reported that there have been many break ins of locked cars in neighboring town. Rowayton had one such incident where a car window was broken in order to gain access to an iPhone which had been left in plain view. Officer Jensen suggests removing valuables from parked cars. Lacking that, please put them out of sight.

Regrettably, Officer Jensen reported that the Police Department is feeling the effects of the economic turndown and the officers we have are spread pretty thin. There has been a cutback in the hours spent in Community Policing.

Mike Barbis wanted to be sure that we all recognized Joe Jensen for his heroic efforts the previous Sunday night in apprehending a thief and a very bad guy. The thief was **MINUTES – December 10, 2008**

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driving a stolen dump truck which he rammed into Officer Jensen's cruiser, which was totaled. Then the man driving the dump truck ran into a tree, tried to enter a home in Rowayton and thoroughly scared the resident. Mike congratulated Joe on a job very well done. We are all grateful that Joe was not hurt in the crash.

OLD BUSINESS

Andy Conroy brought up the fact that the auditing firm we use wants us to have a "whistle blower" policy in effect. He will work on the language for such a policy.

On the subject of finding some accounting help for Andy, Mr. Kweskin encouraged Mr. Conroy to interview some candidates. Mr. Conroy suggested that he would do that in the spring when he has more time. We will put this item on the agenda for April.

Mr. Conroy also stated that the auditors want to bill us more than usual since they needed to send more reports to the state.

NEW BUSINESS

After some discussion, budget meetings to address the budget for the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 were set as follows:

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| January 21 | 7:30 p.m. |
| January 28 | 7:30 p.m. |
| February 9 | 7:00 p.m. |
| February 23 | 7:30 p.m. (if needed) |

The public is welcome to come to any or all of these meetings and may address the Commission with any concerns they might have.

All groups are welcome to make submissions of proposals for funds from the District.

Another item of new business is deciding what to do about groups that cancel events without notification. Mike said that that the Long Range planning committee for the Community Center was looking into some sort of electronic key system, which may help the situation.

Cynthia Johnson suggested having lock boxes with temporary codes. We want to solve the problem, but don't want to jump into something too quickly. Andrea will remind the scheduling groups to notify us if canceling, reminding them that the building stays unlocked for the night if they don't show up. Cynthia also noted that this year, the Fourth of July falls on a Saturday, so the Federal holiday is officially the Third of July,

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the policy being that if a holiday falls on a Saturday, the official holiday becomes Friday.

Ed Kweskin made a motion to adjourn the meeting to Executive Session to discuss Awards of Merit. He noted that anyone can make suggestions to the Commissioners if they know of someone who might deserve to be honored. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Mike Barbis. The meeting of the Sixth Taxing District was adjourned at 9:45 p.m. and went into Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Woodworth
Clerk, 6th Taxing District