

**DRAFT**

**MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
SIXTH TAXING DISTRICT, City of Norwalk  
September 14, 2011**

**Rowayton Community Center  
7:30 p.m.**

The Special Meeting of the Sixth Taxing District electors to consider and approve Phase II of the Community Center Restoration and Refurbishment project was called to order at 7:40 p.m. by Commission Chair Tammy Langalis. Mrs. Langalis welcomed all the residents whose presence was noted on a voter registration list. She then introduced the members of the Rowayton Community Center Long Range Planning Committee in attendance who were Rob Frazier, Mike Stein, Mike Barbis, Meghan St. John, and Fred Lione.

Mrs. Langalis reiterated the purpose of the meeting as published in The Hour. It was:

1. To hear and discuss a proposal of the commissioners of the Sixth Taxing District to do historic preservation and restoration of the windows, doors, stone and stucco on all three buildings at the Rowayton Community Center, also known as 33 Highland Avenue, Norwalk, CT, listed on the “National Register of Historic Places” and
2. To vote upon and authorize the Commissioners of the Sixth Taxing District to expend an approximate amount of \$600,000 or less from future district capital or borrowing from other sources in order to fund said repairs and renovations at the Community Center.

Mrs. Langalis said that the Sixth Taxing District had purchased this property in the 1960s. The Community Center is used by more than 20 groups on a regular basis. We also rent space for meetings, parties and other gatherings. There are many events on this property. A wedding reception will take place this weekend on the front lawn under a tent. We had done only minor repairs to the Community Center until we undertook Phase I of the historic preservation and restoration which project restored and repaired the roofs of all the buildings on the property. We have the good fortune to have many talented volunteers in this community who have donated countless hours of their time to plan and execute these projects. We are in their debt for their dedication and thoughtfulness.

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Tammy then introduced Rob Frazier, Chair of the Rowayton Community Center Long Range Planning Committee, and Mike Stein, a resident and historic architect. Together they and their committee have come up with the plan for Phase II of the Restoration and Refurbishment of the Community Center. Rob explained the proposed project of Phase II with the help of a PowerPoint presentation. He started by explaining the planning process that was undertaken. First a planning committee was appointed. They then developed long range goals and decided to try to implement the goals through a phased approach. The long range goals that were identified were: to restore and preserve the Rowayton Community Center building's exteriors in accordance with the National Parks Service standards for preservation and restoration as established by the US Department of the Interior, to develop improved energy performance, to provide compliance with ADA requirements, to improve the life-safety systems, to address the parking and traffic flow needs, and to develop community consensus on future uses of the property. In order to accomplish this, they decided on a phased approach with the following breakdown: Phase I - - roofs, gutters, and trim on the Community Center, Gardener's Shed, Ice House and Garage; Phase II - - windows, doors, stone and stucco on all three buildings; and Phase III - - energy management, ADA compliance, Life Safety and other interior and site improvements, the scope of which is to be determined through community input. The building envelope issues were to be addressed in the first two phases, as follows: Addressed in Phase I - - Slate roofs and gutters; To be Addressed in Phase II - - Windows, doors and screens; wood trim; stone work and stucco; exterior electrical and service issues, and HVAC upgrades. Rob went on to show a series of pictures which plainly illustrate the state of the exterior which needs to be addressed in Phase II.

The electrical issues occurring in the plan are to: improve electrical safety, and code compliance, resolve existing dangerous electric service set-up, rationalize site electrical distribution, to improve site lighting (parking, etc.) and to provide underground service from McKinley. A series of pictures outlined the existing electrical conditions. The HVAC issues are as follows: replace two 20+ year AC units in the library to improve energy efficiency, improve indoor air quality and to rationalize the systems and the areas served; replace the boiler in the Apartment with split H/AC unit also considering the restoration of the windows to comply with the historic preservation guidelines and to provide AC to the library children's area, and replace the 15+ year unit in the Rowayton Community Center's 2<sup>nd</sup> floor including historic preservation of windows and addressing of maintenance problems.

To elaborate on the above, Mike Stein spoke about the process of restoring and preserving the windows, doors, stucco and stone according to the National Parks Service standards. He noted that this building is approximately 100 years old and has not enjoyed attentive maintenance. There are some instances when features will need to be totally replaced. About half of the items need substantial work and 30 some windows that weren't original to the building and are going to require a lot of attention. Each window in the building has a report on it itemizing the needs for that window. Their goal is to

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preserve as much of the original as possible. They are also striving to be energy efficient in their restoration and are going to add storm windows. There are various hardware issues involved. The committee will be looking at original drawings for the building that have been found and will do research to try to restore as much as possible to its original state. To the credit of the caretakers of this building over the years, many of the original fixtures and features were retained, even when they were not used in situ. They have found the original clock that graced the cupola over the library wing. They will place the old clock in its original venue after it has been electrified. The works are going to be preserved and put on display somewhere. It isn't practical to use the original works as it needs to be regularly wound and the shaft would hang down into the library. They will fight the trend to use newish doors. The door to the Ice House will be restored and it is original to the property. The door in the Gardener's shed will be slightly more of a challenge. It is old growth fir and they will need to find something similar. There is very little work to be done with the stone. It does need repointing in some places, but it is overall in good shape. Each building has a different style of stucco. There is a lab in Iowa that did research on what the stucco was composed of and what paint had been used on it over the years. They have found that it would be virtually impossible to remove the paint. Each building has a different finish to the stucco. They will decide what the original color must have been and use that color.

There has been no cohesive approach to providing electrical to the buildings. The first step would be to bring the electrical service in underground. Their goal is to address the whole of the electrical power. There will be a new transformer center. We have hired an electrician to do a survey and we will be exploring possibilities for better lighting inside the building and out.

The HVAC issues are many. Different parts of the building have different HVAC solutions. The apartment is air conditioned with window units. We need to get rid of them so we can restore the windows and actually close them. One of the air handlers failed in the north wing. So, something needs to be done fairly soon. Rob, said that after two years of investigation, he is proud to say that he finally understands the system. It's taken 2 years to come up with a solution that will solve the problems for at least the next 25 years. As remaining units need to be replaced, we'll have a plan for that as well.

District Treasurer John Verel was introduced to speak to the financial aspects of the proposed project. He said that we're talking about a couple of different projects. The historic preservation funds that we will be applying for max out at \$200,000. However, we need to deal with the HVAC in the next 4 - 6 months. That needs to be taken care of before Phase II gets started. We can be the beneficiary of much better pricing if we do all the electrical and HVAC projects at once. The hard costs will be \$88,300. The soft costs for this whole project is \$68,000. We've allowed for a 10% project contingency of \$45,882. The total cost will be \$615,002. We have \$15,000 budgeted this year for HVAC projects. So we're asking for approval of \$600,000, the balance of what we'll

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need to do the Phase II projects.

**The Phase I Financial Recap is as follows:**

Project Scope: \$475,000

Source of Funds:

On hand at beginning of project: \$ 75,000

Borrowing from City of Norwalk \$400,000

**Total funds available for Phase I: \$475,000**

**Phase I Borrowing**

Principal Amount: \$400,000

Projected Total Int@4.5% for 20 years \$189,000

Actual Total Interest@3.43% \$144,060

**Interest Savings over life of loan: \$ 44,940**

**Average Annual Debt Service Pmt \$ 27,938**

**Phase I - Debt Service**

**Budgeted** annual int exp: 4.5% \$18,000

Actual per year @ 3.43% \$13,720

Admin Fees @ 0.35% \$15,120

**Better** than budget, per year: **\$ 2,880**

**Phase II - Financing Plan Sources  
of Funds**

Reserve for State matching grant:

Receivable from State for Phase I \$146,500

Move from other capital proj: \$ 53,500

Total amount escrowed for State  
matching fund application \$200,000

**Phase II - Financing Plan**

Project Cost: \$600,000

Funds on hand, w/Grant: \$200,000

New Borrowing: \$400,000

**Total Sources: \$600,000**

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**Phase II - Borrowing**

Principal:	\$400,000
Projected Interest Rate: 4.5%	\$189,000
Admin Fees@ 0.35:	<u>\$ 14,700</u>
Total Cost of New Borrowing:	\$203,700

**District Debt Service Burden,  
Phases I and II**

FY 2011-12:	\$ 6,860
FY 2012-13:	\$41,637
FY2013-14:	\$68,798

Debt Service per Rowayton household,  
FY 2013-14@1500 households= **\$45.87/year**

\* Any future matching grant from State may allow us  
to repay outstanding debt.

**Maximum Borrowing Capacity**

Total Borrowings, Pre-Reno:	\$681,750
Phase I Borrowing:	\$400,000
Phase II Borrowing:	<u>\$400,000</u>
Total	\$1,481,750

Maximum Capacity \$2,931,712  
(2.25 times budgeted base for 2011-12  
of \$1,302,983

**At end of Phase 2 the entire envelope of the Community Center and its out-buildings  
will look like new!**

1912-2012  
Preserved for the next 100 years.

Mike Barbis spoke to how Phase I had turned out. He said that we had approved spending up to \$475,000. We borrowed \$400,000 and applied for a state preservation grant up to \$200,000. We were awarded \$146,500. We put the project out to bids and had 9 bids averaging \$369,000. A local contractor bid \$248,000 and was awarded the contract. We have been very satisfied with the professionalism of his crew and the quality of their work. By taking his bid, we saved \$119,000 and were able to expand the scope of the project to include the ice house and garage and the gardeners shed and greenhouse in the project. Even with the addition of those buildings, we still came out

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12% under budget. The project was run very efficiently. 1/3 of the costs were basically paid for by the state of Connecticut, through the Office of Culture and Tourism. We will once again be applying for a state preservation grant. We will be applying for the maximum of \$200,000 and expect to receive between \$100,000 and \$200,000. This is just the type of project that they like. They like to fund projects that seek to preserve publicly used buildings.

Rob Frazier said that as they were putting the plans together, they packaged them in such a way that they could be divided into components. They can shed parts of the project without affecting other parts of it. Even though we are in bad economic times, it's a good time to be contracting for work to be done. Bids that we received have been more than competitive. Fred Lione sought to remind us that the job bid will be on the basis of the prevailing wage. The total sounds like a lot, but the hourly rate for workers will be about \$55/hr. One of the state's requirements in accepting our application for a grant, is that we will be hiring fairly.

Moving on to Motion 1, Mrs. Langalis said that the Chair would entertain a motion that the commissioners be authorized to undertake the Community Center restoration Phase II project as described in the public notice and to expend an amount up to \$600,000 in connection with the project. John Igneri indicated that he so moved. Nancy Lione, 10 Thomas Place, seconded the motion. Discussion on the motion was called for. John Igneri said that in all the financial projections, they hadn't factored in the expected savings from having a more efficient electrical and HVAC systems. Sally Tepas, 7 Barnfield, asked if a possible kitchen redo had been discussed or was this plan only for the outside of the building. Mike Barbis said that we had gotten estimates a couple of years ago on a possible kitchen rehab and it was decided that it was too expensive a project for then. Rob Frazier said that one of the things envisioned for Phase III of the restoration and preservation of the Community Center was to get input from residents about what should be done in a Phase III. We will be asking what residents dreams and ideas are for the building. This property, as good as it is, could be much better. The challenge is for people to start thinking about the future of this place. The kitchen will certainly have a part in this. Dave McCarthy, 38 Nearwater, asked Rob if he was correct in hearing that they would project a 20% efficiency improvement in the air conditioning system. Rob said that that was a conservative figure that they were using. When asked what that would come to in a dollar amount, Mike Barbis said that would be about \$4,000 savings per year just in air conditioning costs. Lynne Pratt, 1 Farm Creek, asked that if it was necessary to drop any of the components, would we meet again to discuss which parts. That remains to be seen. It was said that the HVAC work would be a priority since that's essentially a safety issue. Perhaps the out buildings would be dropped and done some other time. Andy Conroy, 17 Old Witch Court, said that with hard costs predicted to be \$420,000, you could almost look at it as \$100,000 per building side. That seemed like a lot to him. It was answered that it is difficult to look at it in that way. Rather, there are 20 doors to be reconstructed or repaired and 88 windows, more

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than half of which have to be reconstructed. Jocelyn Isabel, Phase I project manager, said that the intricate nature of the work is what drives up the cost of this Phase II of the project. It would, of course, be more economical to put new components in (as for the windows, for instance) but that wouldn't be "restoring" the building and would not satisfy the necessity for doing an historic restoration. In applying for a state preservation grant, we had to sign a preservation restriction. We are committed to doing work that "preserves" the building as an historic place. The reconstruction of the windows will be the main driver of the cost of the project. When asked if we would reduce the scope of the project if we receive less than expected from the state, Rob Frazier indicated that there would be several options. One would be to limit the scope. Another possibility is to try to do some fund raising to make up the difference. Maybe we could set up something like "Friends of the Rowayton Community Center". Leslie Korzennik, 24 Briar, asked when we would expect to hear about a possible grant. April 30, 2012 is the latest that we will receive notice of a grant. Rob indicated that he had been told that these grant funds are secured and come from real estate transfers. The money is deemed secure because of the nature of the agreement between the governor and the unions. We will be doing more planning and will have documents prepared so that we are ready to put the project to bids whenever we hear about any grant commitment. John Igneri mentioned that the state office uses our application from last year as a model to show other people how a grant application should be done. Thanks go to Rob and Andrea for all the good work done on the grant application.

The vote on the first motion was called. There were **31 Aye votes, 0 Nays and 0 abstentions.**

For Motion 2, Mrs. Langalis said that the Chair would entertain a motion authorizing the Commissioners to borrow an amount up to \$400,000 to be used as a source of funds for the Community Center restoration project, Phase II. John Igneri made the proposed motion, which was seconded by Phyllis Padro, 19 Briar. Mrs. Langalis called for discussion on the motion. Hearing little discussion of this motion, the vote was called. There were **34 Ayes, 0 Nays and 0 Abstentions.**

For Motion 3, Mrs. Langalis said that the Chair would entertain a motion authorizing the allocation of existing District capital project account balances in order to increase the District's Community Center project committed funds to \$200,000, for the purpose of complying with the Historic Restoration Fund application requirements. John Igneri made the proposed motion, which was seconded by Nora King, Covewood. Dave McCarthy, 38 Nearwater, asked what project balances would be moved to facilitate this motion. Mike Barbis said that some of these were for projects that had been budgeted but for any number of reasons, the money had not been spent. Radios for the fire department, for instance, had been budgeted some time ago. However, the radios won't be purchased until the Norwalk Fire Department makes a decision on what type of radios to use. We want to have the same radios so that they will interface properly. The vote on the motion

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was called. There were **33 Ayes, 0 Nays and 0 Abstentions.**

Having finished the business of this special meeting, Mrs. Langalis thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Bard Jones, 176 Rowayton Avenue, said that Rob Frazier should be commended and thanked for all the work he has put into this project. Mr. Jones wished to thank all of our residents who volunteer so much of their time.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andrea Woodworth  
Clerk, 6<sup>th</sup> Taxing District