

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on February 2, 2023

I. Call to Order

The meeting was Called to Order at 6:30 P.M. by Councilor W. Worthy, Town Council President.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Cheryl A. Greathouse; Walter M. O. Steere, III; Jonathan E. Burlingame; Stephen W. Arnold, Vice President; William A. Worthy, Jr. ,President

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; David Iglizzi, Town Solicitor; Christine Mathieu, Deputy Town Clerk; Adam Muccino, Finance Director; Gary Treml, Director Public Works; Robert Shields , Recreation Director; John Luszczyk, Human Services Director and Ken Johnson, Building Official

III. Pledge of Allegiance

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council now needs to adjourn to Closed Session.

IV. Seek to Convene to Executive Session Pursuant to:

- A. R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(a)(2) Any discussions , considerations, vote or other actions by Town Council related to Sessions pertaining to potential litigation or work sessions pertaining to litigation - Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to Convene to Executive Session Pursuant to:

A. R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(a)(2) Any discussions , considerations, vote or other actions by Town Council related to Sessions pertaining to potential litigation or work sessions pertaining to litigation - Discussion and/or Action ; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

Councilor W. Worthy asked the Clerk to Poll the Council:

VOTE:

Councilor C. Greathouse- Aye
Councilor W. Steere- Aye
Councilor J. Burlingame- Aye
Councilor S. Arnold - Aye
Councilor W. Worthy- Aye

MOTION PASSED

V. Reconvene Open Session - Disclosure of votes take in Executive Session & Consideration of the Sealing of Minutes - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy asked for a motion to reconvene open session.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to Reconvene Open Session; Disclose zero (0) votes were taken in Executive Session & Seal the Minutes of Closed Executive Session; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

Councilor W. Worthy asked the Clerk to Poll the Council:

VOTE:

Councilor C. Greathouse- Aye

Councilor W. Steere- Aye

Councilor J. Burlingame- Aye

Councilor S. Arnold - Aye

Councilor W. Worthy- Aye

MOTION PASSED

OPEN SESSION AT 7:30 P.M.

Councilor W. Steere asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of two individuals who had recently passed away. Councilor Steere first noted, Joseph Raymond, the Town of Burrillville Building Inspector. Councilor Steere stated that Mr. Raymond was a good friend to Gloucester and helped us out. Councilor W. Steere also noted Gloucester resident, Kathy Rechter. Councilor Steere stated Kathy served on several town boards and was involved in the community.

VI. Open Forum - For Agenda Items

Councilor W. Worthy asked if anyone wished to speak and to come to the microphone and state your name for the record.

None

VII. Citations

- A. #2023-02 Years of Service Recognition - Former Town Council Member William E. Reichert

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council has a citation to recognize former Councilman Bill Reichert for his years of service, both on the Planning Board and the Town Council which he read as follows as follows:

TOWN OF GLOCESTER

Citation 2023-02

William E. Reichert

Given in Appreciation and Recognition of Your Dedication, Commitment and Service for the Benefit of Our Community Throughout the Years.

From your time on the Planning Board and your elected 22 years on the Town Council you have served your town well with your strength and your sense of humor.

The Town Council and the Town Clerk represent all Gloucester residents when we say wholeheartedly “thank you”

Adopted by the Gloucester Town Council 2023-2024

seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor W. Worthy called Bill Reichert up to accept his citation.

B. #2023-03 Years of Service Recognition - Former School Committeeman
Walter M.O. Steere, Jr.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council would now like to recognize former School Committeeman Walter M.O. Steere, Jr. for his work and dedication to our students and our schools for the last 20 years.

We may have some guests here tonight that worked with Walt and I am sure they join us in our show of appreciation with this citation which he read as follows:

Town of Gloucester
Citation #2023-03

Walter M.O. Steere, Jr.

In recognition and great appreciation for your valued contributions to the Town of Gloucester , especially to our students , during your years of service on both the Gloucester School Committee and the Foster/Glocester School Committee since you were first elected in 2002.

You have served the residents of Gloucester with your experience, honesty, and integrity .

We appreciate your commitment for those 20 years and acknowledge your service to our community.

The Town Council wholeheartedly represents all of Gloucester residents when we say “ Thank You”

Adopted by the Gloucester Town Council 2023-2024

seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor W. Worthy called Walter Steere up to accept the citation.

J. Fecteau, Town Clerk presented Walter Steere with his name plate from the school committee.

Walter Steere, Jr. stated his thanks for a great experience, that the people were great, and that there have been tough times and good times during his 20 years. Mr. Steere stated there are good people on the Town Council and School Committee. Mr. Steere also stated that the schools are well run and that he would not trade the experience of the 20 years for anything.

Councilor W. Worthy asked if anyone else would like to speak.

Councilor W. Steere stated that his Dad was there to serve and to do good for the town. Councilor Steere stated his Dad taught him to stand up for what you believe in and to be respectful. Councilor Steere stated his Dad is his role model and it has been a pleasure to work with him on the School Committee and Council, and stated his thanks for everything.

Councilor W. Worthy called upon Representative M. Chippendale. Rep. Chippendale presented W. Steere Jr. with citations from the House of Representatives and the Senate of Rhode Island.

Councilor W. Steere thanked W. Reichert for his time, effort, and dedication to the town. Councilor Steere also noted that W. Reichert did a lot for the town during his time of service and saved the town a lot financially during his time on the Council.

VIII. Consent Items - Discussion and/or Action

A. Approval of Town Council Minutes: Regular meeting of January 19, 2023

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to APPROVE the Town Council minutes of January 19, 2023; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

IX. Unfinished Business

A. Ratification of Agreement: Between the Town of Glocester & RI Laborers' District Council on behalf of Local Union 1322, of the Laborers' International Union of North America, AFL-CIO, Effective: July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025
Police Department Civilian Employees - Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to TABLE the ratification of the Agreement between the Town of Glocester and the RI Laborers District Council on behalf of Local Union 1322; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. Boards and Commissions

1. Appointments - Terms to Run Concurrent with the Town Council-

Discussion and/or Action

a. Economic Development Commission

1. Position # 3- two year term to expire 1/2025

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Chair does not have a recommendation at this time and unless Council has a recommendation this item can be tabled.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Clerk has sent out an ad seeking volunteers for our talent bank listing.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to TABLE the appointment to the Economic Development Commission, Position #3; seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

2. Position # 6- two year term to expire 1/2025

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to TABLE the appointment to the Economic Development Commission, Position #6; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

b. Recreation Commission

Position #4 - two year term to expire 12/2024

Councilor W. Worthy stated that there is no recommendation from the Chair at this time, Council can appoint from the Talent Bank list or table the appointment.

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to TABLE the appointment to the Recreation Commission, Position #4; seconded by Councilor W. Steere.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

C. Personnel

1. Appointment

a. Senior Center -

Part Time Meal Site Coordinator - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council has received a recommendation from the acting HR Director which he read as follows:

To: The Honorable Gloucester Town Council
From: Don Zimmerman, Director of Human Resources
Date: January 26, 2023
Subject: Appointment of a part-time Meal Site Coordinator

Senior Center Director Melissa Bouvier and I are requesting that Council appoint Bethany Lynn Danielson of Mapleville to the position of Meal Site Coordinator at the Center at a rate of \$18.00 per hour effective February 13, 2023. The job is a part-time, 5-day-a-week, 27.5-hour position responsible for preparing and serving meals at the Center, operating, and cleaning the Center's kitchen and other duties assigned by the director.

The position is budgeted and was vacated due to a recent resignation. It was posted internally and advertised locally. Ms. Bouvier and I conducted interviews on January 19. Ms. Danielson's experience includes service with a Rhode Island senior concierge service that provides meal planning and preparation services, personal services, and transportation for older citizens. She also has more than 20 years' experience as a classroom teaching assistant and has held food service positions in the private sector.

(End of memo)

Discussion: None

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to APPOINT Bethany Lynn Danielson to the position of Part Time Meal Site Coordinator at a rate of \$18.00 per hour effective February 13, 2023. Said position is a part-time, 5-day-a-week, 27.5-hour position; seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

D. Code of Ordinance – Forming Cannabis Land Use Regulations - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Clerk has noted the following which he read :

I met with Ken Johnson, Karen Scott, Capt. Matt Fague, and Deputy Christine Mathieu to review draft language to propose to Council regarding an ordinance for Retail Sales of cannabis; Public Use of cannabis; and penalties for violation of these ordinances. The group, including the Solicitor, will meet again next week to continue fine tuning the proposals. We understand time is of the essence. Please table to the Town Council meeting of February 16, 2023.

Discussion: None

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to TABLE Item D. Code of Ordinance - Forming of Cannabis Land Use Regulations and proposed Ordinances; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

X. New Business

A. Budget FY 2023-24

1. Set Date for Workshop with Budget Board - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that for the past few years, Council has been meeting with the Budget Board prior to the Budget Board’s work on their budget proposal. Councilor W. Worthy stated that it is typically a time for Council to express any areas of budget concern, goals they would like to reach, etc. so that the Budget Board knows before hand what the Council would like the Board to consider when preparing the proposed budget.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Clerk asked the Finance Director to bring a few dates forward so Council can set a meeting date.

Discussion: A. Muccino, Finance Director, stated that he has not confirmed any dates with the Budget Board but hopes to do so soon. Councilor W. Steere stated that it is a good experience to meet with the Budget Board.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to TABLE setting a workshop with Budget Board for a date in February 2023; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

2. Financial Town Referendum - Review & Approve Dates for 2023 - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Clerk has prepared a tentative calendar with dates to be considered for the 2023 Financial Town Referendum, which he read as follows:

FRAMEWORK FOR SETTING CALENDAR FOR FINANCIAL TOWN REFERENDUM

- February __, 2023 Town Council and Budget Board conduct a workshop to discuss budget plans/ideas before Budget Board completes and submits their proposed budget**
- March 16 , 2023 COUNCIL RECEIVES BUDGET: Town Council receives from Budget Board (Per Charter C8-2.1c) and Council approves for Public Hearing.**
- April 15th to BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING: Should be held no sooner than 30**
April 20, 2023 days nor more than 35 days after receipt and approval of budget.
Per Charter C8-3.3. this hearing must be at least 21 days prior to FTR.

May 4, 2023 **ADOPTION by TOWN COUNCIL: Within 15 days after final Public Hearing, Town Council ADOPTS budgets and ballot language for Financial Town Referendum. Per Charter C8-3.4 Council must adopt a budget not later than 15 days prior to FTR.**

MAY 23, 2023 **FINANCIAL TOWN REFERENDUM: Referendum to be held no less than 15 days after adoption and not later than May 31 in any fiscal year.**

All procedures & dates referenced in the Town Charter (Articles: III; IV.9; & VIII) have been considered and included in the this framework.

The Clerk recommends the Public Hearing be held on Tuesday, April 18, 2023. Having it on that date would still give Council an opportunity to continue the public hearing to the Town Council meeting of April 20, 2023 (which is the last day) if there was an issue and Council needed more time.

(End of memo)

Discussion: J. Fecteau stated for clarification that the window dates for the Public Hearing are from April 15 through April 20. Councilor W. Steere stated that these dates from the Clerk are set by a formula. Councilor W. Steere stated that the Clerk has come up with a good plan and the public hearing date gives the Council additional time if needed.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to SET the 2023/24 Budget Public Hearing for April 18, 2023; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame.

Discussion: J. Fecteau asked what time for the hearing and Council by consensus agreed to 7:00PM.

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
 NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to SET the 2023 Financial Town Referendum for Tuesday, May 23rd, 2023, seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
 NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

- B. Boards and Commissions
 - 1. Appointments - Discussion and/or Action
 - a. Conservation Commission
 One Alternate 1-year term to expire 1/31/2024

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Chair has recommended the current alternate, Bruce Payton, be reappointed for another term.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to REAPPOINT Bruce Payton to the Conservation Commission for the Alternate 1-year position to expire 1/31/2024; seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, W. Worthy
NAYS- S. Arnold

MOTION PASSED

b. Land Trust

1. One member-at-large (Planning Board) 1-year terms to expire 1/31/2024

Councilor W. Worthy stated that this item is for the expired term of Janine Pitocco. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Chair has indicated that the Planning Board has voted to request Michael DeGrange be the member at large for the upcoming term effective March 1, 2023. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Chair, Janine Pitocco will continue until that time.

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to APPOINT Michael DeGrange to the Land Trust - Member at Large, from the Planning Board, for a one year term to expire 1/31/2024, effective March 1, 2023; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS- 0

MOTION PASSED

2. One member-at-large (Conservation Commission) 1-year term to expire 1/31/2024

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the membership of the Conservation Commission has voted to recommend Roy Najecki be reappointed member at large to the Land Trust from the Conservation Commission.

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to REAPPOINT Roy Najecki to the position of Land Trust, member at large (Conservation Commission) for a one year term to expire 1/31/2024; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS- 0

MOTION PASSED

3. One 5-year term, Position #5, term to expire 1/31/2028

Councilor W. Worthy stated this is the position filled by William Morin who wishes to be

reappointed.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to REAPPOINT William Morin to the Land Trust, Position #5, for a five year term to expire 1/31/2028; seconded by Councilor W. Steere.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS- 0

MOTION PASSED

4. One 5-year term, Position #3, term to expire 1/31/2028

Councilor W. Worthy stated that this position is for the expired term of Scott Boudreau. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Chair has indicated that Mr. Boudreau does not wish to be reappointed and she recommends, John Pitocco, be appointed. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Clerk has forwarded Mr. Pitocco's Talent Bank application to Council.

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to APPOINT John Pitocco to the Land Trust to fill Position #3 for a five year term to expire 1/31/2028; seconded by Councilor W. Steere.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS- 0

MOTION PASSED

C. Memorial Day Parade - Future Oversight Plans: Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council received correspondence last meeting informing the Town that the Gloucester Light Infantry would no longer be planning the Memorial Day Parade.

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere stated his opinion that the parade needs to continue and that a plan needs to be formulated. Councilor W. Steere stated he spoke to R. Shields who said he would help. R. Shields, Recreation Director, stated his opinion that the focus needs to be on local entities and suggested reaching out to the local entities but did not specify. Councilor W. Steere suggested reaching out to the Gloucester Light Infantry. A. Muccino stated that he heard from the Regional Schools and they would like to have the bands participate but the cost of transport may be an issue. A. Muccino stated that the total budget amount received by the Gloucester Light Infantry in past years was \$1000. A. Muccino stated that of the \$1000, that a third was used by the Infantry for the parade. Councilor W. Worthy stated he had spoken to the Foster Town Council president. Councilor W. Steere stated that it would be good to coordinate with Foster if the band is performing in both towns as timing is an issue. Councilor W. Worthy asked Councilor W. Steere to reach out to the Gloucester Light Infantry for information. Councilor W. Steere agreed. Councilor C. Greathouse also offered to help.

No action taken by Council

Councilor Worthy welcomed Senator de la Cruz and thanked her for the Senate citation.

D. Proposal from Senator G. Rogers (Foster) re: proposed regional coalition - Discussion and/or Action

Discussion: Councilor S. Arnold stated he had spoken with G. Rogers regarding rural towns and the regional coalition to address the housing issue. Councilor Arnold stated he welcomes Senator Rogers to share his ideas.

G. Rogers gave an overview of his idea of forming a coalition with several towns to address the affordable housing issue and the housing crisis in general as it relates to small, rural towns. Senator Rogers discussed the differences between small towns and larger cities especially when in regards to achieving the 10% affordable housing requirements. Sen. Rogers expressed his concerns with legislation that could take away the small communities zoning authority. Sen. Rogers gave examples of “trampling density” limits of small communities and what the effects could be.

Sen. Rogers also spoke on the lack of public transportation in rural areas affecting our ability to reach housing goals. Sen. Rogers discussed a commerce park, funded with state assistance, as one of the solutions to consider. Sen. Rogers distributed printed material to the Council.

No action taken by Council

E. Bid Awards - Discussion and/or Action

1. IFB #2022-08 Heating Fuel

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council has a recommendation from Board of Contracts and Purchases which he read as follows:

To: Gloucester Town Council, William Worthy, President
From: Adam Muccino, Finance Director
Re: IFB2022-08 Heating Fuel
Date: 02/02/2023

The Town Council previously authorized the Finance Office to go out to bid for #2 heating fuel for the buildings in Town that heat using oil. The Finance Office prepared the bid document and advertised the opportunity via the Gloucester Town website, the Valley Breeze Observer and via Bid Net Direct. com. After the posting period, the Board of Contracts and Purchases met on January 10th, 2023 to publicly open the responses to IFB 2022-08. The Town received (1) response to the bid opportunity from Reichert & Son Fuel Oil Inc.

The bid requested that respondents indicate a fixed price option per gallon and a variable price option per gallon. The fixed price option from Reichert & Sons Fuel Oil was \$3. 79 per gallon and the variable price option at \$0.1495 per gallon. At the January 10th 2023 Board of Contracts meeting, the Board voted to have the Finance Office review the bid for compliance.

The Board of Contracts and Purchases met again on January 30th 2023. At the meeting, the Board voted to recommend to the Town Council that the Council award IFB 2022-08 to Reichert & Sons

Fuel Oil, the sole bidder, on the variable price basis of \$0.1495 per gallon over the lowest Providence Tank Terminal price through December 31, 2025, per the response from the bidder.

Respectfully,
Adam R. Muccino
(end of memo)

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to AWARD IFB #2022-08 Heating Fuel to Reichert & Son Fuel Oil for the Variable factor- \$0.1495 per gallon over the lowest Providence Tank Terminal price through December 31, 2025; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS- 0

MOTION PASSED

F. Electric Rate Renewal - Discussion and/or Action

Discussion: A. Muccino, Finance Director, stated that he is asking for this item to be tabled and that he feels he should have the information by the Council's next meeting.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to TABLE the Electric Rate Renewal until February 16, 2023; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS- 0

MOTION PASSED

G. Authorization to Request Extension of FY22 Audit- Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council has received a request from the Finance Director which he read as follows:

To: Gloucester Town Council, William Worthy, President
From: Adam Muccino, Finance Director
Re: Authorization to Request Extension of the FY22 Audit
Date: 02/02/2023

The Town Council and subsequently the Rhode Island Office of the Auditor General previously approved an extension of time to complete the Town and School fiscal year 2022 audit. We are in the final stages, working with the State on the Uniform Chart of Accounts validation for the School Department and completing the Municipal Transparency report for the Town and the School as well. I expect to receive draft financials from our auditor early next week which will then allow us to complete the audit transmittal document as well as the management discussion and analysis. As

a result, I am humbly requesting the Council approve an additional extension to February 20, 2023 as the audit is not yet complete. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Adam Muccino
(end of memo)

Discussion: None

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to AUTHORIZE the Town Council President to sign a request to the Auditor General for an extension of the 2022 audit submittal to February 20, 2023; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS- 0

MOTION PASSED

XI. Town Council Correspondence/ Discussion

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Council has received correspondence from the following :

1. A local accountant asking for Council consideration
2. FEMA - notice that the latest flood plain determinations have been established and notice to communities that flood plain management determinations must be adopted.
3. Request to use metal detector on all town property.
4. Copy of Atty. letter, a notice of action being taken by Bella Vista Association against developer.
5. League of Cities and Towns with information regarding affordable housing

XII. Department Head Reports/Discussion

Councilor W. Steere stated that he had spoken to J. Luszczyk about a grant from the RI Foundation and he would forward the information to J. Luszczyk.

XIII. Bds. and Commissions Reports/ Discussion

None

XIV. Open Forum

Councilor W. Worthy asked if anyone would like to speak and if so to step up to the microphone and state your name for the record.

1. Odete McMahon, resident, stated her concerns as to the potential affordable housing in Chepachet Village. O. McMahon suggested to help the Gloucester low income and elderly residents first. O. McMahon stated her concern that

the proposal by G. Rogers of a commerce park would open the door for the large box stores as in Smithfield. O. McMahon stated her opinion to keep Gloucester rural.

2. Councilor S. Arnold read a letter received from resident D. Laplante stating his opinions and concerns against affordable housing:

To: The Honorable Gloucester Town Council
From: David Laplante , 47 Absalona Hill Road
RE: Affordable Housing

Members of the Town Council

Recently there has been a lot of talk concerning the construction of up to 38 affordable housing units in the Chepachet village area. As reported in the news, Neighborworks Blackstone river Valley along with financing from Rhode Island Housing and using ARPA funds have purchased the former Purple Cat Winery along with an adjoining 19 acre lot with a plan to create 38 units of affordable housing. Myself and many other residents have concerns.

One major issue is where the multi housing will be located. That area of Gloucester has a serious issue concerning clean water. As those of you on the Council are aware, most of the center of Chepachet has contaminated water.

Another issue is the restrictions on septic in that area due to wetlands. The solution according to the developer and the State? Composting toilets. This is an extremely bad plan. Composting toilets need a lot of maintenance and careful usage and severe restrictions as to what can go into a composting toilet. People, especially with young children will not give the care and diligence that these systems require, especially in a multiple unit rental setting.

Of course if a developer attempted to place 38 units of regular condominiums in this spot, the project would be denied because of the issues I previously stated. This project however, has the backing of Rhode Island Housing and the State of Rhode Island General Assembly which has become a far left organization that will push their agenda with total disregard for the towns ability to support such an agenda.

Republican Senator Gordon Rogers along with a minority group of other Senators and Representatives are warning that the State is contemplating enacting laws to override local planning and zoning in order to force towns to allow the building of affordable housing units regardless of the negative environmental and social impacts that this rush to urbanize outlying areas would have. Senator Rogers said he is trying to form a coalition to lobby to preserve the rights and sovereignty of rural towns that don't have the infrastructure to support what the State is trying to force on us. I would ask that the Gloucester Town Council meet and speak with Senator Rogers and if such a coalition is created, to join the coalition in order to preserve local planning and zoning.

I am not advocating that there should be no affordable housing. I am merely saying that for any type of housing to be approved and built, that housing should conform to local planning and zoning ordinances, not rules and laws set by an overreaching state government or agency. The residents of Gloucester and their elected officials are the guardians of our local environmental health and what does and does not impact it, not a meddling and overreaching State or Federal government.

My intent was to appear before the Council in person at the February 2, 2023 meeting but my wife Missy had unexpected surgery on Monday January 30th and needs me to be home to assist in her care.

Respectfully,
David R. Laplante
(End of memo)

3. P. Henry, resident, thanked Senator Rogers for coming to Gloucester tonight. P. Henry stated she liked the coalition idea but in her opinion that the town push back at the state by suggesting Gloucester ask the state to be 5% affordable housing and not the 10 % mandated as Gloucester won't be able to meet the 10%. P. Henry stated the reasons she feels Gloucester won't be able to meet the 10% as: the 100% septic system reliance; the strain on the police department and volunteer fire companies, the strain on traffic control, and the importance of our precious aquifer. P. Henry questioned the purchase of this property by the same entity after the last attempt. P. Henry stated her opinion to recommend Gloucester join the coalition proposed by G. Rogers but not to recommend the commerce park concept.
4. C. Wilson, resident, stated his opinion that the affordable housing could destroy the historic homes and the Historic District. C. Wilson suggested the Town Council work on this matter.
5. E. Dauphinais, resident, stated her agreement with O. McMahon and P. Henry. E. Dauphinais stated there are many elderly residents with low income who have been on a waiting list in town for housing that need help. Ms. Dauphinais stated, however, that there would be a strain on the police and fire departments; that there is no trash pick up in town so that would be a separate issue; and, that there is no public water as the town is entirely supplied by wells.
6. B. Leach, resident, asked about a claim he submitted. G. Treml stated the claim was forwarded to the Town's insurance provider, the Interlocal Trust.
7. A. Broccoli, stated that he appreciated what has been said and stated his opinion that the current laws should change to allow the over 55 housing, in law units and Section 8 housing to be counted towards the affordable housing requirement.

XV. Seek to Convene to Closed Executive Session Pursuant to:

- A. R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining - Discussion, vote or other action by Town Council

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to Convene to Closed Executive Session Pursuant to: A. R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining - Discussion, vote or other action by Town Council; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: Councilor W. Worthy asked the Clerk to Poll the Council

C. Greathouse- Aye
W. Steere- Aye
J. Burlingame- Aye
S. Arnold - Aye
W. Worthy- Aye

MOTION PASSED

XVI. Reconvene Open Session - Disclosure of votes taken in Executive Session & Consideration of the Sealing of Minutes - Discussion and/or Action

Note: Due to technical difficulties live streaming was not available but the meeting continued in person.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to Reconvene Open Session - Disclose zero (0) votes were taken in Executive Session & to Seal the minutes of Closed Executive Session; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS- 0

MOTION PASSED

XVII. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to ADJOURN at 9:46 p.m.; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- J. Burlingame, C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS- 0

MOTION PASSED

