

OFFICE OF THE
FIRST SELECTMAN

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TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2010
BRUBECK ROOM, WILTON LIBRARY**

PRESENT: First Selectman William Brennan, Second Selectman Susan Bruschi, Selectman Richard Creeth, Selectman Hal Clark (8:20), Selectman Ted Hoffstatter

GUESTS: Sandy Dennies, State Senator Toni Boucher, State Representative Peggy Reeve, approximately 30 members of public, Jan Andras

OTHERS: Kara O'Connor (Villager), Joan Lownds (Bulletin), T. J. Buzzeo (The Daily Wilton)

First Selectmen Brennan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

A. Informational Session – Re-usable Bag Proposal

First Selectman Bill Brennan opened by advising that the objective of this informational session is for the Board of Selectmen to receive information and opinions on possible plans to phase out the use of plastic retail bags in Wilton. Selectman Hoffstatter advised that there were copies in the back of the room of a possible ordinance draft and surveys from Fairfield University. He also stated that the three main goals are: 1) Reduce the amount of plastic going into the environment; 2) Encourage use of re-usable bags for all retail purchases; and 3) Help Wilton business to reduce costs.

Brian Perry, Chamber of Commerce President, stated that the Chamber deals mostly with the small local businesses and the Chamber considers itself to be "green". An across the board mandate/ordinance would have a significant impact on small businesses. During this tough economy, we need to be helping them. He advised that the Town walk slowly through this process.

Mark Carluzzi of Carluzzi's Market – advised that he has been talking with Mr. Brennan and Mr. Hoffstatter to express their concerns about this initiative. He is very much in favor of re-usable bags but is concerned about switching to the use of paper bags, which could cost his business an additional \$50,000 to \$60,000 per year. He would prefer to eliminate all one-use bags.

Peter Keating, Village Market – Customers prefer plastic bags. Those who do some of their shopping in Wilton and some in other towns (border shopping), may choose to simply do everything in other towns so that they can use the plastic bags. Why target just plastic? Paper bags are harmful to the environment as well.

Paul Gannage, District Director of Stop & Shop – stated that S&S is committed to protecting the environment. They recycle their own shrink wrap and corrugated shipping packages and encourage the recycling of plastic retail bags in their stores. They also encourage re-usable bags by offering a five cent credit for each one used by the customers. The Westport S&S has seen a significant increase in the costs of paper bags since plastic bags were banned. He would encourage Wilton to look at other alternatives and S&S would like to partner with the Town.

Stan Sorkin, Ex. Dir., CT Food Association – The bigger issue is sustainability. Plastic and paper both have negative effects on the environment and the issue of both should be addressed. Look at the big picture. Educate consumers to use re-usable bags.

Peggy Reeves, State Representative – Legislation is going to be introduced again in January at the state level regarding a tax on retail bags. It took many years for the bottle bill to go through the process, so don't put aside the fact that the bag tax could happen. She asked if the merchants would be in favor? The CT Food Association would favor that initiative. Mr. Keating does not feel that a five cent tax would alter consumer behavior. In Ireland, the tax is twenty cents.

Jerry Holdridge – All Wilton trash is taken to Bridgeport to be burned for energy. He feels that an ordinance should encourage re-usable bags, not ban plastic bags.

Kari Roberts, - Stop & Shop in Westport could save money if they did not pay five cents per reusable bag. Since Westport has increased their use of re-usable bags, their ordinance has accomplished the goal.

Bruce Hampson, 47 Lambert Common – Wilton created an Energy Commission three years ago to work for a more sustainable future. He feels that plastic bags should be the target of the town because they end up in the Pacific Ocean. Getting rid of plastic bags makes a statement about Wilton.

Brittany Ferenz, CT Coordinator for CCE an organization with 90,000 members that strongly supports an ordinance to reduce plastic bags. A 420 signature petition was submitted in favor of banning plastic bags.

James Rell, Mountain Road – likes plastic bags and has many re-uses for them. Paper bags are difficult for the elderly to carry. He is conscious of the environment.

Gail Lavielle, asked retailers if they would be more comfortable with a decision made on the state level. Mr. Keating stated that he would be much more comfortable.

Dr. Cunitz and other representatives from Westport were present. They advised that they had a six month educational program before the plastic bag ban was in effect.

B. Consent Agenda

Upon motion by Mr. Clark, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved as follows. Mr. Creeth abstained from voting on the Tax Refunds:

Minutes

- Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting of September 7, 2010

Tax Refunds

- Motor Vehicle as per Tax Collector Memo 9/9/10
- Motor Vehicle as per Tax Collector Memo 9/10/10

Gifts

- Donation of \$100 from Nancy Hansen to the Wilton Police Department

This donation is most appreciated.

C. Discussion and/or Action

1. Raymond Ambler House Project Update

Ann Bell, President of Friends of Ambler Farm gave a presentation on the work done to date on the white house.

2. Possible Property Sale

The 8-24 referral from the Planning & Zoning Commission has been approved for the purchase of a 0.12 acre parcel of Town-owned land on the southwest corner of Olmstead Hill Road and Danbury Road. This sale will be discussed at a future meeting.

3. Town of Wilton and DOT Update

First Selectman Brennan reported that work has begun at the Crossways at Rt. 33 and Rt. 7. The utilities work is being finished and the work on the retaining wall has begun and is expected to take three months. The structural work on the Rt. 33 bridge is expected to begin Oct. 1 and take several months. The work at the train station is proceeding on schedule and should be open for the winter. Most of the internal work has been done on the Marvin Tavern building and the exterior will soon be washed and painted. The Veterans Memorial Green work is on schedule – the monuments may be placed the end of this week.

4. Consideration of Resolution for LHD-Unintentional Injury Prevention Grant from the State of Connecticut

Health Director Steve Schole is applying for a grant in the amount of \$2,282 to fund a Medication Safety and Fall Prevention program for older adults. Ms. Bruschi moved the Resolution authorizing First Selectman William Brennan to sign the contract with the State of CT. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

5. Acceptance of Historic Document Preservation Grant

Ms. Bruschi moved to accept the Historic Document Preservation Grant in the amount of \$3,000. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

6. Miscellaneous Other Business – None noted

D. Public Comment – Senator Boucher advised that there had been a bill introduced in Hartford addressing plastic bags state-wide, but did not involve a ban. The bill was meant to stop other towns from going the same route as Westport. It is important to listen to small businesses.

E. Reports

1. First Selectman's Report: No further report
2. Selectmen Reports

Mr. Creeth: No report

Mr. Clark: No report

Mr. Hoffstatter: No report

Ms. Bruschi: People are asking who is responsible for clean up of the new sidewalks along Route 7. Mr. Brennan advised that since Route 7 is a state road, they are responsible. However, they don't have the resources right now so the grass cutting near the schools has fallen on our Parks & Rec employees.

F. Adjournment

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Jan Andras, Recording Secretary