

Common Council Actions

**City of Norwalk
Common Council
Public Hearing
July 17, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Council President Fred Bondi; Michael Geake, Richard Bonenfant, Carvin Hilliard, Laurel Lindstrom, Douglas Hempstead, Andrew Conroy, William Krummel, Amanda Brown (7:45 p.m.)

STAFF: Atty. Robert Maslan, Corporation Counsel

OTHERS: Charles Taney, James P. Murphy, Patricia Genuario, Anne Farrow, Jerry Crowley, Diane Cece, Helen Marshall, Walter Briggs, Diane Lauricella, Larry Ruttenger, Bill Galasso, John Frank, Ernest Dumas, Debra Kreter, Robert Burgess, Al Aymes, Joe Newell, Rev. Jeffrey A. Ingraham, Calvary Baptist Church; Timothy Butler, Enviro Express; Shirley Green, Anne Frimet, Nellie Mann, Yolanda Dancey, John Melling, Harbor Shores Secretary/Treasurer

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Bondi called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m. Mr. Hempstead said that Ms. Straniti was ill and could not attend the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

Council President Bondi reviewed the rules. He said that each person would be given three minutes to speak and requested that everyone remain civil.

Let it be noted that the following comments and remarks by all speakers have been summarized and are not necessarily verbatim.

Mr. Charles Taney came forward and said that he lives at 9 Outer Road. He said that he had attended the last few Council and DPW meetings about the garbage at Meadow Street. He said that he hears that Meadow Street is permitted by 250 tons, that if the City has control over the facility, it will control it.

Mr. Taney said that the DEP was actively reviewing the renewal for Meadow Street and that the DEP was interested in hearing from the residents. He said that there might be a potential lawsuit looming to stop the garbage from going to Meadow Street. He then advised the Council to join the environmental lawsuit.

Mr. James Murphy came forward and said that he represented LaJoie's on 40 Meadow Street. He said that his company would be pro active and want to be part of the solution and not part of the problem. He said that he would be meeting with the Mayor and the Chief of Police. Mr. Murphy said that for the record, he would like to have the Mayor and the Chief of Police to visit LaJoie's site. He said that he realizes that there are traffic issues and there are problems, which need to be addressed. He also added that during this recession, LaJoie's is employing more people and there are local residents. Mr. Murphy then invited everyone to come and question him about the traffic concerns. He said that LaJoie's has been there for 65 years and seen many changes. He said that he was a neighbor to the transfer station and the company has gotten along with the commercial neighbors but needs to work with the residential neighbors.

Ms. Patricia Genuario came forward and said that she lived at 42 Neptune Avenue in Harbor View. Ms. Genuario said she had spoken before the Council regarding this issue and about the "quality of life" for the area. She then urged the Council to vote no and to continue on with the Crescent Street operation.

Ms. Genuario then submitted a copy of her statement to the secretary to be attached to the minutes. (Attachment #1).

Ms. Anne Farrow said she lives at 6 Harbor View Avenue. She said that DPW was promoting the Meadow Street transfer station. She then said that it was interesting that at all three public hearing there have been between 50 and 100 residents in attendance. Ms. Farrow said that she had concerns about the odors. She asked what would happen if the proposed misting system didn't work. She referenced a recent DPW meeting when Mr. Hilliard asked about the odors and was ignored by the Council President Bondi. She then reminded everyone that the environmental judge bill had been passed and asked if the City would be dedicating some of the supposed savings to the neighborhood.

Ms. Farrow then submitted a copy of her statement to the secretary to be attached to the minutes. (Attachment #2).

Mr. Crowley came forward and said he was represented Ms. Bitsy Farnsworth of 10 Harbor View Avenue, who was not able to attend the meeting. He then read the a statement from Ms. Farnsworth regarding the proposed transfer station to the Council.

Copies of the statement were passed out to the Council members along with copies of the aerial photos. (Attachment #3 a,b,c)

Ms. Farnsworth said that the residents on the north side of the Meadow Street transfer station would be strongly affected and that Harbor Shores and Village Creek are directly across the estuary from the site.

Mr. Crowley then requested that the Council members read the statement from Ms. Farnsworth and consider it carefully before voting.

Ms. Diane Cece from 37 Olmstead Place came forward and said that at the DPW Special Meeting on July 14th, Council President Bondi said that the transfer could not be put at Taylor Farm because “the residents would not allow it”. She said that she had requested a copy of the verbatim transcript of the meeting. Council Bondi said that he did not believe he said that. Ms. Cece said that when the minutes come, she would apologize for this. Ms. Cece said that She then said that some of the Council members claimed to have She also said that Mr. Alvord had not supplied Ms. Lindstrom and Mr. Hempstead with the updated environmental study and other information they had requested.

Council President Bondi informed Ms. Cece that her three minutes were up. She argued that she only had a few more sentences to say. Council President Bondi called Ms. Helen Marshall forward. Ms. Marshall said that she would cede her time to Ms. Cece.

Ms. Cece said that she expected the committee work to be done in committee and that only the fact should be presented to the Council members, not the gathering thereof. Council President Bondi thanked Ms. Cece for her remarks and called the next speaker, Mr. Walter Briggs, forward.

Ms. Cece then submitted a copy of her statement to the secretary to be attached to the minutes. (Attachment #4).

Mr. Briggs explained that he was waiting for a copy of a resolution to arrive and requested that he be moved to the end of the speaker list. Council President Bondi agreed.

Ms. Diane Lauricella, of 16 Marlborough Road, came forward and said that she was speaking for the Norwalk Open Government, which was a coalition of 36 different associations to insure that the Council makes a decision based on the facts. She asked that the public be informed in advance and that the environmental information be distributed to the public earlier. She added that the Health Department, the Health, Welfare and Public Safety Committee and various other committee involved in public health should have been involved earlier.

She then distributed copies of minutes by the City Staff of a meeting that took place in April at the DEP about establishing a regional transfer station.

Council President Bondi informed Ms. Lauricella her three minutes were up.

Ms. Lauricella said that it was ridiculous that the speakers were being held to a three minute limit. Council President Bondi asked Ms. Lauricella if she wished him to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Lauricella then challenged Council President to be “decent”.

Ms. Lauricella then submitted a copy of her documents to the secretary to be attached to the minutes. (Attachment #5a&b).

Mr. Larry Ruttenburg came forward and said that he lived at 36 Buckingham Place. Mr. Ruttenburg said that he had attended meetings about a different issue and heard the arguments. He said that he thought it had sounded like a good, well thought out idea. He urged the Council to vote for the Meadow Street proposal.

Mr. Bill Galasso came from ward and said that he lived at 227 Strawberry Hill Avenue. He said that he had lived next to a junkyard and thought that the City should go forward on this issue. He urged that Council approve the measure immediately in order to get on with other business.

Mr. John Frank, chairman of the Shellfish Commission, and who lives on East Meadow Lane, in Norwalk came forward. Mr. Frank then read his comments to the Council. He said that he has known George LaBlanc for a long time and Mr. LaBlanc would be a good manager for the City Carting facility. However, he was unsure as to whether or not the Meadow Street facility could handle 1200 tons a day. He also expressed concern regarding run off into Village Creek and pointed out that it affected the oyster beds. He then encouraged the Council members to consider a number of questions about the issue before voting.

Mr. Frank then submitted a copy of his statement to the secretary to be attached to the minutes. (Attachment #6)

Ms. Brown joined the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Council President Bondi asked Mr. Frank if he was speaking as Chair of the Shellfish Commission. Mr. Frank said he thought that the answer should be evident. Council President Bondi said that it was not evident, which was why he was asking. Mr. Frank confirmed that he was, in fact, speaking as the Chairman of the Shellfish Commission.

Mr. Ernest Dumas came forward and said that he lives on South Main Street. He said that he was present to represent the people of South Norwalk. He said that with the situation at hand, no one had thought to ask about the health of the children who live in that community. He said that Council President Bondi had mentioned one million dollars in savings, but not the children. During the DPW meeting on Monday, accidents at Crescent Street were mentioned. Mr. Dumas said that he researched the police accident reports and that there were no accidents at Crescent Street

Ms. Deborah Kreter came forward and said that she lives in Village Creek. She said that she had five questions. She said that the City proposed fines for trucks backing up onto the road. She said that she had called the police at 5,6 or 7 a.m., but that when the police come, the situation has already resolved itself.

She said that the City was convinced that there would not be any leaching from the area. She then asked how the City knew this and what studies had been done.

She then asked about the 2 million dollar bond with only 1 million dollar savings.

Ms. Kreter asked if there had been studies to look at Crescent Street in terms of environmental studies and if the public had access to it.

She then asked why the public had been denied access to the most recent traffic study report.

Mr. Burgess came forward and said that he resides at 17 Brooklawn Avenue. He said that on April 28th, the City had been notified about the Meadow Street project and wished to know who knew about it and when they knew it.

Mr. Burgess then asked why half of Crescent Street would be closed when the new developments were constructed. He said that Mr. Alvord had not provided information to the public. He said that he had a meeting with Mr. John Griffin and that there would be an injunction against the City if Meadow Street is used. He said that this was a discriminatory action against the poor people in South Norwalk. He said that the residents in South Norwalk would not allow any more dumping in South Norwalk

Mr. Al Aymes came forward and said he lives at 28 Martin Luther King Drive. He said that using the Meadow Street transfer station would save the city money, but also that the residents in meadow Street area have not been getting the services they need. Approving the Meadow Street transfer would affect six communities, Village Creek, Meadow Gardens, Harbor Shores, Wilson Point, and Shorefront Park, not to mention the rest of the residents of South Norwalk. He then urged the Council members to vote against the use of the Meadow Street Transfer Station.

Mr. Aymes then submitted a copy of his statement to the secretary to be attached to the minutes. (Attachment #7)

Mr. Joe Newell came forward and said that he lived in South Norwalk. He said that the statement that there is a transfer station in Meadow Street and it should be continued to be used was not a good argument. He said that there are contaminants all over South Norwalk and many children have asthma. He said that the Council needed to look at the entire area and that it was an injustice for the community to have further burdens place upon it.

Rev. Ingraham of 6 Leatherwood Road, who is the pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, came forward. He said that his concerns were the health impacts for the residents in the area. Dr. Rev. Lindsay Curtis just published a paper in the recent issue of the NAACP about the effects of these types of projects that are allowed to take place on the health of nearby residents. He then asked at whose expense this 1 million dollars would be saved. He said that it was common knowledge that this area was underserved in terms of health insurance and medical care.

Mr. Briggs came forward sand he lives at 4 Meridian Road. He said that he would read a resolution passed by District E, which he wished to have included in the record.

District E Democrats Resolution

The following resolution was passed at the July 16, 2008 meeting of the District E Democrats:

Resolved: The District E Democrats support environmental justice for South Norwalk and oppose the expansion of the use of the Meadow Street Facility to handle garbage.

Mr. Briggs then suggested that this be sent back to Committee for further study and planning. He said that it would be important to resolve this so that everyone wins.

Mr. Briggs then submitted a copy of the resolution to the secretary to be attached to the minutes. (Attachment #8)

Council President Bondi asked if there was any one else present that did not sign up on the list but wished to speak. Several people came forward.

Mr. Timothy Butler from Enviro Express came forward. He said that EnviroExpress was willing to continue providing service after January 1st. He encouraged the City to consider this.

Ms. Shirley Green of 51 Elmwood Avenue came forward and said that she was speaking on behalf of residents of Meadow Gardens. She said that people don't think of the people who work on that street and that there are many people who don't have health insurance. She said that there are people who live in this area. She said that those in Silvermine, Rowayton and East Norwalk would not want the transfer station in their neighborhood.

Ms. Frimet came forward and said that she lives at 20 Split Rock Road. She said that she had been working on keeping their community in balance. She then said that the City had been pushing more and more things onto South Norwalk. She then said she had just learned that half of Crescent Street was going to be closed, which would force the traffic onto the other half of Crescent Street. She said that it sounded like this was being presented as a "Relax and get used to it" idea. She said that the residents had elected the Council to represent all of Norwalk, not just the nice neighborhoods.

Ms. Nellie Mann said that she resides at 19 Lawrence Street in a neighborhood where everyone is someone. She then said that the elderly and the children would be harmed by this situation. She said that it was important to realize that everyone in the Meadow Street area is someone special and not to just dump garbage at the transfer station.

Ms. Yolanda Dancey came forward and said that she was the president of Meadow Gardens Association. She said that she was concerned about the children and when she comes home from work, the stench at the corner of Meadow Street is unbearable. She then suggested that the Council take a longer look at keeping the transfer station at Crescent. She said that the children have a park right on the street right near the transfer

station. The children down on Meadow Street live with more things to content with than the other children in Norwalk.

Mr. John Milling came forward and said that he was the secretary for the Harbor Shores and that his community was near the Meadow Street area. He said that he realized that the Council was required to have this hearing. He said that there were problems at Meadow Street and that the transfer station will make life just that much harder. He pointed out that the residents are making an effort to have a nice neighborhood. He said that while it wasn't the City's responsibility to make this nicer but the Council should do whatever it could to make life easier for the Meadow Street residents. He urged the Council to invite the residents in for a meeting where they could see where the drainage system.

Council President Bondi asked if there was anyone else who wished to address the Council. When no one else came forward, Council President Bondi closed the public hearing at 8:19 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Bondi then adjourned the meeting 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

