

***APPROVED MINUTES*** of the City Council  
Budget Workshop of the City Council of the  
City of Rye held on November 26, 2007 at  
7:10 P.M.

PRESENT:

STEVEN OTIS, Mayor  
ANDREW C. BALL  
MACK CUNNINGHAM  
MATTHEW FAHEY  
DUNCAN HENNES  
HOWARD G. SEITZ  
Councilmen

ABSENT: GEORGE PRATT

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Otis called the meeting to order and invited the Council to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Otis asked the City Clerk to call the roll; a quorum was present to conduct official City business.

3. Continued Discussion of 2007 Budget

Mayor Otis said this evening's workshop would concentrate on proposals for capital spending. City Manager Paul Shew said the discussion could also include the 3.1 Initiative (Staff's proposal to lower the tax rate to 3.1%), questions and answers, a flood needs section, revenues and consideration of some resolutions amending the 2007 budget. He welcomed City Engineer, George Mottarella who was present to provide nuts and bolts information about the various projects.

**Theodore Fremd Wall**

There are serious problems with the gas transmission line which will need to be moved by Con Edison (the City is working with Con Ed and Con Ed is working with Chas. B. Sells). To shut this line down, it has to be warm weather so there is a timing issue. We also need to coordinate with the County on the sanitary sewer line; notify Metro North and coordinate with the Elm Place Project. Funding appears in place, but is now the **State DOT** rather than FEMA so there will be a 20% local contribution **(\$175,000)**

**Elm Place Wall**

This is a much simpler project which will most likely be funded directly from **FEMA** so probably no local contribution will be required, unless the City selects a more aesthetic surface (like the Boston Post Road) for the wall.

**Central Avenue Bridge**

This project also has utility interference issues. Con Edison may be capping the gas line today, but there are also issues with the water lines and the telephone wires. FEMA will not be funding this, as hoped. We are working with the **State DOT** so there will be a 20% local contribution (**\$290,000**).

**Theall Road**

This project is underway, but there are serious utility interference issues with this project as well, most particularly the water main which runs under the road in the City's right-of-way. The solution to this issue needs to be worked out with United Water Company (which bought Aquarion and ignored the need of this project). The City could try and move the main, but it is not our pipe and it would probably be illegal. There may be extra costs, especially as the cost of black-topping rises with the price of oil

**Metro North**

The City has had conversations with Metro North which has surveyed the parking area and submitted a plan to redesign it. Our job is to pave it, but not until there is a plan. The Council should have a workshop just to deal with this issue.

**Thruway Playing Fields**

Mr. Mottarella's only caution for this project is to have a Phase I exam to make sure there is no bad soil. No further discussion ensued.

**Trails and Pathways** Mr. Pickup and Mr. Miller are more familiar with these issues, which include:

- *Boston Post Road Diet.* It appears that this project is a matter of paving and striping and that the cost, this year, will be around **\$500,000**.
- *Roundabout at end of Purchase Street.* The County is working on paving in the area and may be ready by Spring 2008 so it would be good to coordinate. The Council thought it was an aesthetically good plan, but there needs to be a meeting of the residents (if they like it, go ahead; if not, don't do it). The existing flashing lights are scheduled for replacement, but if we do the roundabout, there will be a savings.
- *Safe Routes.* A state grant application is due April 1<sup>st</sup> and we are working with the YMCA. All committees have submitted their reports so as soon as the editing is final, the plan will be ready for review. The question was raised: "what do we do if you have a good path, but part of it can't be made into a sidewalk?" Most of the Boston Post Road has a 15' right-of-way, but it is true there may be unavoidable gaps.

### **Sidewalks**

The current budget includes routine maintenance of \$50,000 which will take care of City sidewalks or those lifted by City trees. Maybe we should look at other policies which would ease the pain for those who have to pay for the improvements. If the City builds new sidewalks (because of the Safe Routes plan) won't there be less money for maintenance?

### **Bird House/Friends/Boat Basin Historic Milltown District**

No one is quite sure where the *Bird House* fundraising is, but the City has met with an architect to see what can/should be done to at least stabilize the *Friends Meeting House*. It is clear it can't be raised above flood level (for one thing it would make handicapped access impossible). There is no clear plan about what to do with it.

The *Boat Basin* is still working hard on what to do about dredging. It is clear that the DEC is not positive about any dredging project and, at the moment, have new personnel so yet another person to say "no." It is a frustrating situation, made more difficult by having the dumping fields closed.

### **Police/Court Facility**

A study needs to be done and also to see what can/should be done. In the meantime, everyone wants to know when the fencing will come down so commuters can have some of their parking spaces back.

### **1037 Boston Post Road.**

Perhaps it should be appraised, with some of the parking retained by the City for City Hall/Library parking.

### **Peck Avenue Pump Station**

The majority of the job is done. We are waiting for a generator which needs to be diesel. The overrun is **\$60,000** which needs to be appropriated from the 2007 budget. (Note: the City now has a lot of back-up generators [Police HQ; Milton and Locust Fire House HQ; the 7 pump stations] all of which were operative during the April 15 storm. They are all required by the Westchester County Health Department so the City is in compliance.)

### **Flood Control Projects**

- *Upper Pond Sluice Gate*. Will be funded by FEMA. Local match is \$210,000/
- *Lower Pond Study*. Chas. B. Sells is ready to study alternatives for this project. Funds would have to be taken from contingency.
- *Dredging/disposal of spoils at the Boat Basin*. See above. We are working on trying to make this a demonstration project with FEMA, State and Federal approvals.

### **Capital fund (and other) miscellaneous issues (budget related):**

- *The Purchase Street Study*. Mayor Otis questioned why there is still \$100,000 in the budget for this study if we aren't going to do any of the projects. Mr. Mottarella says learning about the infrastructure before doing anything is

important. The wisdom of the study is to know what work you will have to do so you can see it in the context of the whole. The issue of grease disposal is also a CBD problem.

- CBD Parking Meters: The income from the meters is currently allocated to the general fund; the Mayor wants it designated specifically for CBD improvements. He would rather see the signals redone now, even before the study.
- Have the steps to the Rye Art Center been fixed? Temporary fix has been done; funds for a complete re-build are still in the budget.
- Over the past decade Merchant Parking Permits have risen 22%; property taxes have increased 73%.
- Re the 3.1 Initiative: There is no agreement on whether or not to reduce staff.

Mayor Otis noted that the Water Runoff Committee is doing a great job. George Mottarella and Christian Miller are very impressive, so much so that he has asked them to serve on his County Committee which is examining the same topic.

Mayor Otis announced that there would be an executive session prior to Wednesday night's Council Meeting, commencing at 7:00 P.M.

#### Adjournment

As there was no further discussion on the budget, Councilman Hennes made a motion, seconded by Councilman Fahey and unanimously carried, to adjourn the budget workshop at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Morison  
City Clerk