

**MINUTES
COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
SIXTH TAXING DISTRICT, City of Norwalk, CT
September 16, 2020**

**7:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

Commission Chair Tammy Langalis called the September 16, 2020 meeting of the Sixth Taxing District Commissioners to order at 7:10 p.m. She welcomed those attending and introduced the members of the Commission.

Approval of the Minutes will take place at the end of the meeting.

Mrs. Langalis said that we would start at the bottom of the New Business agenda as many people wanted to speak to this item. (There will follow a detailed account of those residents).

Priscilla Feral, McKinley Road, was the first resident to speak. She said that some people didn't get the link for the meeting. She wanted to know how we can assure that the people who want to participate can? Is it a technology issue? Commission Chair Tammy Langalis answered that people who want to join the meeting should email us for the link. It is then sent to them. If we provide the info, you need to email Mike Barbis for the link. There's no one now waiting to join the meeting. Mr. Barbis said that the link is posted on the District web site (www.Rowayton6TD.com) at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Myrvet Fouquart of Burchard Lane said that she is against racism in any shape and form. She has no objection to people who want to hang the sign. However, there are many crises in the world. She is against these projects around the country. We should do everything we can to counter racism, but we shouldn't put that sign up as opposed to signs about any other issue. Many organizations provide help and they may need help as well. Myrvet says she has been subjected to racism as she is of an Arab background. She feels that there are many crises in the world and we should address all of them and just not concentrate on Black Lives Matter.

Ivy from 14 Pine Point said that we have an opportunity to figure out a way to state the obvious, that we are welcoming and that includes Black people. We shouldn't need to have a sign. The town only needs to say "We Welcome You".

MINUTES – September 16, 2020

Page Two

Char Givens thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak. This resident is a long time resident of Rowayton. She praises Rowaytonites for welcoming her and her family, people of color. Residents of Rowayton have gone out of their way to make us feel welcome. Joe Jensen came to her house and stayed with her when someone in her household died. He supported her unconditionally. This is the first time that I have felt a little tone deafness about Black Lives Matter. Please don't jump to conclusions about what should be done. Everyone feels that this isn't political. We know that Black Lives Matter. We in Rowayton are always welcoming and we don't need reminding. This isn't political – this is about all humanity. We just need to make sure that we bring awareness of the issue to people in the town.

Chris commented that this issue is polarizing. The last thing he wants to see when he drives home is that sign. He doesn't disagree with the sentiment. There should be a better way to reinforce that Rowayton is a welcoming community. It's not about pushing back on the Black Lives Matter.

Ivy reiterated her support for the sign. There's a lot of polarization right now around the Black Lives Matter organization. All Lives Matter. We might need a reminder that the global movement to bring Black Lives Matter to the forefront. Is this political? There is a law enacted preventing federal employees to be political at work.

Susan Edwards, Pennoyer Street, said that the organization, Racism in America, encourages people. She attended a "Racism in America" series at the Library in New Canaan and was very favorably impressed.

Caitlin said that she would like to celebrate the rallies that have occurred in Rowayton. She wishes to thank these proactive people who are participating in these rallies. There is aggression and micro aggression and we need to draw people's attention to it. As far as the removal of the sign goes, other families can come forward and express their support if they wish.

Lauren, 26 Bryan Road, supports the sign. It's a statement from our community when some people might not feel comfortable speaking out about this issue.

Lily cited what people are saying on Next Door Rowayton. People can comment on such a site when they might not be comfortable speaking out about it.

A gentleman resident asked how the Commissioners propose to approach this issue to make sure that Rowayton is a welcoming place? It's odd that the Commissioners have the right to decide about this sign, he said.

Liz Beinfield, Pennoyer Street, said that all the questions so far were interesting. She wonders why the Commissioners have the jurisdiction over the sign and the fence. Who gets to decide about what goes up there? Could you answer this question?

MINUTES – September 16, 2020

Page Three

Nora King, Covewood Road, said that she is for anything on the fence, but thinks there are better ways of doing it instead of going against what the fence rules are. Many organizations have signs there. She's sort of appalled and thinks this is all terrible. We all do a lot for the organizations in Rowayton.

Ethel Schatz said that what is legal is that Black Lives Matter. Most of us do feel that Black Lives Matter. When it comes up as a topic, there is a white community that feels their pain.

A Darien resident who owns property in Norwalk supports people and is expressing his support saying that Black Lives Do Matter. Obviously they do.

Another resident noted that there is a repercussion to the community and to a potential constitutional issue and it all is entwined with the politics of Donald Trump. This is not whether or not this is political. It is constitutional. When the issue of the house in Farm Creek came up, I was against it but I didn't bother the Commissioners about it. The protesters are not the same as the people in this community. We don't put our feet on the neck of people and snuff the life out of them. There are some repercussions that are political.

Commission Chair Tammy Langalis said that the stewardship of the Old School Field (Witch Lane Park) has been granted to the Sixth Taxing District by Norwalk, specifically by the Department of Recreation and Parks. We had a meeting with most of the groups in Rowayton, to talk about the fence. We set some guidelines and the length of time a sign could be displayed on the fence was set at two weeks. People don't like so many yard signs popping up all around town. The notices on the fence are to notify residents of local upcoming events, personal birthdays, etc. We included that in our fence guidelines.

Commissioner John Igneri said that piece of property had been controlled by the City of Norwalk for a long time. Over the years we struck an agreement with the City and they have given us jurisdiction over it now. One time they didn't allow signs on that fence at all. They wanted to put in a chain link fence but gave in and gave the 6TD jurisdiction over the fence.

Commission Chair Tammy Langalis said it is still unclear who gave the Commissioners jurisdiction over the signage. The City of Norwalk owns the property. They have allowed the Sixth Taxing District to monitor the property as explained previously. We do not own the property. It was Recreation and Parks and we who had a verbal understanding about it. We have had the neighbors cutting the signs down, The Commissioners' believe the signs benefit the community.

Commissioner Mike Barbis said that there was a lawsuit in the past following the demise of the Five Mile River School District. There was a big legal battle between the City of Norwalk and the 6TD. They chose not to go to court. About 8 years ago, the chain link fence was replaced with the wooden one now in place. The Commissioners are the elected representatives for this part of the City. That's how it gave the Commissioners control over the fence.

MINUTES – September 16, 2020

Page Four

Caitlin said that it would be interesting to know who it is – the mayor? another woman? who has the actual control of managing the fence? All of the Commissioners have done a good job of handling everything. It should be a vote for all residents. The current process has worked for a very long time. The Commissioners take care of everything. Are the Commissioners open to having a dialog?

Mrs. Langalis said that we will take all your ideas into consideration. If everyone wants to go to a non-profit whose signs would go on the fence, what would be your final ideas?

A resident asked where we should go for information? Who should we be contacting? Mrs. Langalis said that the 6TD web site (www.Rowayton6TD.com) would be the place to go for any information about the Sixth Taxing District.

Mrs. Langalis said that we would go on to discussion of the algae building up at the Rowayton School Duck Pond. Jason brought out some specialists to advise us on what we could do short of very expensive dredging to alleviate that problem. And, even though we thought the pond was too shallow to install an aerator, that's what the advisors suggested. The system would have a compressor and 4 – 5 pumps throughout the pond. The estimate for this system to be installed was \$17,000 +. We would have to approach the City of Norwalk and the Department of Rec and Parks to get permission to have an aerator installed since the City of Norwalk owns the pond. Since there have been quite a lot of comments about the pond, this might be an opportunity to do some fundraising. Rowayton Gardeners might be inclined to provide some financial help to this project. In response to Commissioner John Igneri's question of it not being too shallow, Jason said that the company would come in with a net and scoop up off the bottom what they can. It would keep the water moving and would be slightly warmer.

The next topic on the Agenda, is a discussion of problems with the currently recycling efforts and an upcoming action plan to improve those efforts. Mrs. Langalis said that we have become frustrated in trying to get residents to follow all the rules related to recycling. We now have a flier to communicate what can be recycled and how. We have a very conscientious community but we have to get the word out about the rules of what can be sent in the recycling bins. For instance, things to be recycled can't be put in plastic bags and put in the recycling bin. It is thought that cleaning ladies may be doing this without knowing the guidelines.

Mrs. Langalis said that she has been approached by residents about having a place to put a pickle ball court. This sport has become very popular. It has been a topic that we have discussed for awhile, for a couple of years. We didn't have a place for it. We've done some research and have been looking at various options for awhile. Some neighborhoods have been putting up courts on their own. A lot of our residents have been doing some serious legwork. Drew Seath and Tim Widmer, the president of the Rowayton Tennis Association, have been front and center. The RTA has given a lot of support to his. We're in the early days, but we have to start somewhere, Drew Seath did a presentation of the idea via Zoom. He said that Pickle Ball is the fastest growing sport in the United States. Neighbors have started playing. It's not just for old people

MINUTES – September 16, 2020
Page Five

as some people thought. We've tried to play it on paddle tennis courts and it doesn't really work. What would have to happen for Rowayton to build pickle ball courts? We have received over 50 comments on Next Door Rowayton – and he has received another 25 personally. They have been 100% positive as being in favor of construction of Pickle Ball Courts. They would need 20'x 44' for the courts and 30' x 60' for actual play. It would be the same as an asphalt tennis court. The fence around a court would need to be 7' high. Where could they go? Bayley Beach, Pinkney Park, Rowayton School? The Board of Ed would only allow use of them outside of school hours so that would not be a great option. There is a space at Bayley Beach where there was previously a lot of grass and a tree which is located behind the kayak racks. We could fit 4 courts in that space. We would like to propose looking into building two courts now with the thought of having 2 more in the future. They have approached the President of the RCA. We have an idea to ask the RTA to have Pickle Ball as an adjunct to the RTA with the idea that the RTA would run the problem, at least in the beginning. The rough estimate for cost would be a bit under \$50,000. We're asking the Commissioners if they think there is a better location than that. Also, what funding could the 6TD provide? With Pickle Ball being a real growing and popular sport, we would like to get some agreement as soon as possible. They have played Pickle Ball a bit on Court #5. However, the RTA is using that court for tennis more and more. Commissioner Igneri said that he would support the construction of Pickle Ball Courts. All of the Commissioners thanked Drew and Tim for all the work they have done on this so far. Mrs. Langalis asked if the proposal would be for one or two courts initially? The answer was "Two". The estimates are for everything but lighting. It would include the cost to take out the fill and replace it with more stable land. It would be about \$35,000+ to do all 4 courts at once. A question was asked if the costs would go up dramatically if we did only two courts now? Also, how would you go about doing fundraising? They replied that they hadn't given that lot of thought yet.

REPORTS

As the Commissioners have already spoken during the New and Old Business part of the Agenda, we will begin with the Treasurer's report.

**Sixth Taxing District
Treasurer's Narrative Report
Commissioners' Meeting
September 16, 2020**

Handouts to Commissioners*:

- Budget vs. Actual report as of August 31, 2020 for FY 20-21
- Capital Funds Project Balances report as of August 31, 2020
- Report of Bills Paid for the following months:
 - August 2020

MINUTES – September 16, 2020
Page Six

Comments on Reports:

- **Budget vs. Actual Report for FY 20-21**
 - Our income is at 34% of the budgeted income
 - Our expenses are currently at 25% of the budgeted expenses
- **Capital Budget**
 - Including reserves, the Capital account has a balance of \$471,808

Events:

- We are still reviewing Fiscal Year End and working on setting up for the new Fiscal Year
- We are also preparing for the Annual Audit

*Please note, these are preliminary drafts and not final audited reports
 \$Statistical reports will appear at the end of the Minutes

Our portion of the tax revenues from the City of Norwalk should be received within the next 32 days. Revenues are down for Bayley Beach and special events by about \$13,000 which is about \$34,000 under budget. The \$6500 rental income budgeted will show a \$19,000 shortfall. Our expenses are pretty much in line with the budget. We’ll get a report to the Commissioners early next month. We have about \$471,000 balance. The Treasurer’s Office is working on the first Fiscal Year end assessment for the audit. The process continues.

Report of the District Fire Marshal	July – August 2020		Ed Carlson	
<u>Type of Activity</u>	<u>#</u>		<u># Man Hours</u>	
	July	August	July	August
Blasting Permits		***		***
Blasting Site Inspections		***		***
Building Inspections	3	2	3	2
Clerical (office) work			14	13
Fire Marshal Conferences		***		***
Career Development Training		***		***
Investigations	1	2	1	2
Meetings: District Monthly	1		2	
FNHCFMA	1	1	1	1
Sign Temporary Liquor Permit	1		1	
Building Plain Review	1		2	
Oil Tank Inspection	1			
	Total Man Hours:		24	18

Remarks: Due to Covid-19, Operation Save-A-Life did not occur, but I have some detectors for residents if necessary.

Discussions are ongoing with two vendors to upgrade our fire Incident Reporting and Inspections software.

MINUTES – September 16, 2020
Page Seven

District Property Manager Report

August – September 2020

Ed Carlson

Community Center:

1. New wood chips have been spread throughout the beds and Sweet Peat mulch added to Dogwoods. Some trees will possibly be replaced this fall.
2. Clean Bee Company has been hired to clean and sanitize after events.
3. Two dead trees were removed by District personnel.

Bayley Beach:

1. NO PARKING Signs have been installed along Pine Point Road.
2. The phones will be turned off after the camp out.
3. AED will be removed by Norwalk Hospital for the winter.
4. Geese Relief was hired to control Canada Geese.
5. Fragmites cut down by Round Meadow
6. Large Locust tree removed by Brown Tree Service.

Pinkney Park:

1. District personnel cleaned property following the storm and there was no major loss of trees.
2. Watering hoses were missing from the Memorial Garden and the south side of Pinkney House. We hope to have them returned.
3. A call from the abutting neighbor on the north who is concerned about the dead wood in the maple tree. Brown Tree Company is to prune the dead wood.

R. R. Parking Lot:

1. The lot is being used by more commuters recently. A number of permits have been applied for, but not yet paid for. The Wait List is having some issues with the way Park Mobile has set it up and we are waiting for an explanation.

It was noted that Diane would like to return next summer with Di's Sea Shanty at Bayley Beach..

Report of the District Clerk

September 16, 2020

Andrea Woodworth

1. Katie Nigurdkar (she's the Pinkney Park yoga person) has asked about the possibility of having yoga classes in the Community Center starting this fall. Would you approve this if we can find a time to accommodate her? **YES** I think she would like two mornings during the week and one Saturday class. She said she can be flexible. So, if we had an opportunity to rent the Moose Room for a party on the weekend, I'm sure she would either cancel or move her class for that day. I believe there would be about 10 people per class so that they can social distance, She may be able to use the Grace Room if you think we could get 10 people distanced there.
2. I've had a couple of requests to rent rooms at the Community Center. Since a discussion of the conditions for this is on the Agenda, my questions about cleaning fees

MINUTES – September 16, 2020

Page Eight

will have probably been answered. In the case of our regulars (repeats), would they need to pay the cleanup fee for each occasion that they meet? I would assume so, but just wanted to confirm that. **TBD**

3. I've had a request to rent the Pavilion in early October. I want to be sure I don't rent it when the picnic tables have been moved up there and/or the water has been turned off. Do we have a possible date when that might happen. **TBD**
4. I've had a request from a Norwalk Police officer to have a wedding at Bayley Beach on October 17, a Saturday. This would be for about 15 people and for a max of 2 hours. He is a Monroe resident but the season is over now so that shouldn't be an issue. The fee for an out of District resident for 2 hours at Bayley would be \$100. It says \$50 on the pricing schedule but I think that must have been a typo as the fee for 0-1 hour is \$100 and 2-4 hours is \$100. Should this be comped for a police officer? **YES**
5. I haven't heard from Andy Meyerson about the Corn Hole Tournament that has been advertised as starting at 11 a.m. on October 3. You all have given the go ahead to Rowayton Soccer to use one of the front fields from 9:00 – 11:15 on Saturday morning on one of those same fields. I think the Corn Hole Tourney was hoping to set up on both fields. I'm hoping the Library will be able to start their event at 12:00 noon. Sue Powell indicated about 51 people with soccer players and parents to use these fields. Does anyone have a suggestion? We could probably finesse the start since we're only talking about 15 minutes but the parking would probably be an issue. **After returning home, I had received an email from Andy Meyerson saying that the Library would move the start of the Corn Hole Tournament to 1:00 p.m.**

The Clerk was asked to send a schedule of potential users of the Community Center when it opens for regular use.

On a motion by Commissioner Mike Barbis, the Minutes of the July 15, 2020 meeting were approved.

Our next meeting of the Sixth Taxing District Commissioners will be held via Zoom on October 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

On a motion by Commissioner John Ignéri, the September 16, 2020 meeting of the Sixth Taxing District Commissioners was adjourned at 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea J. Woodworth
Clerk, 6th Taxing District

