

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2021**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Regular Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall at 2155 Main Street, with an option for attendance through Zoom video conferencing. The video was broadcast in real time and via a live video stream.

1. Roll Call.

Council Members

Mr. Thomas P. Gullotta, Chairman
Mr. Lawrence Niland, Vice Chairman
Ms. Deborah A. Carroll
Mr. Whit Osgood {excused}
Dr. Stewart Beckett III
Ms. Mary LaChance
Mr. Kurt P. Cavanaugh
Mr. Jacob McChesney
Ms. Lillian Tanski

a. Pledge of Allegiance *Led by Mr. McChesney*

2. Public Comment.

Chairman Gullotta opened the floor for in-person attendees to comment.

Stephan Maksymiuk of 275 Forest Lane, thanked the Council for supporting Safe Streets CT, and appreciates their bipartisan presence at the public forum and at the State Capitol. Justice must be provided to the impacted victims of juvenile crime, and these topics must be discussed at the legislative level. Safe Streets CT asked the Governor to take them up at a special legislative session, which they are told will not happen. He encouraged all to sign the petition started by the Mayor of Rocky Hill.

Eric Twachtman of 122 Evergreen Lane, is against the proposed demolition on Main Street. He fears that Glastonbury is slowly losing its unique charm.

Steven Bielitz of 80 Newell Lane, stated that Glastonbury is slowly losing many of its pre-revolutionary buildings in town. He was disturbed to see all the applications for demolition this week, for which there is vast community opposition. Even the plan's proponents acknowledge that gridlock will be exacerbated. He believes that good design complements the architecture that is next to it, rather than creating a new identity in one place. There is no continuity in the architecture here. He called for good, regional design.

Marshall Berdan of 2015 Main Street, spoke on behalf of the Historical Society, who is opposed to the proposed demolition of the Main Street properties. The Town does not need a project which denigrates its history. He called the proposal ‘disingenuous’ because the process has been rushed through. If the application were to be presented to the TPZ for approval, it would likely get rejected on the grounds of issues of access. He is as incensed about that as he is that they are taking down the buildings.

Donna Hendrickson of 1751 Main Street, President of the Historical Society, is very saddened that people want to demolish a building which was so important to the Town for the last century and a half. She hopes that the developers would take them into consideration because they want to preserve as many of these buildings as they can.

Robert Loughlin, Executive Director of the Historical Society, stated that a number of their members are against the destruction of the historic buildings on Main Street. He noted that these buildings have adapted before for over 200 years, so it can be done again.

Rob Hale of 832 Hopewell Road, stated that while the old Kamin’s building and supermarket are nostalgic places for him, they have no architectural merit or value anymore. What disturbs him is the proposed demolition of the building formerly owned by Gatesy because it has historical value and the existing two buildings by the wine shop. He plans to file an objection to the demolitions, but he asked that the Council considers everything expressed tonight. The proposed project should be narrowed down to keep the history and character of what Glastonbury has, while replacing the old buildings in the middle with something nicer.

Chris Haaf of 39 Strickland Street, supports the Historical Society in their efforts and hopes that the Main Street buildings do not get demolished.

Ms. Carroll read the written comment received, as listed on the Town website:

Denise Weeks of 334 Hollister Way West, is a member and past chair of the Commission on Aging. She is glad that the Town won the designation of an Age Friendly Community and created an Age Friendly Community Action Plan, which was a two-year effort. She is confident that the plan can serve as a blueprint for continuous improvement across the Domains of Livability and help ensure that Glastonbury is a town in which people of all ages and abilities can participate and thrive. She urged the Council to approve the plan this evening.

Mr. Niland opened the floor for comments from Zoom attendees.

Jacqueline Weiss of 25 Lazy Valley Road, asked questions to the BOE last night, which did not receive answers. She hopes that the Council can provide them:

1. Who in town was charged with completing the applications for the federal grants for the CARES Act and the emergency relief funds?
2. Who, or what, is the local education agency in charge of allocating this money?
3. Who exactly decides how the money is spent, and are taxpayers involved in any way?
4. How is this money being added to the budget?

5. Where and how exactly is the federal funding being spent?
6. What role does the Town Council play in the decision-making?
7. The BOE has run surplus the last two years to the tune of \$1.7 million. Why do they continue to ask for increased funding?
8. How much money is in the one percent fund?

Jennifer Wang of 86 April Drive, supports the Age Friendly Community Action Plan, which she hopes that the Council will formally approve. She also looks forward to Chief Porter's report tonight regarding the issue of car thefts and juvenile crimes. This Thursday, the Commission on Racial Justice and Equity will hold a community hearing on the results of its community survey finding. She was inspired to join the commission for its bipartisan spirit, and its mission is as important now as ever.

Jane Benson of 489 Chestnut Hill Road, is tired of dealing with the BOE. She expressed frustration at people who seek to destroy this beautiful town.

Emmy Weil of 233 House Street, stated that they need to preserve historic buildings and structures in town.

Pamela Lockard at 10 Southgate Drive, has lived in Glastonbury for 31 years. Glastonbury has a wonderful Town Council and BOE, and she is tired of hearing them being berated and attacked by those who offer no constructive criticism.

Mark Branse of 48 Birch Trail, echoed the statements made earlier on the importance of preserving historic and iconic buildings that define this town. He stated that the Council provided great comments during the preliminary design hearing, and the developer has completely ignored everything they said. He hopes that the Council will send the message that developers choosing to ignore the Council will do so at their own peril.

Joseph Weiss of 25 Lazy Valley Road, asked if public comments even matter. He does not think that people are being heard, which is unfortunate. Glastonbury is now in the orange zone. If people are forced to mask up because five people in town have COVID-19, then he thinks that they need to rethink things.

Chairman Gullotta stated that they will be adding an item to the agenda, which will be Item 5c.

Motion by: Mr. Cavanaugh

Seconded by: Mr. Niland

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby adds new business item: discussion and action concerning commercial and residential structure 2277-2289 Main Street to the agenda of Regular Council Meeting of September 28, 2021.

Result: Motion to add item to agenda passed unanimously {8-0-0}.

3. Special Reports.

a. Presentation on Age Friendly Community Action Plan (action to approve).

Mr. Johnson explained that this is something that the Council has supported previously. Jennifer DeSetti presented the initiative, which started in 2016. The Commission on Aging has seven members from town, which also work with the local AARP and the community at large. In 2018, the Commission applied to be part of an age-friendly network. Presented tonight is their action plan, which is 53 pages long.

She noted that AARP gave them eight domains to review, to decide how Glastonbury can become more age friendly. After community outreach in the form of a survey, several focus groups, and the formation of a core leadership team, they chose three domains to focus on: increasing access to open spaces and all town areas, enhanced walkability/transportation services, and expanded shared/alternative housing options. Each domain has within it specific recommendations and action items. They will continue to work towards a three-year plan for all those items.

For next steps, they hope that the Council will adopt the action plan. After which, they will submit it to AARP to attain certification, and then develop processes to enact the action plans, and incorporate the five other domains for AARP. They will continue to hold annual community conversations to review what they have done and inform the community on what lies ahead. They are also working with other towns in the state to share and work on best practices.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Community Action Plan, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated September 24, 2021, and as presented and recommended by the Commission on Aging.

Disc: Ms. Carroll stated that it has been a pleasure to serve as part of the core leadership team. As a town, they strive to innovate, and this is a great way to do so. Dr. Beckett seconded, noting that this is not just about helping the elderly, but about making the town better for all. Mr. Niland thanked all who created the action plan, which he called an amazing document. Ms. Tanski encouraged all to look at the plan, which is impressive and ambitious, but also very achievable.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {8-0-0}.

4. Old Business. None

5. New Business.

a. Status report concerning car thefts and related crimes by juveniles.

Chief Porter provided an update on the auto theft task force, which consists of three officers. They are proactive in the community, doing additional patrols, and speaking to residents. They have created a poster around town to remind people to not leave their cars running. They also work regionally with other police departments and prosecutors to hold the most dangerous offenders for longer than they would otherwise be held. Since July, they have made several

arrests and seized weapons, stolen cars, and disrupted a lot of activity, which has plummeted since July. However, there has been an increase in thefts in convenience stores and car jackings, but the task force is working on that, as well.

According to a recent Courant article, FBI statistics show that there has been an 11.8% increase nationwide on stolen vehicles, but a 40% increase in Connecticut. Task force officers are trying to get the message out to the community and work with legislators to communicate what the impediments are. The most recent legislative change was a step in the right direction, as judges and officers now have access to a juvenile's criminal history and court records. He also noted that they have received grant funding for a regional approach. Glastonbury will officially begin working in a regional task force shortly.

Ms. LaChance noticed that stolen car reports have gone down. She thanked Jill Barry for putting pressure on the state level. She asked if there has been a shift from crimes in Glastonbury to other towns. Chief Porter stated that he does not know, but he can find out. Mr. McChesney thanked the Chief and his team. He has spoken with the task force officers and found them very impressive. Mr. Cavanaugh stated that the last time the Chief Presented in front of the Council, he was down three or four officers. Chief Porter clarified that they are down five officers and are currently interviewing applicants. If he needs additional assistance from the Council, he will reach out.

b. Action to schedule public information hearing concerning American Rescue Plan Act funding to Glastonbury.

Mr. Johnson explained that they are developing a plan for how to spend the \$10.2 million that Glastonbury has received as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. Mr. Cavanaugh asked if he could address the questions that Ms. Weiss posed during the public comment session. Mr. Johnson stated that her questions were geared more towards the funds provided to education, but he will go back and check; if the questions relate to ARP, then he will be prepared to answer them at the next meeting. Ms. Tanski asked about the areas of the projects that could be eligible for this. Mr. Johnson noted that they mainly focused on identifying activities to support public health response, water and sewer, projects that can influence negative economic impacts, broadband infrastructure, and replacing lost revenue from the pandemic.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby schedules a public information hearing for 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 12, 2020/2021 in the Council Chambers of Town Hall, 2155 Main Street, Glastonbury and/or through Zoom Video Conferencing to hear public comment on potential uses of monies allocated to Glastonbury through the American Rescue Plan Act, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated September 24, 2021.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {8-0-0}.

PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON PUBLIC HEARING

NO 1: TRANSFER FROM THE GENERAL FUND-UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE (\$411,000) FOR GOODS AND SERVICES ORDERED BUT NOT YET RECEIVED AS OF JUNE 30, 2021.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves a \$411,000 transfer from the General Fund-Unassigned Fund Balance for goods and services ordered but not received as of June 30, 2021, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated September 24, 2021, and as recommended by the Board of Finance.

Disc: There were no comments from the public.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {8-0-0}.

c. Discussion and action concerning commercial and residential structure 2277-2289 Main Street (New agenda item)

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby expresses its objection to proposed demolition of the residential and commercial building at 2277-2289 Main Street and directs the Town Manager to file a formal objection to the issuance of a demolition permit for the subject building, in accordance with Section 5-64 of the Glastonbury Town Code of Ordinances.

Disc: Mr. Johnson noted that this action is for preservation of the Gaines Hotel. He explained the process of a demolition delay ordinance in Glastonbury. If an objection is filed within 30 days following publication of the legal notice, then the building official shall delay issuance of the permit for 90 days from the receipt of the application. He noted that they are already in the middle of that 90-day period since the application was submitted on September 30.

Amendment by: Mr. Cavanaugh

Seconded by: Mr. McChesney

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby expresses its objection to proposed demolition of the residential and commercial building at 2277-2289 Main Street **and 2389 Main Street** and directs the Town Manager to file a formal objection to the issuance of a demolition permit for the subject building, in accordance with Section 5-64 of the Glastonbury Town Code of Ordinances.*

Disc: Mr. Cavanaugh likes the idea that the Curtis and Gatesy buildings would bookcase something new that would go in that area. He thanked everyone for coming out tonight. He happened to catch the notice of this demolition in the Citizen on Thursday. It will take a lot of pressure to stop the destruction of this town and its history, but they are in a great position to do

something about that right now. Mr. McChesney was also very frustrated when he read about these demolition plans, particularly 2389 Main Street. He takes comments very seriously regarding motives. He recalls that the applicant sought a variance for more parking, which the TPZ pushed back on. It seems that the applicant is responding by seeking to tear down this building, which is wrong. He is very frustrated with the slow decline of the unique charm that Glastonbury has.

Result: Amendment passed unanimously {8-0-0}.

Discussion returned to the main motion (with the approved amendment).

Disc: Ms. Carroll stated that they held a public hearing on this in March, where the developers listened to a lot of feedback from the Council and the community. It seems like they have cheerfully ignored all of them and returned with their original plan, which is disrespectful. Mr. Niland was also maddened when he found out about this. He understands the need to redevelop that area. However, demolishing historic buildings is unconscionable. It is possible to mix development with historic preservation, and the developer shows a complete lack of respect for that historic area and for the Town of Glastonbury as a whole.

Ms. Tanski stated that the buildings included in this motion are some of the few unprotected historical buildings in the Town Center, which are important for the Council to protect. They need to develop comprehensive design guidelines. In addition to saving these buildings, they need to ensure that future development has a sense of time, place, and dialogue. Ms. LaChance is a big proponent of this action since Mr. Gullotta and Mr. Cavanaugh suggested developing a village district. Both took it very seriously, but the Council can only do so much. The way they impact this is through planning and zoning. Glastonbury has a long history, and they should look to preserve its buildings.

Mr. McChesney echoed his council members. He thanked Mr. Gullotta and Mr. Cavanaugh for their efforts in pushing the village district, which he finds important to pursue. He is frustrated they were not able to get it done before this application came in. He agrees that they need design standards to protect the character and charm of the downtown area, especially since they have lost a lot of it already. He agreed with Mr. Niland that there are ways to do development that honors the character and design of the town. They should fight the destruction of these buildings and make sure that whatever is built in that area falls within the design standards they are discussing.

Mr. Cavanaugh stated that, at a time when many people were moving to other surrounding towns, his father moved to Glastonbury 58 years ago because he saw something here. Glastonbury has a unique character and history which must be preserved. Dr. Beckett noted that, for 20 years, there has been talk of redeveloping that shopping center. Mr. Bielitz put it well that Glastonbury has more 18th century homes in Connecticut than any other town, apart from one. To knock down buildings would be a tragic mistake. While developers can sell and leave, the community has to live with the developments. Therefore, development must complement the community.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {8-0-0}.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby requests the Town Manager to work with the Town Attorney to make application to the State Historic Preservation Office and Board to identify the building at 2277-2289 Main Street as a historic structure and landmark of the state, which contributes to the historic significance of the Town of Glastonbury, and to take all applicable actions to protect the subject building from the demolition now proposed.

Amendment by: Mr. Cavanaugh

Seconded by: Mr. McChesney

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby requests the Town Manager to work with the Town Attorney to make application to the State Historic Preservation Office and Board to identify the building at 2277-2289 Main Street **and 2389 Main Street** as a historic structure and landmark of the state, which contributes to the historic significance of the Town of Glastonbury, and to take all applicable actions to protect the subject building from the demolition now proposed.*

Disc: Mr. Johnson explained that this action would ask the State Historic Preservation Office and Board to declare the former Gaines Hotel and Gatesy building as historic structures and landmarks of the state. He called the Town Attorney today but was unable to reach them. He will ask them to take up this matter and make the designations that prevent demolition.

Result: Amendment passed unanimously {8-0-0}.

Discussion returned to the main motion (with the approved amendment).

Disc: Ms. Tanski asked, should the state add these buildings to the register, if there would still be an opportunity for the Town to restore them to their more-historic state. Mr. Johnson stated that, typically, if one could enhance the architectural process, that is supported. However, he has not gone through this process before. Mr. Cavanaugh asked how long it would take to get the designation. Mr. Johnson is not sure, but he hopes to speak with the Town Attorney tomorrow. Mr. Cavanaugh would like the Town Attorney to point out any potential sandpits they might get into.

Mr. Gullotta expressed that this must be a partnership between the Council and the community. He asked the public to get the word out on social media and express their desire to halt the demolitions. Attorney Alter is representing the developers, so sending an email to his office could help. He also noted that the online petition to save the Cotton Hollow mill ruins was very successful, so that could be replicated. A strong message must be sent to the developers that they will not be financially successful unless they work with this community. Ms. Tanski asked if there is any information pertinent to the history and use of the building which would be

important to know and include. Mr. Johnson stated that the Historical Society is a great resource for that.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {8-0-0}.

Mr. Gullotta explained that they are preparing a resolution for the next meeting that will denote the Council's consternation to the developer. Ms. Tanski would like it to express hope and desire that the developer will come to the table to work with the community members and the town to drastically address the concerns that have been expressed. Mr. McChesney added that it should refer to the fact that the Council held a preliminary meeting back in March where many public comments were made, and the developer was to incorporate those in the plans. The hope is that the developer will work with the town to make a successful development.

Mr. Cavanaugh suggested that the Council "hereby directs the Town Attorney to promptly initiate whatever goal or legal action is required to prevent the demolition by action or inaction of the Curtis Hotel building, including but not limited to, action under Connecticut General Statutes sections 22A-16, 22A-19, and 22A-19A, and to retain such experts as may be necessary for that purpose." He would also like to add that there is some direction for the Town Building Official and urging the TPZ to deny the application.

Dr. Beckett stressed that there is no plan or design. It is premature to talk about knocking down anything until they discuss what they have. Mr. Gullotta's inference from that is, if the Council intends to go forward, they will take whatever appropriate legal steps to stop that from happening. Ms. Tanski stressed the importance of denoting the specifics of the steps that the Council plans on considering. Otherwise, they could run into legal issues. Mr. Gullotta has faith in the Town Manager and the Town Attorney to handle that without problem. In the next 7-10 days, he would love to receive a communication from Attorney Alter, on behalf of the developers he is representing, saying that they have decided to put a hold on the demolition.

Dr. Beckett reminded everyone that it was not long ago when the Town Council successfully sued the MDC over what they considered to be unlawful action. There is no quid pro quo here, as everyone's consideration is about what is best for the Town. Chairman Gullotta thanked the public for coming out for this matter and fighting for the community.

6. Consent Calendar.

a. General Fund Transfer to Refuse-Contractual Services – Storm Isaias clean up.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby schedules a public hearing for 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 12, 2021 in the Council Chambers of Town Hall, 2155 Main Street, Glastonbury and/or through Zoom Video Conferencing to consider a \$46,000 transfer from the General Fund-Unassigned Fund Balance to Refuse-Contractual Services for clean-up costs related to Storm Isaias, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated September 24, 2021 and as recommended by the Board of Finance.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {8-0-0}.

7. Town Manager’s Report.

Mr. Johnson explained that Item 1 concerns the welcome signs for parks and open spaces. They looked at the cost again and came up with different options, which run about \$50-100 each. They will have to erect new signs to denote the language on banning cannabis use and replacing those that need repair. They will go through the list of open space and properties, prepare the logo, and install them at those locations. Ms. Carroll offered a grammatical correction to the signs: “Open to all **who**,” not “Open to all **that**”. Ms. Tanski thanked Mr. Johnson for all the work he has done on signage and for making them cost efficient by pairing it with work that they already had to do.

Ms. Carroll noticed that major intersections in town are displaying political and business signs. She asked what the protocol is for that. Mr. Johnson explained that they backed off on taking down business signs because of the hardships posed by the pandemic, but they will take a closer look at it. Regarding the candidate signs, they have generally stayed away from them. There is a state statute which does not allow signs to be located within the state right of way, and if they are located at town-owned property on Election Day, they will remove them.

Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Gullotta and Mr. Constantine from the BOF worked to interview candidates for the Bond Council. The thought is to continue working with Attorney Judith Blank at her new firm. They will formalize that appointment. He also provided a copy of recent development activity for the year to date and noted that they expect good results for the new floor at the Smith Middle School gym. Mr. McChesney received a request regarding crosswalks near Hopewell and Three Mile Road. Mr. Johnson explained that the sightline is a challenge, which is why there is no crosswalk there now. Someone is evaluating it, and he will report back.

8. Committee Reports.

- a. Chairman’s Report.** *None*
- b. MDC.** *None*
- c. CRCOG.**

Dr. Beckett stated that CRCOG had a meeting about crime for the whole region, and they are in the process of looking for a new executive director.

9. Communications. *None*

Mr. Gullotta received a communication from Mr. Niland regarding a house on the corner of Griswold Street and House Street. It is older than 75 years and has been identified for demolition. Mr. Johnson explained that the property has been unoccupied for years. The Chabad Center is looking to build a home for its rabbi and family at that location. The property has been, in part, donated to them for that purpose. They have applied for a demolition delay ordinance. Mr. Gullotta requested that Mr. Johnson reach out to the Chabad Center and the Historical

Society to see how they could halt the process of demolition. Mr. Johnson explained that he had connected the rabbi with a member of the Historical Society, and he will follow up on their discussions.

10. Minutes.

a. Minutes (Amended) of September 14, 2021 Regular Meeting.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

Result: Minutes were accepted unanimously {8-0-0}.

11. Appointments and Resignations. None

12. Executive Session.

a. Potential Land Acquisition

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby enters into executive session to discuss a potential land acquisition at 8:50 P.M.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {8-0-0}.

Present for the Executive Session item were council members, Mr. Tom Gullotta, Chairman, Mr. Lawrence Niland, Vice Chairman, Dr. Beckett, Ms. Deb Carroll, Ms. Mary LaChance, Mr. Jake McChesney, Ms. Lillian Tanski, and Mr. Kurt Cavanaugh, with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson.

No votes were taken during the Executive Session, which ended at 9:15 P.M. Meeting adjourned at 9:16 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

Lilly Torosyan

Recording Clerk

Thomas Gullotta

Chairman