

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2022**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Special Meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall at 2155 Main Street with the option for 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. Kurt P. Cavanaugh  
Mr. John Cavanna  
Ms. Mary LaChance  
Mr. Jacob McChesney  
Mr. Whit Osgood  
Ms. Jennifer Wang

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

**2. Public Communication and Petitions pertaining to the Call.   *None***

**3. Special Business as contained in the Call.**

**a. Continued public hearing with possible action on proposed Town purchase of the property at 50-55 Nye Road and allocation of \$3.4M in ARPA funding for this proposed land acquisition.**

Mr. Johnson explained that the BOF met this afternoon and heard public comment on the matter of Nye Road. After a discussion, they voted unanimously to approve the \$3.4 million allocation, with the understanding that there is funding in the ARPA account and that the use of the purchase of 50-55 Nye Road satisfied the requirements of ARPA as issued by the Treasury.

There were no public comments.

***Motion by:*** Ms. Carroll

***Seconded by:*** Mr. Niland

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves purchase of the land and improvements at 50-55 Nye Rye totaling 10.86± acres and an appropriation of up to \$3.4M in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) monies allocated to Glastonbury;*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that action to approve the land acquisition and allocation of ARPA funds is conditioned on subsequent Council approval of the following:*

1. *Due diligence process – site and buildings*
2. *Schedule to sunset tenant leases of space at 55 Nye Road subject to current tenant options to extend, effective January 2024, May 2024, April 2025;*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Manager is authorized to execute an Amendment to the Purchase and Sale Agreement dated October 12, 2022, to extend the closing date and other timelines as applicable;*

*all as described in a report by the Town Manager dated December 8, 2022.*

**Disc:** Mr. Osgood stated that the due diligence process to date has already identified significant capital and repair costs/issues with these buildings. He proposed an amendment.

**Amendment by:** Mr. Osgood

**Seconded by:** Mr. Cavanaugh

To amend #1 to read as follows: ***“Due diligence process – site and buildings and price negotiation thereafter”***

**Disc:** Mr. Gullotta stated that there has already been discussion on this at the executive session. The motion is clear, and this is dragging it out. Ms. Carroll believes that the price negotiation is already baked into the present language. Mr. Cavanaugh is concerned about the background of the due diligence language. The Council is not allowed to disclose it as they do not even know what it is themselves. The public should know it before this vote is taken. Mr. McChesney finds it inappropriate to say that the Council does not know what it is as they have had private discussions about what the issues are. This is just memorializing what is already in the motion.

**Result:** Amendment passed {6-3-0}, with Mr. Gullotta, Ms. Carroll, and Ms. Wang against.

Mr. Osgood then proposed a second amendment.

**Amendment by:** Mr. Osgood

**Seconded by:** Mr. Cavanaugh

To amend #2 to read as follows: ***“Prior to closing, the Town Manager shall obtain tenant estoppels, indicating that there are no lease extension options beyond the current terms.”***

**Disc:** Mr. Niland stated that this is already in the motion, so it is unnecessary.

**Result:** Amendment failed {2-7-0}, with Mr. Cavanaugh and Mr. Osgood voting for.

*Discussion returned to the primary motion.*

Mr. Niland stated that there has been a lot of angst. He is thankful to the BOF for finding a way to approve this project. It is an important first step to resolving the Town’s housing deficiencies, He is proud of his colleagues and the community as they continue to push forward on the project. Ms. Carroll echoed, adding that everyone is exhausted from this process. She thanked Mr. Johnson for his tireless efforts and has faith that, with his guidance, the Town will acquire the best possible partners on this project. Mr. Cavanaugh stated that in Connecticut, separation of

powers has not worked, as the state legislature continues to erode local authority. It is time for suburban legislators to retake that authority from city legislators. Several remarks were made during the public hearings that he found offensive, such as Rev. Matthew Smith's comments about Mr. Cavanaugh having extreme privilege because of generational wealth through homeownership. That comment was based on words by Mr. Cavanaugh which were taken out of context. Another comment was made that most arguments against affordable housing are based on classism and racism. Mr. Cavanaugh stated that no such arguments were heard in these chambers throughout the public hearing process.

Mr. Cavanaugh believes that the impetus behind this proposal does not have much thrust. This is because of the Town Attorney's November 4 opinion, which was that the court does not have much discretion in reviewing affordable housing efforts. He then quoted the Mayor of East Hartford who stated that the best way to develop affordable housing is by broader mixed income development. As Mr. Zeller of the BOF stated, this proposal is warehousing people in one section of the community. At least a private developer includes both market rate and affordable units. This will not have market units. CGS 8-30g is helpful for developers, and it has been available to them for 30 years. They have not used it before because they can make more money on market units. Now, the tide is shifting to affordable units. Thus, he is against the motion.

Ms. LaChance will vote for the motion because it is the right thing to do. She countered that the reason why developers have not used 8-30g to create affordable housing developments in Glastonbury is because they have been doing it elsewhere and those places are running out. She also noted that the decision has not yet been made as to whether there will be market rate units in the proposed development. Many people are struggling for housing. She shared a personal example of her sister-in-law and nephew who almost became homeless because they could not find an affordable home.

Mr. McChesney voiced frustration at the BOF, who expressed at their meeting that many questions were not answered, such as whether there will be unknown costs to the town. Those questions were all addressed at multiple meetings before the Council. He asked the BOF to do the courtesy of at least reviewing the meeting minutes if they have questions. He also made a correction: the Town Attorney's opinion was that if the Town starts doing this now, and in a few years meets the threshold for a moratorium, then they will temporarily acquire a waiver on 8-30g applications. This project will help to take back some control of zoning projects. He agreed with Ms. LaChance that the inclusion of market rate units into the development has not yet been discussed, so it is a possibility.

Mr. McChesney rejects the idea that this development will warehouse people. It will offer housing for those on working salaries who cannot otherwise afford to live in Glastonbury, which is especially crucial now that a reevaluation has made it even more unaffordable to live in town. Bringing in affordable units is the right thing to do. He also rejects the idea of cities versus suburbs. This "us versus them" narrative only contributes to the problem. Affordable housing benefits everyone in town. There are issues with 8-30g which legislators are working to challenge. This proposal has been a hard call for him, not because it is affordable housing, but because he was unsure whether this property was the right way to do it. He has decided that it is

a unique opportunity, and the Town will not bear the cost of developing it. This will be a good project, so he will support it.

Ms. Wang reiterated that one of the intended uses of ARPA is affordable housing. The Council held many hearings on how to spend the funds, and from the very first one, residents expressed that it should be used for affordable housing. Lamentably, there has been a huge gap in the intent of pandemic recovery funds and what it has been spent on. Out of 169 towns in Connecticut, only about 1% of ARPA funding has been spent on affordable housing. The Town's revaluation data shows evidence of an extraordinary demand and low supply, especially among cheaper homes. The perception that this purchase was made in haste is incorrect. The Council has done as much due diligence as possible, and time is of the essence. As Dr. Beckett mentioned a few meetings ago, this site was contemplated for affordable housing for a while and unlocking that gateway piece of property is good for the town. This purchase would also help to achieve the goal of Glastonbury's Affordable Housing Plan, which was developed on a bipartisan basis with much community involvement. It is the Council's responsibility to act on this. The 2017 state law which required towns to develop affordable housing was passed on a bipartisan basis. This is the Town taking control over the problem and housing future neighbors.

Mr. Osgood stated that 35% of households in town are financially stressed. The Town's affordable housing plan has noted this. They should be cognizant of the fact that ARPA funds are not a present. They have been used to reduce the cost for taxpayers. The GHA has been supportive of this project, but until today's BOF meeting, they had never said that they would take on the cost. It is unlikely that any developer will pay the high cost that the Town is willing to for this development. It takes commercial property off the tax rolls, the site selection for affordable housing complex was nonexistent, and the lack of design of affordable housing units is unknown. He disagrees with the process that is going into the acquisition of this site, so he will vote against the project.

Mr. McChesney countered that the GHA stated multiple times that they will take on funding for the development. Perhaps it is not financially viable for a developer to come in right now and tear down the buildings to make an affordable housing project, but it will be, one day, because the land is in a very desirable area. Mr. Gullotta remarked that if this were only about the Nye Road property, then perhaps there is a good argument to be made about the high cost. However, this property provides access to land that otherwise would not be accessible, which could be developed at a later date. That is why he has been a proponent of this property since he first heard about it years ago.

**Result:** Motion passed {6-3-0}, with Mr. Cavanna, Mr. Cavanaugh, and Mr. Osgood voting against.

**Result:** Motion approved unanimously {9-0-0}.

#### **4. Adjournment.**

**Motion by:** Ms. Carroll

**Seconded by:** Mr. Niland

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby adjourns the meeting of December 8, 2022, at 7:12 P.M.*

**Result:** Motion passed unanimously {9-0-0}.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Lilly Torosyan**

**Lilly Torosyan**

**Recording Clerk**

**Thomas Gullotta**

**Chairman**