

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON
TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2011, AT 7:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL
84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Public Hearing Subject Matter;

**CONSIDERATION OF APPROPRIATION AND BORROWING
AUTHORIZATION FOR \$188,890 FOR THE CHESHIRE HIGH
SCHOOL TRACK REPLACEMENT AND RESURFACING PROJECT**

Present

Council Chairman Tim Slocum, Vice Chairman David Schrumm; Steve Carroll, Andrew Falvey, Patti Flynn-Harris, Sylvia Nichols, Thomas Ruocco, James Sima.

Staff: Town Manager Michael A. Milone; Finance Director James Jaskot; Deputy PW Director George Noewatne, Parks and Rec Director Robert Ceccolini; Pool Coordinator Sheila Adams; Fire Chief Jack Casner; Supt. Of Schools Dr. Greg Florio; Director of Management Service, DOE, Vincent Masciana; CHS Athletic Director Steve Trifone.

1. ROLL CALL

The clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

2. EXPLANATION OF HEARING PROCEDURE AND AGENDA

3. READING OF LEGAL NOTICE

The clerk read the legal notice into the record.

4. PRESENTATION ON HEARING SUBJECT

Chairman Slocum explained the Town Charter provision which requires any expense over \$350,000 to go to referendum. There is also a triggering device for a public hearing for any item \$175,000 or more to complete a project. If the Council approves the project, the funds cannot be expended for 21 days in order for the public to petition a referendum with 10% of the voters signing the petition. If the petition were successful, the project must go to referendum.

Mr. Masciana, Director of Management Services, DOE, presented an overview of the \$188,890 appropriation request for the CHS Track Project. He noted there was an approved appropriation of \$150,000 in FY 09-10 for the track project. Therefore, the total expenditure is \$338,890 to rebuild the running track at the high school and the South D-zone. A drainage system will be installed around the track which supports the track and turf field. The Town will be getting a high quality, long lasting track and D-zone, and the cost of \$338,890 is a bargain. At the last referendum on the track project the cost was \$475,000, and it is now \$339,000. With the new turf field and track renovation, the Town of Cheshire will have a great facility to be proud of and to be used by the citizens.

Dave Dixon, Milone and MacBroom, displayed the rendering of the track and D-zone. He pointed out the “red” areas on the rendering, which are all the areas of the field and track to be redone in this project.

Mr. Masciana stated that a number for the project was also received from Dalton Enterprises which installed the track 17 years ago.

5. QUESTIONS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR.

Dave Gomes, 4 Regent Court, asked if the D-zone includes the pole vault area.

Mr. Dixon replied that it does include the pole vault area.

6. PROPONENTS AND OPPONENTS STATEMENTS ALTERNATELY EXPRESSED.

Ellen McKinley, Radmere Road, addressed the Council, stating that she hopes the track will be replaced, as many events are held on the turf field and around the track throughout the year. Ms. McKinley commented on people of all ages using the track for running, jogging, walking, and even children playing. She asked about the perimeter drainage being replaced and said this would be a good time to do this work.

In response, Chairman Slocum explained that the perimeter drainage work will take place because this is part of the turf project, and there will be shared costs between the two projects for some of the work, including drainage.

Barbara Hedden, Marion Road, spoke in favor of the track project being done now, in conjunction with the turf field project. She also commented on the number of people using the track, from little children to senior citizens, families walking together, as a way to build better bodies and a healthy life style. Ms. Hedden noted that the extensive use of the track has led to its poor and deteriorating condition. She said the track should be replaced now, in conjunction with the turf project, as there has been a long wait to get this project done. The dual project is the best use of Town money.

Pam Gunnesson, Devon Wood Drive, CHS track coach and Dodd Middle School Physical Education teacher, spoke in support of the track project in conjunction with the turf project. She commented on the very poor and deteriorating condition of the CHS track, with unstable footing, leaves growing through the track, patched areas, etc. In its current poor condition, Ms. Gunnesson noted that championship track and field events cannot be held at Cheshire High School. There are many benefits to a rebuilt track for residents of all ages, for teams, Relay For Life, marathons, and other events.

Phillip Coldwell, Spruce Street, informed the Council he is a 4 year member of the CHS Track and Cross Country Teams. Mr. Coldwell commented on the very poor condition of the track for athletes, and the fact that the track team practices at Bartlem Park due to poor track conditions. The team cannot hold championship events on the high

school track, and Cheshire had to host the last championship at another school's facilities. The movement of events also leads to a loss in revenue for the concession stand food and beverages, to businesses in Town visited by people coming to the events. The D-zone has grass growing. Due to the poor track conditions, athletes have had injuries, and this past winter the track was flooded out. Mr. Coldwell started that the track must be rebuilt now in order for Cheshire High School to continue to have a good team and promote healthy living.

Alicia Wright, Suffield Court, commented on the poor condition of the track with pits, areas patched in which track shoes get caught and cause falls, the track surface is so hard it is like running on cement, and there are too many safety issues with the existing track. Ms. Wright noted that athletes get injured on the track, and now is the time to replace the running track with the turf project.

Taylor Golddaper, Scenic Court, is a member of the Cross Country Team, and has had shin splint injury as a result of running on the CHS track. She said she goes to Sheehan H. S. in Wallingford to practice on their new track. The CHS track is used all year round by people of all ages in the community, and needs to be replaced for the safety of athletes and citizens, and healthy life style for people in Town.

Christine Hedden, Marion Road, reaffirmed the comments made by others regarding the CHS Track. Ms. Hedden is a former member of the track team and as a college student she enjoys running and using the CHS Track, but its poor condition is a safety issue and hurts the prestige of the Town and the teams.

Chairman Slocum asked Athletic Director Trifone how and why the decision was made to not use the CHS Track for a state CIAC championship meet.

Mr. Trifone informed the Council that he is the Commissioner of Track for the Southern Connecticut Conference and Boys and Girls Swimming. Each year the league track championship meet rotates between the schools, and 2010 was Cheshire's turn to host the meet. The head coaches of the schools and a committee met at the CHS track, and the league stated it did not want to hold the championship meet on Cheshire's track. The meet was hosted by Cheshire at Sheehan High School. The decision to not hold the meet in Cheshire was made by him through the CIAC League.

Robert Daly, Carlton Drive, stated his support of the track project in conjunction with the turf project. He said it makes sense to do both projects at the same time, as it saves the Town money, and makes the track safe for athletes and citizens. Mr. Daly commented on the need to have a mechanism in place for future maintenance of the Town's recreational facilities, including the track, football field, ball fields, Linear Trail, community pool bubble, etc. He requested the Council support the track project.

7. REBUTTAL AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Slocum adjourned the public hearing at 8:09 p.m.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk