

# MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING

APRIL 18, 2011

The meeting was called to order by His Honor, the Mayor, and upon roll call, the following members were found present: Councilors Watman, McCallion, Tapscott, Witham, Jarvis and Sprague. Absent: Councilors Pepin, Spainhower and Messier.

## MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.

Councilor Tapscott moved to accept the minutes of the Public Hearing held on March 21, 2011 regarding establishing a Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of sidewalk construction, reconstruction or rehabilitation. The motion was seconded by Councilor McCallion and passed unanimously.

## COMMENTS BY VISITORS.

Dan DeSantis, 43 Mt. Vernon Street, said he came here from his sick bed tonight to talk to the Council because he feels the Hilltop School issue is so important. He indicated there are two resolutions on the agenda tonight, one which authorizes the City Manager to draft a purchase and sales agreement for the transfer and development of the Hilltop Elementary School building and property, and one which maintains City ownership of the property and that it be dedicated to serve the public's interest for educational, artistic, charitable or other community needs. He is definitely in favor of the resolution that maintains City ownership of the property. The saga of the Hilltop School goes on. It has been debated for a decade.

Mr. DeSantis said the residents of the Hilltop neighborhood have clearly stated their objection to putting housing in the building.

Mr. DeSantis said some members of the Council have said we cannot afford to not sell the building and cannot afford to tear it down. He was told that after the new school was built it would cost \$150,000 to raze the Hilltop building. Now we are told it will cost \$1M. We still do not know what the new school is going to cost us. We were assured that our voices would be heard regarding the Hilltop building.

Mr. DeSantis has heard we are a mecca for low income housing yet we want to go on and add more. For \$325,000 we are going to sell our soul. No technical studies, infrastructure studies, or any other kind of studies have been done to support this. This is a fragile neighborhood. Homes that are 150 years old cannot absorb the impact of a major construction project. There is no doubt in his mind that the City will see a decline of property values in the neighborhood if this project happens.

Mr. DeSantis said the proposed developers of the project, Stratford Capital, are not developers. They raise equity. They sell the tax credits and then leave.

Mr. DeSantis said this resolution is a betrayal. At the least, this resolution is disingenuous.

Bill Griffith, 52 Grove Street, said he thinks about what fairness is. He asked the Councilors if they didn't know where they were going to live in Somersworth, would they want to live facing two large buildings in front of their homes? Some of the things they have seen are two dimensional.

Mr. Griffith said he was very surprised to see this request for proposal, and even more surprised to see five or six Councilors put their names on it. He wondered where the study was, or if anyone has gone and visited any properties this company has put up in the past.

Mr. Griffith said history plays a part also. If you put these properties up, you might as well get rid of the Historic District Commission. One of the oldest neighborhoods in the seacoast in its present state would be gone. He is personally not against seniors and low income housing. That is not his issue at all. He would like to see due diligence. He would like to see some studies. He also wonders if our infrastructure can handle such a project.

Mr. Griffith said most of all, it is just about the neighborhood. It just wouldn't be the same.

Real Roseberry, 405 Route 108, said people are frustrated and that is why there was only one person commenting on the public hearing on the budget.

Mr. Roseberry said one guy from the hill area started a petition a couple of years ago to save Hilltop School. Some City Council members ignored this gentleman. He was the next one to take up a petition, for a tax cap. You couldn't ignore him, so you took the tax cap to court. You are going to have a big surprise coming.

Mr. Roseberry said when it comes to the Hilltop School building, the Council listens to the wrong people. When the Fire Marshal said to shut that school, you should have taken the money to install a sprinkler system and redone the inside of the building and you would have saved yourself a lot of problems. The school "pros" wanted to get rid of the school. They got their way, but he's laughing. They built this new "mausoleum" instead of using the money to repair Hilltop. We couldn't afford a new school and we still cannot afford it. He is guessing the new school will end up costing us \$30M to \$40M. He tried to give them the right dope but they wouldn't listen. He is laughing because everything he told them is coming true. The school people got what they want, now the taxpayers will be paying for it. People are frustrated and they don't trust the Council. You overlooked them, laughed at them and at him. He will have the last laugh.

Mr. Roseberry said the Hilltop School building is a solid building. All that was needed was cosmetics inside and a sprinkler system.

Mr. Roseberry said the best choice would be to have art studios there and a food pantry. That would make it easier for people to get to, especially the people from Berwick.

Dianne Griffith, 52 Grove Street, said she is hoping her requests and facts do not fall on deaf ears as they have in the past. She has stayed away from this venue for many months, tired from the fight. They in the Hilltop neighborhood fought the good fight with factual information and the citizenry behind them to maintain Hilltop School and to not build a new school. She hopes they are listening right now and not thinking "oh, get over it, it's old business". It is current business.

Ms. Griffith commented on the financial state of our City. There is no money for what needs to be repaired or maintained and the leadership of this City historically has not had a long-term vision. Will this City always be first responders or will it think systematically and with the future in mind? If you really subscribe to the motto "Proud Past, Bright Future" then you cannot in good faith vote to move the resolution to sell the Hilltop School property. She invites them all to come and stand on her porch, which needs repairs they cannot afford, and look at what we have lived with and what our bright future would hold.

Ms. Griffith said she implores them to think about what leadership in the past has done to their neighborhood, and what they can do to change the past. They should think about how they would feel seeing their neighborhood systematically destroyed and now having the prospect of a 50 unit low income elderly apartment complex being there. Maybe she should petition to have a string of halfway or group homes in your neighborhoods.

Ms. Griffith said according to research she did Somersworth has more low income Section 8 housing than in Dover and Rochester. According to the Assessor's Office, we have 2,283 single family dwellings and 2,103 rental units. We have 7 mobile home parks. She does not think we really need more rental units. The median age of Somersworth residents is 34 years old. Only 12% of our residents are over 65.

Ms. Griffith said she hopes some of these comments might generate some questions in their minds and they will think about this resolution thoroughly and clearly and be creative with their thinking.

William Connor, 21 Pinewood Drive, wished to share his thoughts and observations with the Council concerning our common issues.

- Stop the tax increases. Stop the pay raises. Put this City's runaway tax train in full reverse and apply all main braking mechanisms to the floorboards.
- He believes our City Manager is making a serious effort to reduce the tax burden on the residents. On the other side of the budget (60% of the total budget) the School Board has submitted what they feel is an appropriate budget under the guidance of the SAU56, meanwhile the school buildings, CIP funding issue still remains an outstanding dilemma. As School Boards across our State are making serious and substantial cuts to programs and personnel, our School Board and SAU56 continue to operate in a state of delusional thinking, continuing with the

old spending practices of carte blanche within their budget. It's no wonder we continue to have the highest tax rate in the State.

- Our SAU56 is an area that needs a comprehensive and independent review of its programs to determine which are required by statute. At the present time and recent past he has seen no real serious attempt to reduce costs or programs by SAU56 management. It's been the same story year after year.
- He would like to see all City and school employees, including SAU56, to contribute a greater share of the costs of their health and retirement benefits. He feels these programs should model the federal benefits programs.
- The taxpayers should feel shame for not showing up at a recent budget hearing. They are in a state of predictable negative vibration stemming from an unstable economy, political unrest in the State and the nation's capital, and maybe they just don't understand how this political machine works. Few of us do.
- Taxpayers are already dealing with unemployment, working two jobs, devaluation of the dollar, rising consumer prices, skyrocketing medical costs, increases in cable and newspaper subscriptions. The list goes on forever.
- Maybe Foster's is all-knowing in their editorials that Elvis and the taxpayer have left the building to take the pathway of irrational obscurity. Could we send out a newsletter with questionnaire to determine why people stay at home and don't attend meetings? But please! No more comments by anyone that the reason we have a huge tax rate is because we live in a "bedroom community", this only shows ones inability to rectify the adverse condition.
- He feels that our City Council is highly skilled at the profession they perform and have his full vote of confidence that they will make the right decisions to meet the current conditions. Thank you and your families for all your hard work. We all know that this budget process is a most unpleasant business.

Michelle Sheldon, 27 Prospect Street, said her heart is pounding and she feels very strongly about this. She bought her first home here seven years ago. She can barely afford to live there now. The taxes are going up to the extent where she has thought of possibly having to sell her home, and that is not what she wants to do. She works very, very hard on her home and to improve the neighborhood. She wanted to let the Council know the human impact of their decisions. She is also on the Historic District Commission and it is hard to hear of this new proposal for the Hilltop School property because she serves on a Commission that is charged with maintaining standards in the district. The proposal she is seeing is very incongruent with that.

Louise DeSantis, 43 Mt. Vernon Street, wished to read a letter from her daughter, Madeleine DeSantis, as follows:

In 2008, hundreds of Somersworth citizens spoke at this podium, wrote letters to Councilors, to the editor, signed a petition and cast their vote, all voicing the same demand, save Hilltop. There were many reasons behind this desire such as concerns about property values, parking, traffic, taxes. Other issues were less tangible, but tremendously more significant. I believe that the fight over Hilltop was not just the location of the school, but about these fundamental values: due diligence, honest

representation, respect for history, commitment to community, and the integrity of our City's government.

When it became clear that the building was not to remain a school, the citizen's voices, though disappointed, remained consistent. Their call was for the Hilltop building to continue to foster community and citizenship as it had done for both the neighborhood and the City for centuries and not fall victim to the social death of affordable housing. The dispute over the fate of Hilltop School pushed Somersworth residents to question the legitimacy of the very nature of their government. Was it so long ago that Councilors had forgotten the seriousness with which it considered a dramatic reform to the City Charter? Is three years really so distant to Councilors that they cannot recall the single issue that bred disappointment so deep and frustration so bitter that the City of Somersworth nearly became the Town of Somersworth? Is 2008 such ancient history that the Council forgets the primary impetus behind the dissatisfaction that arguably resulted in a new Mayor, an individual who won more votes than the other two candidates combined?

At the present time, because so many Councilors have co-sponsored a proposal to turn the Hilltop building into apartments, it seems there may be a malfunction with Councilor's memories. I would like to take this opportunity to remind them of an obvious fact. The future of Hilltop has been and will continue to be the most salient and essential issue to voting citizens of the City of Somersworth. Though the Councilor's memories may be flawed, perhaps they remember back to one week ago when only one non-City employee attended the budget hearing. The lack of attendance at a City meeting by citizens is directly proportional to the confidence with which the citizens believe their pleas will be heard. You, the Somersworth City Council, have been primarily responsible for establishing an environment such that the citizens do not believe their concerns are reflected by their representatives.

It is with a heavy heart that I once again write in defense of the future of Hilltop, but with a reservation of hope that Council will recognize the immoral discrepancy between its agenda and the sincere desires of the constituency they claim to represent.

In summary, the terms of the City's Ward Councilors had not yet expired last election cycle, thus preserving the frustrating dearth of cooperation by elected officials. It was after these electoral results had become history that the defeated Mayoral incumbent reflected to Foster's, "It looks like people wanted some sort of change". Indeed.

Marty Dumont, 73 Crest Drive, thanked the City Council and Mayor for what they do for the City and what they do on behalf of the residents. He is here to speak about Hilltop School, stating there has always been a special feeling about the Hilltop School in this City. Most of the people here tonight live in the Hilltop School neighborhood. It is evident they have a lot of compassion, and it is to them that he apologizes for not coming before you until tonight because he let them do the work. He is asking the Council to consider Resolution No. 22-11, because it goes to the heart and soul of the City of Somersworth.

Mr. Dumont said the discussions about the Hilltop School began in 1996 on somewhat of an informal nature. At the time the leadership of this community knew that this day would come. It took people with intestinal fortitude to bring it to this point. It is not just necessary to do things right in this world, it is important to do the right thing. He is concerned about the numbers of people that have spoken about keeping the Hilltop building a Hilltop entity. It is not just important to the people in the neighborhood it is important to all of us. The history of our town was built on that school. Look at the graduation scrolls of the Hilltop School and see what colleges they were turned out to, Ivy League schools.

Mr. Dumont said we have before us an opportunity to bring back some Hilltopper pride. The arts are a wonderful thing. Where are we with our surrounding communities when it comes to arts? What about the pamphlets we produce for the Historic District Commission? This sends a message that on the one hand we support the Commission, but on the other hand we don't. Does it all come down to dollars? That's not right.

Mr. Dumont said the people here are the heart and soul of this town right now. What meeting has drawn more people than this? In 1996 the discussion was the same, and promises were made, but they were verbal. Those promises now seem to have gone on deaf ears.

Mr. Dumont said this is a difficult decision, but why would you cut the heart and soul out of a body? Does it make it easier for anybody else? He is not in favor of selling this building. If you turn loose this body of people here tonight and give them the opportunity, you might be surprised what many people can do that one person can't. You have got to give them a chance. Don't take away the vision for this community. Please support Resolution No. 22-11.

John Joyal, 1 Molly Lane, said he does not live in the Hilltop neighborhood. He spent the weekend up there talking to property owners and taking hundreds of photographs. He has created a group on Facebook. Somersworth's Hilltop property needs an extreme home makeover. They are in the process of getting in touch with Ty Pennington right now and inviting him to come to our City to save our Somersworth. They are looking for New Hampshire properties.

Mr. Joyal said he feels that the public trust has already been betrayed enough in this community. He takes it personal. He looked at the properties on the hill and noted the historic architecture of the buildings, the huge, beautiful Victorian houses. He walked the entire area. He will be putting pictures of that school on the internet and the world is going to see them. Right in the front of the building it says "Dedicated to Citizenship". Regardless of what anyone says, the Hilltop School building, the way it stands, is probably the most structurally sound building in this City in his opinion.

Mr. Joyal asked how anybody would dare sell that building to the lowest bidder, from out of state, who will come in, "flip-flop" that, and leave with a profit. That is very short-sighted. He asked that they have the vision and the fortitude to look down the road.

Mr. Joyal said when he leaves here tonight he is going to exercise his first amendment rights by turning on a group on Facebook, that he created with the help of many people, titled Somersworth's Hilltop Property needs an Extreme Home Makeover.

Mr. Joyal asked the Council to look real close at the people here tonight, the people whose lives would be affected if the property is sold. He also asked the people in the City not to forget the ball field at Noble Pines the next time they request grant money.

Mr. Joyal said he is totally against selling that historic beacon of our community.

Linda Chaston, 37 Page Street, felt they were well served by Mr. Dumont's comments. She is not a very political person and she doesn't like tension. She is a peace maker. She has struggled with this Hilltop issue for many years. She is here tonight to beg the Council to not vote for Resolution 21-11. She feels the Hilltop property should keep serving the community of Somersworth as it has been doing for decades. She doesn't understand how the political process works and she doesn't know what she can expect from the City Council. What she is really excited about is that the City Council has a wonderful resource, and that is the people in the audience tonight. She doesn't think she is being out of line in offering their commitment to you. If you will listen to us and if you will offer the Hilltop community the opportunity to do something we will do what we can do. We will give you our hands and our time and we will contribute to our community in whatever way we can. She doesn't know where to start or what to do. She is personally looking for some direction, guidance, and leadership. She will commit her time and her energy on whatever needs to be done. There are people in this community who have time and talent and we are here tonight to tell you we care. She is hoping the Council will listen to them and trust them because they really care.

John Chaston, 37 Page Street, said that anytime they want to do anything on their house, they have to run it by the Historic District Commission to see if it is allowed. He didn't think it was legal to put an apartment building up there because of zoning laws. He would really like to know if they are changing the zoning laws to sell this building, and if so he wonders if that is legal. He thanked the Mayor and Councilors Pepin and Sprague for coming up with Resolution No. 22-11, which would maintain City ownership of the building, and hopes the Council will pass it when the time comes.

Ray Atwood, 19 Mt. Vernon Street, said he is strongly in support of Resolution No. 22-11. They are all here to help, but thought the direction would come from the Council. They are ready to do their part.

Jason Schrack, 28 Lincoln Street, said he is here in support of Resolution No. 22-11. They bought their first house here four years ago based on the potential of the neighborhood. It is a beautiful neighborhood and they love it. When the trailers were put

in at the school they knew that was temporary. With this new proposal, it makes them second guess their choice of moving here. If you are trying to attract people to Somersworth, a project such as what is proposed by Resolution No. 21-11 would have an extremely negative impact on the City's future.

Mr. Schrack said a Sustainability Committee was just started in order to move in a positive direction. The proposed project would not be investing in a sustainable future for Somersworth.

Woodard Openo, 25 Grand Street, said he supports Resolution No. 22-11. One of the strong reasons they wanted to keep Hilltop as a school is because they saw it as a center for the neighborhood. This is a real neighborhood where people know and care about each other. He would like to see the use of the school continue to serve the people.

Bob Gibson, 59 Myrtle Street, said he was an advocate for keeping Hilltop as a school and keeping it as a City-owned property. He knows times change and necessities change. We really do not need more elderly housing. More rental property would be detrimental to the City. You would be changing the character of the neighborhood. Approval of this project would be "zoning by exception" and would do nothing to improve the financial well-being of the City. He is totally against Resolution No. 21-11.

Brian Chu, 26 Lincoln Street, said he has collected the names of 14 artists who expressed an interest in using this building as a working place. This is just by his personal contacts. He does not think building 50 apartments and 50 parking spaces would be a practical solution. He feels this would add a burden to the traffic and to services in the City.

Ray Brunelle, 46 Mt. Vernon Street, said this building is historical and we should keep it. The amount of \$325,000 the City has been offered for the property is nothing. This building is located in the Historical District. When he or his neighbors want to do anything to their homes, they need to ask the Historic District Commission if it is allowed. This project would go against these laws. He has worked on the Hilltop School building in the past and it is pretty structurally sound.

Christopher Smith, 46 Maple Street, said he lives across from the "pink house" that is still a halfway house. Spring is coming but neither he nor his kids can sit out on their front porch, because every night when the weather is warm the people who live there are all outside talking on their cell phones, yelling at their girlfriends, dropping the "F bomb", and the police inevitably come up. This has drastically changed the character of his neighborhood. He would love to sit on Mr. and Mrs. Griffith's front porch.

Mr. Smith said the neighbors can pull together and do stuff. When the Seneca School bought the former Tri City Christian Academy the parents all went there. They all spent Christmas vacation working on transforming the building and they were able to open up after Christmas vacation to a full student load.

Mr. Smith said when you let things happen, such as putting apartments in the Hilltop School building, it does change your whole neighborhood. It doesn't take much to start a decline. If property values go down and people move maybe the new owners are going to be absentee landlords, which is what has so decimated so many of the neighborhoods in this City. You cannot come back from that. That is what this has the potential of doing.

Kevin Crowley, 31 Grand Street, said he is opposed to Resolution No. 21-11. He cannot see 20 apartment units up there, never mind 50. He tried to put apartments up in the neighborhood, but it was denied because of zoning.

Mr. Crowley said they put the Council members in office and it would be appreciated if the Council would listen to what they have to say and act on it. He has never seen the City in such dismay in all the years he has lived here.

Jerry Perkins, 40 Grove Street, said the reality of the situation is he applauds all the emotion that is being expressed here tonight, but he cannot say he endorses Resolution No. 22-11 yet. He hasn't heard of any funding mechanism whatsoever. He has heard people state their opinion, but not facts. The fact is this has been talked about for the past three years with the formation of the Hilltop School Reuse Committee, and there was an RFP put out. Unfortunately, there has been only one response to that RFP.

Mr. Perkins said wherever the funding mechanism is going to come from to support Resolution No. 22-11, there has been time for people to come up with something. He wishes a developer had come forward that would support the emotion of what people say they want. That hasn't happened.

Mr. Perkins said to blame the City Council is ridiculous. They have to deal with what is before them. For the people who haven't gone to City Hall and talked to Development Services Director Wheeler or to their City Council Representative and asked what is contained in the letter from the developer, which Mr. Joyal very improperly characterized, you'll find that the developer is willing to entertain some thought of a performance area in his plan. He cannot say that he supports the developer's total plan, but what he is most concerned about, and the thing that will drive property values to the basement, is an abandoned building.

Mr. Perkins said before we characterize that we absolutely do not want to entertain the one proposal from a developer, he thinks we need to look and ask Council to ask the important questions and to find out what else can be considered and whether or not there is any potential for what they desire that can be incorporated into that plan. He is a direct abutter, and he too has concerns about the scope of the project. He encourages a workshop to explore all the possibilities.

Mr. Perkins said while we can come together and offer our hands and offer our time, the truth of the matter is there is a cost to keeping that building open and usable by the public. If it was solely based on emotion, he would support Resolution No. 22-11 100%.

Nobody has identified to him how that is going to be affordable or where the money is going to come from. There has been time to find those funding sources, create the co-op or any of the other ideas, and bring them forward in response to the RFP. That didn't happen. Now you are asking Council to make a decision that has no proposal to support it financially. You should be fair to the Council in what you are asking them to do.

Joe Lovell, 63 Prospect Street, said he is opposed to building anything up there. They moved here from Portsmouth for one reason, that is Goldie Royce's house. The outside of the house was in immaculate condition. They bought a home in the Historic District and they expect the City Council to protect that district and their investment. People move to the hill area for the houses and the neighborhood. That is what you need to protect. You have a crown jewel and you should not let it get away from you. The proposed project would disrupt the view for many people, and it would also destroy the property values.

Dianne Griffith, 52 Grove Street, said Mr. Joyal was not joking when he was talking about Extreme Makeover. They are looking for properties in New Hampshire, and she has an application at home. She implores anyone who is interested in participating in this process to contact her. Her e-mail address is [dldgriffith@gmail.com](mailto:dldgriffith@gmail.com). They have had some discussions about whether or not their advocacy group should become an LLC, or try to get non-profit status. They are serious about wanting to do this.

Dick Jutras, 31 Lincoln Street, said he has lived here over fifty years. His wife graduated from Hilltop when it was a high school. Their children also attended school there. It is an emotional thing for their family. He is hoping the Council will consider the emotional side of this as well as the financial side. If the Council gives them more time, he is sure they can come up with something that is beneficial to the City. Adding 50 more rental units in Somersworth doesn't seem right to him.

Sherri Soldati Pratt, 4 Grand Street, has an emotional attachment to the Hilltop School building, but on a greater scale than that, she sees a lot of community members who come into her business every day, and she knows how they feel. She feels that a community arts center would be more important to what we are doing as a community and she feels we really need that. The arts grow community values and she feels it is something that is very necessary here. We have a lot of very talented people throughout Somersworth that would be willing to come and volunteer time and resources to help educate people of all ages through crafts, music, art, theater, and it is very important that we have that for Somersworth.

Arlene Labrie, 16 Grand Street, said she lives directly in front of the school. She has lived there her whole life, except for a few years when she attended college. When she was a child in the 1960's she watched Somersworth undergo urban renewal and a lot of our beautiful architecture was destroyed. It hurt to see that happen to her town.

Ms. Labrie said every time she takes a shower, she gets very little water pressure in her area. What would happen if there were 50 apartments across the street?

Ms. Labrie said she feels the Council will do whatever it is they want to do. Everywhere she has ever worked during her career, she has been in buildings that have undergone renovation. No one ever asked any of the people that worked there what would work for them. They had to take what they were given. Here you have a great audience, full of ideas, who would like to participate. She really would like the Council to ask them to do what they can. She thinks it would be a great opportunity if you gave the residents of the Hilltop area the chance to decide what they want in their neighborhood.

Mayor Soldati indicated there are a number of communications, but because of the amount and the hour, if there is no objection from Council members, he is going to ask the Clerk to make the communications part of the public record.

Councilor Watman moved to make communications received part of the record. The motion was seconded by Councilor Tapscott and passed by a vote of 5 yeas, 1 nay, Councilor Witham voting in the negative.

#### COMMUNICATIONS.

#### EMAIL FROM JONI FERLAND.

Subject: Advocating for Music Programs

Hello Council Members,

I understand the budget process can be difficult and sometimes cuts need to be made. I wanted you to know how strongly I feel that no music or arts programs should be considered for cuts. I'm sure you are aware of the many research studies done that prove music and the arts increase overall student IQ, but are you aware of the positive effects these programs are having right here in Somersworth? Recently I attended the high school's production of West Side Story. With a very limited budget the students staged a fine production. Better than that though, were the stories I heard about what happened behind the scenes. My daughters shared with me how everyone in the cast and crew bonded during the rehearsal process. Students who wouldn't normally associate with one another in other school settings got to know each other through the course of the production and became friends. There were no social cliques, no judging and respect that wasn't present for some students before began to grow. Weeks have past and my daughters report that this new respect for students from all types of social groups has continued in regular day to day life at SHS. I'm sure you can visualize the positive ripple effects.

When the show was finished many Facebook posts reflected comments such as, "I miss West Side, not sure what to do today...". Much like sports; band, chorus and drama programs get students involved, make them feel a part of something bigger than themselves, boost self-esteem, teach cooperation and teamwork and keep our young

residents off the streets and out of trouble. Currently only one block of music education is provided at the high school level. This is the bare minimum that the state recommends.

Last Thursday I had the opportunity to attend the fourth grade production of Joseph... where about fifty fourth graders also got to experience the wonder of the arts. Let's be sure you are doing your part to ensure programs like these remain available for these students and many others as they move through the grades and eventually attend SHS. Music and arts programs are of great value and need to be made available to the students of Somersworth at all grade levels.

Thank you for your consideration, Joni Ferland

E-MAIL FROM DENISE AMBROSE.

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

As Mr. Sprague mentioned in the article, many have placed their trust in the council, and know what to cut. The stability of Somersworth Citizens relies on our Somersworth heads to make good economical decisions.

Thank you for representing us.

Sincerely,  
Denise Ambrose

LETTER FROM JOHN FLAHERTY.

Dear Councilor

A recent editorial in the Foster's suggested that we write to you to offer possible reasons as to the small turnout at last Monday's council meeting. I am offering my insight and opinion but please do not hesitate to correct me if any of my observations are in error.

Governor Patrick Duvall answered this question on NHPR recently and to him it was due to the constant negativity surrounding government. We all see greed, corruption, cooked books and mismanagement at every level of government all across the country. If there were no trust for government officials then why would any citizen have any desire to voice their concerns, especially if they felt their opinions and concerns would be ignored and/or dismissed by the decision makers anyway?

Regarding Somersworth, these are some of my concerns that may have precluded my absence from that meeting. Some issues may have taken place prior to the existing council but it still reflects upon the behavior of the council as an entity of public service.

- Maplewood was supposed to be built in a slightly different spot to allow for future expansion via pods. It got relocated which prevented any possibility of expansion.

- Hilltop's ward councilor voted for a new school against the desires of his constituency.
- The council voted for a different source of funding for the new school, which effectively increased the cost of the school by approximately \$10,000,000.00 more.
- The Blaisdell family offered the Idlehurst land as a donation and only requested the city to waive their taxes for their lifetime. This decision probably cost the taxpayers a million dollars.
- The taxpayers followed procedures and got the necessary votes to put a tax cap on the ballot. Notwithstanding the legality, the council shirked on its responsibility to the citizens of Somersworth to put the cap on the ballot. If it was determined to be unconstitutional, it would be moot anyway. It was not the council's responsibility or obligation to make that judgment. They failed to follow the citizen's agenda, which was why they were elected.
- The school board supposedly found and spent \$250,000.00. The council said nothing.
- The school board found a surplus of \$115,000 and hired a superintendent's assistant. Who pays for that position next year? Couldn't that money be used for building maintenance instead of increasing personnel cost?

Why are there so many maintenance issues at our school? If the council couldn't find money to repair these before, then how can we possibly afford to pay for a new school and still try to locate funds for other repairs?

Most of the people at the previous meeting were teachers and school board members; probably there to voice opposition to taxpayer's request for any cuts. Do they not realize that any increase in pay or benefits is funded via a cut in take home pay for every taxpayer in the city? At the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, people donate leave for those in need. I do not see the teachers or teacher's union stepping up and foregoing their raises and benefits in order to keep a flat 0% budget increase; which would, in the process, prevent their fellow teacher's job from being eliminated. This is a small sacrifice to keep your fellow professionals working and not joining the unemployed.

Misappropriations, back door deals, not listening to the taxpayers, doing whatever you want regardless. And you're surprised by such a small turnout? Really? Be honest, above board and listen to the taxpayers who put you there. Regain and earn their trust and respect and I'm sure they will respond. Keep going the way you're going and we will have the highest tax rate around, the most deplorable city with the least amount of benefits to the taxpayers and be one more step away from bankruptcy.

Please do the right thing: work creatively and diligently to prevent any tax increases this year.

Sincerely, John Flaherty Somersworth, NH



E-MAIL FROM DAVE BURGESS.

To: Mayor and City Council

As a property owner in the Hilltop neighborhood, I am writing to inform the Mayor and council of my opposition to the proposed apartment development of the Hilltop School property. The building of an additional new building is completely absurd and cannot be allowed. The additional traffic on the narrow streets on the hilltop will make it more dangerous for pedestrians and children who play in this area. I urge every member of the council to vote against the proposed apartment development. The proposed apartment complex may have financial benefits for the city, but in the long run,

the apartments will have negative consequences in the designated historic district of Somersworth. As the owner of the oldest home in Somersworth, it is my duty to staunchly defend and preserve the historic aspects of the Hilltop neighborhood. There are rules and regulations pertaining to preserving history in this part of the city. A new apartment building will certainly ruin the aesthetic aspects of the hilltop.

David Burgess

603-841-5881

LETTER FROM WALTER ROSS.

To all members of the Somersworth City Council!

Once again it is time for you to consider next year's city budget.

And once again I asked that you pass a budget with NO TAX increase. For the past two years we the seniors and retirees have had no raises or cost of living increases. All seniors and retirees are having a very difficult time in making ends meet.

It is most important to all the Tax payers of this city to have a balanced budget with no TAX increase.

I have been reading the articles in the paper about the up and coming city budget with increases in the school and town budgets which, if allowed to stand, will increase our taxes. I urge you to consider a NO Tax increase for the good of our taxpayers who are all struggling to keep afloat.

Walter L. Ross

73 Maple Street, Somersworth, NH 03878

## MAYOR'S REPORT.

Mayor Soldati announced there will be a meeting of the Sustainability Committee on Thursday, April 21, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

## REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES.

### FINANCE COMMITTEE.

Councilor Jarvis reported this Committee will be meeting on Friday, 4/22/11, at 9:00 a.m.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

Councilor McCallion reported this Committee will be meeting on Friday, 4/22/11, at 10:30 a.m.

### RECREATION COMMITTEE.

Councilor Tapscott reported this Committee met on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011, and the following items were discussed:

- The Tri City Trailblazers Club gave them an update of what they have been up to. They want to be able to cross the EPA Landfill site, and that has been a stumbling block for them.
- The park utilization summary was approved as is, noting the usage reflected is as of that date.
- Noble Pines Improvement Fund Raising update - they discussed the \$2,900 that has been received to date, and the possibility of a donation of building materials from Home Depot.
- Summer Program progress update – applications are being accepted for summer counselors.
- St. Laurent Park – City staff will be directed to move forward with whatever plans they feel are necessary to decommission the St. Laurent Park based on park utilization pending EPA actions due to remedial measures that would be required by the EPA to maintain it as a park.

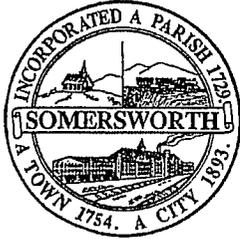
## REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES.

### STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION.

Councilor Tapscott reported he and Councilor Sprague attended and SRPC meeting in Rochester on 4/15/11. The whole meeting was about the projected cuts to budget items for the “ten-year out project”. They discussed the chopping block list of projects. It was determined that between \$2.6M and \$2.8M from our region would be cut due to the possible expiration of the \$30 surcharge fee on our vehicle registrations.

Councilor Sprague said what is going in Concord is there are a lot of cuts. We have two highway project plans in the queue that are important. DOT said they are going to be cutting some projects, and they wanted to hear from SRPC to see what recommendations they had to put on the chopping block. They went to the meeting to protect our projects. It is yet to be seen what will happen.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT.



**CITY OF SOMERSWORTH**  
**Office of the City Manager**

**TO:** Mayor Lincoln Soldati and City Council Members  
**FROM:** Robert M. Belmore, City Manager  
**DATE:** Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
**SUBJECT:** City Manager's Report for Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
City Council Agenda

---

**6:45 p.m. Public Hearing on Petition from  
Residents of Lake Street.**

---

***New Business (under Section 13 of the Agenda):***

**Ordinances:**

**A. Ordinance No. 10-11 FY 2011-2012 Budget.**

**Resolutions:**

**A. Resolution No. 21-11 To Authorize the City Manager to Draft a Purchase and Sales Agreement for the Transfer and Development of the Hilltop Elementary School Building and Property.** Director Wheeler, City Planner Sharples and I met with Mr. Richard Hayden of Stratford Capital Group along with their architects. We shared concerns and suggestions offered by residents and Councilors. Attached is a revised letter that outlines another proposal in addition to their original concept. There are also more pictures on the City website representing past completed similar projects by this developer. I would suggest council consider inviting Stratford Capital Group representatives to a workshop session prior to the next regular meeting to give a presentation and to answer questions from Council.

**B. Resolution No. 22-11 Resolution Concerning Hilltop School Property.**

- C. **Resolution No. 23-11 Authorizing the City Manager to Complete City Road Maintenance Projects and to Contract with Bedford Sealcoating, Inc. of Bedford, NH to Provide Cracksealing Services on Certain City Roads..** Attached is a memorandum from Public Works Director Tom Willis regarding this fiscal year's road resurfacing budgeted line appropriation of \$150,000. As you may recall, the proposed use of these funds was to use \$50,000 to establish a Capital Reserve Fund for sidewalks (done) and the remainder to be used for cracksealing of roads and shim coat/repair work. The Public Works & Environment Committee met and voted to recommend awarding the cracksealing work to Bedford Sealcoating as the low bid in order to compete approximately \$75,000 in total work. Additionally, the Committee recommends completing needed repair work to Indigo Hill Road. Should this repair be completed for less than \$25,000, the differential amount will be used for additional cracksealing work. Total work not-to-exceed \$100,000. Once quotes are received for the Indigo Hill Road repairs, they will be forwarded to the Public Works Committee for review. Attached is a Memorandum regarding Indigo Hill Road from Public Work Director Willis.

**Other:**

- A. **Vote to Discharge and Release the City's Public Easement Interest and Potential Public rights Created by a Dedication on the Property at the End of Lake Street upon a Dedication on the Property at the End of Lake Street upon the Finding that it is not Needed for the Accommodation of Public Travel.** Attached is a Memorandum from Public Works Director Tom Willis, who recommends granting the petition. He recommends the Council ask the petitioners provide a surveyed plan as a condition of granting the release.

***City Manager's Items (under Section 9 of the Agenda):***

**A. Informational Items:**

1. **Employee Recipients of 2011 Hero Award by Union Leader.** Congratulations to Firefighters Lt. Ken Vincent and Firefighter Jim Drakopoulos who have been selected as the 2011 Hero Award recipients by the New Hampshire Union Leader in conjunction with Citizens Bank, for rescuing Ruth Kelly, who was overtaken by smoke in her apartment during a fire last March.

**B. Attachments:**

1. Department Head Monthly Reports.
2. Annual Spring Clean-up Day Flyer – Spirit Up Somersworth, April 30, 2011.

Councilor Sprague referred to Resolution No. 23-11 in the Manager's Report, asking why this did not come to the Finance Committee.

The City Manager replied they haven't been able to schedule a meeting. There is one scheduled for this Friday. This Resolution is on the agenda tonight for a first reading, not for action.

NOMINATION, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS.

PLANNING BOARD.

- Daniel Proulx, term to expire 4/2014.
- Paul Maskwa, Alternate, term to expire 4/2014.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION.

- Dale Smith-Kenyon, term to expire 4/2014.

NEW BUSINESS.

ORDINANCES.

ORDINANCE NO. 10-11 FY 2011-2012 BUDGET.

Somersworth, NH  
April 18, 2011

The City of Somersworth ordains that Budgets for the City of Somersworth for the 2011-2012 Fiscal Year shall be:

<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>
<b><u>GENERAL FUND</u></b>	
Elected Leadership	\$114,847
City Management	333,109
Finance and Administration	1,165,185
Development Services	896,930
Police	2,997,376
Fire	1,855,356
Public Works	1,990,390
Other Expenses	1,387,432
Capital Outlay	131,652
Intergovernmental Assessments - County	2,277,390
School Department	24,391,975
	<hr/>
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>37,541,642</b>
<b><u>ENTERPRISE FUNDS</u></b>	
Wastewater Department	2,166,752

Water Department	1,951,232
Solid Waste	368,300

---

**TOTAL ENTERPRISE FUNDS** **4,486,284**

**TOTAL FY 2011 - 2012 APPROPRIATIONS** **\$42,027,926**

---

---

This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage.

Introduced by  
Mayor Lincoln T. Soldati  
by request

Approved:

City Attorney

Following the first reading of Ordinance No. 10-11, it was referred to the next meeting.

RESOLUTIONS.

RESOLUTION NO. 21-11 TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO DRAFT A PURCHASE AND SALES AGREEMENT FOR THE TRANSFER AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE HILLTOP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUILDING AND PROPERTY.

Somersworth, NH  
April 18, 2011

WHEREAS the Somersworth School Board intends in the near future to no longer utilize the Hilltop Elementary School building and associated property as an educational facility; and

WHEREAS the Somersworth School Board will transfer care and control of this property, designated as lot 11 49 0, to the City of Somersworth under the terms of RSA 199:4, paragraph II; and

WHEREAS the City of Somersworth desires that said property be utilized in the best interests of the citizens of Somersworth without creating an undue burden upon its taxpayers; and

WHEREAS the City of Somersworth further desires that the property not become either a hazardous or a blighted location by prolonged abandonment; and

WHEREAS the Stratford Capital Group, LLC, has submitted a proposal for the purchase and adaptive re-use and development of this property; and

WHEREAS said proposal would provide affordable housing for active adults, ages 55 and over, one of the fastest growing segments of our population; and

WHEREAS, according to this proposal, the Hilltop Elementary School building, a contributing structure to the Somersworth Historic District, would be rehabilitated according to the U. S. Department of the Interior Historic Preservation Standards; and

WHEREAS the Stratford Capital Group, LLC, proposal would further the sustainability efforts of the City of Somersworth by the adaptive re-use of a building and by incorporating sound construction and development principles including those for recycling, salvaging, using certified wood based and low emitting materials, as well as by utilizing Energy Star Certified appliances and energy saving lighting; and

WHEREAS this development proposal would place this property on the property tax rolls for the first time,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the City Manager is authorized to draft a purchase and sales agreement, at the expense of the Stratford Capital Group, LLC, and subject to the City's Ordinances to include planning and zoning regulations, detailing the conditions under which the Hilltop Elementary School building and property will be transferred to and developed by the Stratford Capital Group, LLC.

Introduced by Councilors

Michael X. Watman  
David A. Witham  
Denis Messier  
Dale Spainhower  
Brian Tapscott  
Jonathan McCallion

Approved:  
City Attorney

Following the first reading of Resolution No. 21-11, it was referred to the next meeting.

RESOLUTION NO. 22-11 - RESOLUTION CONCERNING HILLTOP SCHOOL PROPERTY.

Somersworth, NH  
April 18, 2011

WHEREAS, the property on which Hilltop Elementary School is situated has been the property of the City of Somersworth for more than 100 years; and

WHEREAS, such property has served a public purpose for the citizens of Somersworth during the past one hundred years; and

WHEREAS, there remain many public purposes to which such property could continue to serve in the future and for which no other public property exists in the City of Somersworth; and

WHEREAS, there is strong public support and interest in having the Hilltop Property remain the property of the City of Somersworth,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the City of Somersworth shall maintain ownership of the "Hilltop Property," and furthermore that such property shall be dedicated to serve the public's interest for educational, artistic, charitable, or other community needs as may from time to time be identified as appropriate. Such uses may include but are not limited to:

- Artist cooperative /studio space; community radio and public access television; food pantry; adult education; library; farmers market; community gardens; community center.
- Nothing in this Resolution is intended to prevent the City from entering into public/private partnerships to accomplish the goals set forth herein.

Introduced by

Mayor Lincoln Soldati  
Councilor Martin Pepin  
Councilor Dale Sprague

Approved:  
City Attorney

Following the first reading of Resolution No. 22-11, it was referred to the next meeting.

RESOLUTION NO. 23-11 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO COMPLETE CITY ROAD MAINTENANCE PROJECTS AND TO CONTRACT WITH BEDFORD SEALCOATING, INC. OF BEDFORD, NH TO PROVIDE CRACKSEALING SERVICES ON CERTAIN CITY ROADS.

Somersworth, NH  
April 18, 2011

WHEREAS, the fiscal year 2010-2011 adopted budget contains an appropriation for the purpose of road cracksealing and other road maintenance projects; and

WHEREAS, city staff solicited bids for cracksealing certain City roads; and

WHEREAS, city staff is currently soliciting quotes for repairs to Indigo Hill Road ; and

WHEREAS, the City Council's Public Works and Environment Committee has reviewed the bids received for cracksealing and recommends awarding the contract to Bedford Sealcoating of Bedford, NH; and

WHEREAS, the City Council's Public Works and Environment Committee supports city staff's efforts to obtain quotes for repairs to Indigo Hill Road,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the City Manager is authorized to contract with Bedford Sealcoating, Inc. of Bedford, NH to provide cracksealing services and to proceed with repairs to Indigo Hill Road for a total amount not-to-exceed \$100,000 (One Hundred Thousand dollars).

Introduced by Councilors

Dale Spainhower  
Denis Messier  
Dale Sprague

Approved:  
City Attorney

Following the first reading of Resolution No. 23-11, it was referred to the next meeting.

OTHER.

VOTE TO DISCHARGE AND RELEASE THE CITY'S PUBLIC EASEMENT INTEREST AND POTENTIAL PUBLIC RIGHTS CREATED BY A DEDICATION ON THE PROPERTY AT THE END OF LAKE STREET UPON THE FINDING THAT IT IS NOT NEEDED FOR THE ACCOMMODATION OF PUBLIC TRAVEL.

Councilor Watman moved to discharge and release the City's public easement interest and potential public rights created by a dedication on the property at the end of Lake Street upon the finding that it is not needed for the accommodation of public travel subject to the condition that petitioners provide a surveyed plan before the release is granted. The motion was seconded by Councilor Sprague.

Councilor Witham asked the City Manager who would be responsible for the cost of the surveying.

The City Manager replied the petitioners would.

The motion carried by a vote of 6 yeas, 0 nays.

## COMMENTS BY VISITORS.

Keith Dinger, 23 Prospect Street, said he is a product of science and organizational management, and as such he is a strong believer in the operation of systems that have procedures under which they operate. While he believes in the systems and the procedures, what gives him faith is that this project addressed in Resolution No. 21-11 will not survive because it is inconceivable to him that it can survive the processes and procedures it would have to go through to be approved, such as a zoning variance. This project does not meet the law of R-1A property. In that process there will be several opportunities for the public to be involved. It will also give the public the opportunity to get educated on the details of the project.

Mr. Dinger said he appreciates that the Council will move us forward through this process. It is inconceivable that in the variance process, if done properly, there can ever be the proper argument made to change the current law for the use of that land when one takes into consideration all the studies he is sure the Council will see that the process has done such as infrastructure, traffic, property values, demographics, etc. You obviously will ensure that those studies are done and are part of the package that will go into the process of making the decision on whether this could be improved or not.

Mr. Dinger said what he finds to be the most offending part of the plan is the addition of another building. Once the company gets into the details, it would surprise him if they really want to make this investment when they find out what they have to do to prove they can meet City laws.

Mr. Dinger said he is here to let them know he believes in the process and he has full faith that the Council will see that that process is carried out diligently in order that the public will be adequately educated, and you as the decision-makers will be adequately educated by the public. In the end, he feels comfortable that it is impossible for this project, as presented, to ever satisfy the laws, the intent and the welfare of the City. He does not feel this is the place for this project.

Bill Griffith, Grove Street, said he doesn't want the Council to get backed into a procedural corner either. He doesn't feel they should have to decide on this property by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Griffith asked if anyone has any ideas about how residents could get the funding he hopes they will share them. It would be beneficial if they had a little more time. People are willing to put the time in to make it work.

Linda Chaston, 37 Page Street, said she wanted to mention that one of things she did learn was this is a proposal, and nothing more at this point. It gives permission for the proposal to be drafted. Approval of this resolution does not mean the building will go up, it only means the City will review the proposal.

## CLOSING COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS.

Councilor Watman said he has received several communications relative to the budget and the impact on the tax rate. None of the comments suggested making any additions to the budget, they suggested reining things in quite considerably. His intention is to bring forward some proposals to do just that.

Councilor Watman said relative to the Hilltop School, he appreciates the City Manager and some members of the public pointing out that Resolution No. 21-11 merely asks, at the cost of the developer, that a draft be made of the project. If Council agrees to sign a purchase and sales agreement at some point, it would be contingent on this company going through the process the members of the public spoke of such as the Zoning Board, Historic District Commission, Site Review Technical Committee, and the Planning Board. Those are the independent bodies that do the due diligence relative to all the specific issues of a project.

Mr. Watman said his understanding is that if the City retains the property they don't have to abide by all the rules and regulations, which is very interesting. If people are concerned about semi-commercial activities going on, such as artists selling paintings, that violates zoning because it is not zoned for commercial purposes.

Mr. Watman said his purpose is to put before the public the best possible proposal from this company at their expense, and ask Council to vote it up or down, or just ignore it. Apparently people think they should just say no immediately, don't look for any better offer, don't try to see if it is workable, no. He feels that is what he has been told tonight.

Mr. Watman said there is a third possibility that some people in the neighborhood said they supported, that is they would rather see the building leveled than to have an abandoned building.

Councilor McCallion said although he doesn't agree with Mr. Perkins on a lot of issues, tonight he thought he made some good points. We need to look at all the options we have. Whether we are in favor of the proposal or not doesn't matter right now. He doesn't want to see the building torn down, but we do have to come up with a way to pay for it.

Councilor Witham said he likes being a City Councilor because at the end of the day he feels like he can make a difference. He cares very much for this community. He does not mind being involved in making tough decisions. We are dealing with a City budget right now that is probably going to require us to let go of some people. We are in a reality situation where the tax rate might go up and the services might go down. Letting go of people is a hard, hard decision.

Councilor Witham said his mother sees the value of the Hilltop School to the neighborhood. She sees it as iconic. She also recognizes the financial struggles we have in this community.

Councilor Witham said he has received a lot of e-mails recently, most of them pertaining either to the budget or to the Hilltop School building. These are both arduous issues to deal with.

Councilor Witham said he feels that serving on the Planning Board is much more important than being a City Councilor, because land use decisions are ones you have to live with for the rest of your life. He makes sure to ask a lot of questions, and makes sure all the issues are dealt with.

Councilor Witham said he sees the Hilltop School issue as the beginning of a very long process that may in the end be dead in the water.

Councilor Witham indicated the City Council voted unanimously to authorize the City Manager to purchase a police cruiser, which generated some of the e-mails he received. Some people wondered why we couldn't repair the cruisers we have. He feels that is something we could have done, although they are high-mileage vehicles, and he feels it is a matter of reliability. Also, what happens with the older cruisers is they get moved down into other departments, such as Code Enforcement, Public Works, etc. There is a process to this whole thing.

Councilor Witham said they received a memo from Director of Development Services Wheeler indicating he did meet with Monica Zulauf with regards to the trash complaint on Grove Street. It appears there is some resolve to that, and some ongoing monitoring. All parties have been involved in a conversation. We are making some forward progress.

Councilor Jarvis said she does support Resolution No. 22-11 but given the lengthy time it will take to run through any of these processes she thinks they need to keep in the forefront of their mind that there is going to be some cost no matter what route we decide to take. None of these plans would happen overnight.

Councilor Sprague said a lot has been said tonight, and very well spoken by the residents on the hill. There are not a lot of revenue streams out there right now. He doesn't know what the rush is to decide right now what we are going to do with the Hilltop property. Nobody counted on the economy going where it is today.

Councilor Sprague said he still would like to know how much it is going to cost to heat the building. He doesn't feel that boarding it up has to be an option. We can still use the first floor, or find someone to use the first floor in exchange for heating the building.

Councilor Sprague said he thinks the wording in Resolution No. 21-11 about drafting a purchase and sales agreement makes people uneasy. It makes him uneasy also. He doesn't know how we could go along with this Resolution anyway since it goes against the zoning ordinance. We have zoning laws on the hill now to stop the conversion of big homes into three or four unit developments.

Councilor Sprague said he has never heard of the Stratford Capital Group and he would like the opportunity to ask them some questions about their proposal.

Councilor Sprague said if we put apartments in the building, the property values will plummet in the neighborhood. If apartments are designated for 55 and older, it doesn't mean that will stay that way. Everything changes. There is something about this that makes him feel a little uneasy.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.

Councilor Watman said he would like to have the City Manager schedule the workshop he recommended with the people from Stratford Capital Group prior to the next Council Meeting. He feels many City Councilors have questions they would like to ask them and see where they stand on some issues. He feels this would help them to know how to proceed.

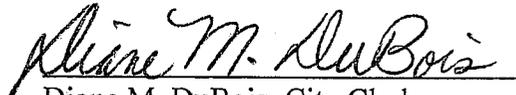
The City Manager suggested a workshop at 5:30 p.m. on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. The City Council members agreed with this.

Councilor Watman moved to suspend the rules in order for the meeting to go beyond 10:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor McCallion and passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT.

Councilor Witham moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Watman and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Diane M. DuBois, City Clerk