

**SPECIAL
WORKSHOP MEETING OF TOWN COUNCIL OF
NORTH BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT**

Tuesday, March 21, 2006

Town Council Chambers

8:25 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL: Present were Deputy Mayor Joanne Wentworth, Council Members Mary Bigelow, Andrew Bozzuto, Vincent Candelora, Michael Doody, Donald Fucci, Arthur Hausman and Ashley Joiner. Also present was Town Manager Karl Kilduff.

Mayor Andrew Esposito was absent.

2. DISCUSSION OF BENEFITS FROM GOAL SETTING

Town Manager Kilduff briefly spoke on the benefits derived from the goal setting process.

3. REVIEW OF PRIOR GOALS

Town Manager Kilduff reviewed with the Council the goals which were established four years ago and re-endorsed two years ago by the Council.

The Council and Town Manager then reviewed the Mission Statement that was previously established by the Town Council. After review and discussion, the Council concurred with keeping the Mission Statement as stated.

4. ESTABLISHING COMMON GOALS FOR THE FUTURE OF NORTH BRANFORD

Town Manager Kilduff spoke on the goal setting process which included determining key results areas, outlining critical issues and hurdles, coming up with a set of goals, and determining specific action steps to meet those goals.

The first step in the process was to determine the Key Results Areas. The Council discussed the need to streamline and reorganize services for better efficiency. The Council also noted the need to plan for growth.

Town Manager Kilduff briefly reviewed the Wall Field relocation and redevelopment of the former Town Hall/Wall Field site. He spoke on the process for development of this site. This item was seen as a Key Results Area by the Council.

The Council also discussed the Northford Study which was previously done and the internal circulation for the businesses in that area. It was noted that there was a wetlands issue with respect to this.

Two additional items that the Council felt were Key Results Areas were the library project and economic development including business retention and expansion of existing businesses.

There was a brief discussion on the business facade program. It was noted that new business development is moving very slowly.

The Council next discussed the Critical Issues. With respect to economic development, the Council felt that the land use boards and commissions are out of step with the Council's vision and desires for the Town. It was felt that the Planning and Zoning Commission could be doing more planning. The Council discussed the quality and accountability of appointees to the boards and commissions.

Town Manager Kilduff spoke on the parcel behind the Northford Ice Pavilion. There was also discussion on the Town-owned Open Space as well as the Swajchuk and Augur properties and the issue of centralization of Town services.

The Council also felt that the Town needed money and that there is an over reliance on property taxes. There also is a lack of land zoned and available for business development as well as the lack of infrastructure for business development such as sewers, high-speed internet, etc.

Town Manager Kilduff confirmed that a formal Tax Abatement Policy is in place for business development.

There was considerable discussion between Council members with respect to economic development and planning issues.

The Council also felt that there was a need to have a strategic projects list.

The next step was to discuss the Goals of the Council. One goal would be to integrate strategic planning to improve the decision-making process for construction projects and major issues facing the Town. The next goal discussed was an interview process for appointments to boards and commissions in order to help make sure the appointees share the Council's vision. Another goal discussed was the quality development of the old Town Hall site as a model of a good redevelopment project. The Council also felt that a plan needs to be developed to make Route 80 and Route 17 more commercial. An additional goal would be to implement a management plan and policy for Town-owned properties.

There was a brief discussion on the Regional Water Authority's PILOT program and the taxation of the large inventory at Tilcon.

The final step in the goal setting process was to outline the Action Steps to be taken in order to implement the Goals.

With respect to the need for strategic planning, a Policy Statement should be adopted indicating that any significant investment or policy issue must have a strategic planning document.

On the issue of appointments to boards and commissions, the Council would like to appoint a two person bipartisan interview subcommittee and implement a policy that all appointees must be approved through this interview process.

With respect to the redevelopment of the old Town Hall site, the Council would like to move forward with the Yale study. Another Action Step with respect to this would be to make sure that the Planning and Zoning Regulations mirror the best practices modeled on the old Town Hall site, particularly with respect to aesthetics and land use.

For the goal to make Route 80 and Route 17 more commercial, the Council will issue a Policy Statement to the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the need for zoning changes and the desire to take advantage of opportunities for greater business development along Route 80 and Route 17. The Council would also like to see a pre-approval process on sites in North Branford to encourage business development.

Toward the goal of managing Town-owned property, the Council will look at excess property for disposal. An update is needed on the recreation development at the Swajchuk and Hyland properties. The Council would also like to see a plan for the use of the balance of the Cinque property. The Council discussed the need to develop a public policy reason for centralization of facilities that is balanced with the open space plan.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Councilor Joiner moved, seconded by Councilor Hausman, to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosanne Krajewski,
Clerk to the Council