Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Aldermanic President John Anglace called the meeting of the Board of Aldermen to order at 7 p.m. All those present rose and pledged allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call

Alderman John F. Anglace, Jr., President – present
Alderman Lynne Farrell - present
Alderman John “Jack” Finn – present
Alderman Stanley Kudej – present
Alderman Noreen McGorty - present
Alderman John P. Papa – present
Alderman Eric McPherson - present
Alderman Anthony Simonetti - present

Administration:

Corporation Counsel Tom Welch

There was a quorum present.

Agenda Items

PUBLIC SESSION

Alderman Anglace explained the procedure of the public portion of the meeting, and asked if any member of the public wished to address the Board.

Richard Widomski, Christine Drive

The annual circus has arrived in Shelton. The ringmaster, seven elephants and one donkey, versus the donkey-elephant coalition. Yes. The Board of Aldermen and the Board of Education are scheduled to perform for the crowds during the next few months. It should be quite the show. The elephants will stand on their hind legs and raise their trunks high into the air praising their trainer for leading them down the victory path in November. The coalition of five donkeys and four elephants will enter the big top seeking an inordinate amount of food to feed their handlers. Quite the sight to see. The Board of Education is seeking additional funds for the children, or so they say. However, before wholeheartedly supporting the Board of Education, we should all take a peek at the dollars doled out to the administrators. I’m not referring to principals, teachers, custodians or the average person banging out a living, trying to make ends meet. I’m
talking about those administrators that are in the upper pay bracket. The administrators should be the first in line to take a cut in both salaries and benefits. This will set the tone for additional sacrifices of others so that the children will have a decent education. Instead, the Board of Education decided to build a school on Perry Hill Road at a time when they should have been looking toward the future and recognizing that all is not well. Instead, Lafayette School is closing, and perhaps one other school might be in jeopardy of closing. Additionally, the Board of Education agreed to transfer some $55,000 from Lafayette School bonding to fund the downtown Canal Street project. Why is the Board of Education building roads and relocating railroad tracks instead of taking care of what they’re supposed to be their first priority – the children. The Board of Education needs to mind their own store before asking for additional funds. Only then should they ask the taxpayers support of their coalition. On the opposing side, the Board of Aldermen needs to be more responsive and open to the taxpayers. City walls are crumbling and the Aldermen and Shelton Economic Development Corporation and their non-elected executive board have grand preliminary plans to pay a substantial portion of the process of installing new roads, utilities, etc. on Canal Street with our taxpayer dollars. $600,000 was magically found in the current budget, and another 400,000 is bonded for the project. Taxpayers are also paying to relocate privately-owned railroad tracks because the new privately-owned parking garage poses a safety problem. All this after funding for the project was defeated in a referendum. Why are the taxpayers footing the bill? The taxpayers didn’t build the garage. Why not have the railroad pay for the cost of the railroad track relocation? It’s not the taxpayers’ railroad tracks nor is it the taxpayers’ garage. Based on correspondence from a number of Aldermen the Shelton Economic Development Corporation is the principal board that is taking the lead in the project. A non-elected, self-appointed board taking the lead? The Board of Aldermen and the Shelton Economic Development Corporation need to step forward and have an open forum, free from Shelton Life quarterly propaganda that is funded by taxpayer dollars where the public can ask questions as to where our dollars are spent and for whom. So, we have the big top and the magic bonding of money show. There is little explanation as to where dollars are spent on both sides. Rather than answer questions, the tone appears to be, “here is the information, you figure it out.” The elephants, donkey, clowns and magicians need to stop performing in the big top and should start sharing the information in a simple manner that all can be understood. After all, this is a serious business that affects everyone. Until all questions posed to City boards and commissions and corporations are treated with an open book policy, the public will continue to be entertained by the circus. Thank you.

Randy York, 10 Longview Road

I’m here in opposition to a plan that this City is about to embark on to place a community garden access through a small cul-de-sac in the Long Hill area. I am against the access on Longview Road. I am against the access on Long Hill Avenue and while I didn’t have a problem with the garden to begin with, since I’ve heard the new developments and the garden’s already been expanded from 40 to 60 plots, I’m now against the garden. The Board already has a lot of communications from me that I’ve written to everyone, so I’m just going to outline some of my points briefly. I just want to bring to your attention that there is no emergency access into the Klapik property at this point. There’s one gateway
that has enough room for one car to get by that is bordered by stone walls on each side. It's a very serious issue that needs to be addressed. The Fire Department needs to be informed of this. Because now we've got neighbors pitted against neighbors because the City gave us a choice of either going in through a cul-de-sac or it has to go in off of Long Hill Avenue, I visited the property myself; it's wet, it's a 600-foot drive to get up to the field, and it's not even appropriate for an emergency exit, never mind an entrance into the garden. Those are basically my positions. There's also a concern of mine that the Board is going to be given an unrealistic figure of cost. We have no idea where the money is going to come from and while we have people from the community here so concerned about serious cuts to our Board of Education, I think we need to use our money very wisely. Water usage alone can be astronomical if the City's going to pick up the tab for a 60-lot community garden. There's been no estimates to my knowledge so far, there's going to be nothing presented to you that gives you an idea on how much you're going to have to pay for water to get water up to the gardens. The plan at this time is to use rain barrels with covers for 60 plots. How's that going to work? Who is going to fill the rain barrels and how are they going to monitor who is using what? I attended the Garden Committee meeting on Tuesday. There was a communication from President Anglace asking the Garden Committee to discuss security issues, because apparently neighbors have been contacting him, and the Garden Committee didn't understand what he meant by security issues, so it never really got discussed. The traffic report that the committee is going to submit is bogus. As gardeners ourselves, we do not agree with the fact that each gardener is going to visit their plot 1.2 times a week. It’s going to be more like four or five times a week, so our traffic estimate is on a small cul-de-sac anywhere from 400 to 500 cars, through our neighborhood, a small cul-de-sac, per week, especially during the busy months of April, May, June. It may slow down a little bit in June, but it will definitely pick up again during harvest season. Traffic through the cul-de-sac needs to be addressed. We received through FOI a list of the streets of the people who have registered so far and I got a list of 37 names. We were told it's up around 60. I FOI'd them as soon as Tuesday, so as far as I'm concerned, that's what I was given; that's what the number is so far. For 37 or 38 people you're going to disrupt an entire neighborhood, and most of the neighborhood is opposed to the garden being located in that area. I'm here to say I don't think that the committee has shown a need at this point for this garden. If in fact the garden goes in somewhere, only the people who have their name on the plot registration should be allowed to work on that plot, and I believe that their car license plate number should be registered with the Shelton Police so that we have an idea of who belongs in there and who doesn't. That is an issue of security that should have been addressed by the committee. Most of the people on the pre-registration list come from well-to-do neighborhoods with large lots of their own up in the Huntington and White Hills area, and we believe why should an entire neighborhood be disrupted with increased traffic for seven or eight months out of the year and taxpayers foot the bill for a very large and costly community garden for people who can well afford to put it in their own yards if they really want it that badly. I suggest we create smaller gardens within walking distance or a short drive in more centralized areas closer to the pockets of people who are requesting them. We should be looking at reducing vehicle miles traveled, not creating projects that cause people to drive across town. We've got a lot of traffic in our end of town anyway; we don't need another 400 or 500 cars coming into our area to garden when we've got plenty of land in other places and we
can just create smaller gardens elsewhere. We can utilize volunteers to manage the gardens. They can run their own little community garden, do their own fundraising, get their own funds donated, monitor their gardens and support their own garden. It will save the City money in the long run, it will ensure more ownership over each garden and also helps to reduce the inherent problems that are associated with these community gardens. If you’ve done any kind of research on them, it’s not all cherries. It comes with problems of vandalism, traffic, somebody’s got to enforce the rules, disturbance of neighbors. So if people have ownership over their smaller garden I think it’s going to reduce that. I’m here on behalf of neighborhoods all over the City and I’m asking this Board to please preserve the integrity of your neighborhoods and try very hard to not continue to disturb them by using them as thru-ways into community projects. Your neighborhoods are vitally important to this town. I also have a petition of about 80 names, over 80 names of people who would like to see those fields remain as an agricultural use that it is, which is a hay field. It benefits residents as a wonderful sanctuary in a very congested part of town. People walk it all the time. It’s a bird sanctuary. It’s a wildlife sanctuary. It’s serving a purpose. I can’t see the logic of removing something that’s being used and serving a purpose to serve another purpose for a different group of people. I’m going to hand that petition to you. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace reminded those the speakers to limit their speaking time to five minutes or less so that everybody that wishes to speak may be heard.

Jessica Smalley, 55 Toas Street

I am going to be graduating this year and I was never really a good student. I really never had anything that really helped me to figure out anything about myself. The Art Department at Shelton High School is very important to me and very important to other people as well as extracurricular activities to other students. It does help them more than just with scholarships. It helps them grow. If some people can ever find that within themselves and if some people just go down the wrong path, like I was heading for a while, what are they going to do with their future? It should be about what’s going to happen 10 to 20 years from now. I might be graduating, but I know many people who are going to be staying and going to be losing things that are important to their lives. Even a student is caring a whole lot.

Mary Sokol, 3 Longview Road

I’ve lived on Longview Road for 46 years, my husband and I. Had three children grow up on Longview Road and go off into the world. We are opposed to the garden on the Klapik property. It’s too much traffic for both Long Hill Avenue and Longview Road. Today I sat down with a map of Shelton. I put our garden in green where our garden will be, hopefully not, and then in yellow I highlighted all the streets that were given to us; the 37 names of people interested in the garden. I even have five highlighted areas up here that were off my map in White Hills. We are not the center of the people interested in the garden. They’re going to have a long way to come, three or four times a week, from way up in White Hills down to Long Hill Avenue. So I’d like to leave this for you to look at. Thank you.
Bill Dyer, 20 Beverly Lane

Actually I’m here mainly to thank you all. I want to thank you for buying the Klapik property. If you hadn’t bought it, obviously somebody else would have. There would have been a lot of houses there. Who knows, maybe it would have been Avalon Bay. Maybe they would have built some affordable housing, so future people can’t throw that in our face for not having it. I want to thank the taxpayers of Shelton. All of them paid for this property. Everybody is paying taxes in this town and you in your wisdom chose to use that money to buy this property. I certainly want to thank the Klapik’s; they could have gotten more, they could have held out especially in those times when property values were going up. But they chose to save the property in an agricultural way for the City of Shelton. I want to thank you also, now, unlike some other towns around us who are in serious financial difficulty, for considering selling the property to developers, to other people for other uses. I think the idea of using this property for what it was – a farm – I want to thank the people who have been asking for a community garden throughout this town for many years for their patience. They held off; they didn’t get upset. I also want to point out that not everybody in White Hills or everybody in Huntington or everybody in Aspetuck Village or other, oh my goodness - condominiums, who pay taxes – have access to land that they can farm. Not everybody has sunlight in the right direction. Not everybody has soil that’s of sufficient quality. Again, thank you for preserving this property, for what you’ve done in the past. I think it’s a reasonable thing. I also think it’s not unreasonable to limit the size of the number of plots and even to consider another access. I do support the need. Obviously, when you bought the Klapik property, the people who benefitted by far the most are the neighbors, because their property values went up significantly with the fact that there is not a large number of houses or condominiums or whatever else where the Klapik Farm still is. Again, thank you all for what you’ve done and in general helping, and it’s basically the same people, or many of the same people that bought this property that now are deciding on how it should be used. Thank you.

Mike Tinski, 7 Mount Pleasant Street

I recently just moved to Shelton this year. I’m here because I’m against cutting music, sports or after-school activities from Shelton High School. I don’t believe that we should put our students at a disadvantage just because of our location on a map. Why should students who take AP classes not have it count all of a sudden? I don’t know, I’m 16 so I’m having a difficult time trying to put my thoughts together on this. I really want what’s best for my fellow students in Shelton. Thank you.

Mary Lou Shields, 858 Long Hill Avenue

I’m just going to read the text of the e-mail I sent to my Alderman, Mr. McPherson. I sent an e-mail on the matter of a community garden which has been slated for the property off of Longview Road. When I went to the meeting scheduled on Tuesday of this week I found out that some Shelton residents in the immediate area were opposed to the garden, so I was concerned that only their side would be heard at the meeting tonight.
Since I live in Shelton, I want you to know that there's another point of view about the garden. I'm a single mom, artist, author, college professor. I have two sons, ages 12 and 17. We've lived in Shelton since 2002. They both attend the public schools in Shelton. I volunteered and continue to volunteer in Shelton and the surrounding communities in Scouting, visual arts and town beautification efforts. Both of my sons are Scouts. The oldest attained his Eagle this past summer by completing a construction project at the Boys and Girls Club. We live in a very nice condo with a small, shady yard. I chose to live in a condo because I don't want to spend time fixing the exterior of my house, mowing the lawn and so forth because I'd rather spend time with my children. Unfortunately there's not room for a vegetable garden. I come from a farming family. I've gardened as much as I could all my life and I'd like to be able to share that with my children. Gardening is an opportunity to share family time, to learn about and develop an attitude of stewardship toward our environment and to keep one's food bill low. It's relaxing for the mind and at the same time it's great exercise. I would like the opportunity to partake in all these positives in my own community. While I was at the meeting on Tuesday I took the time to understand the position of the neighbors in the area that opposed the garden because I was generally interested in hearing both side of the story. After asking them for their input and listening to their concerns, I have to say I'm still in favor of the garden in it's proposed place in the town. Addressing their thoughts in particular, I don't believe the garden will reduce their property value. It's not going to turn the street into something other than the cul-de-sac it already is. It's not a bar, a skate park or a theatre that's going to attract a large number of cars, and people that are noisy, park on lawns or leave trash around. I don't think the garden will be visited by those types of people that engage in that kind of behavior. Large quantities will not visit the garden at the same time, because people of all ages will have plots there. With today's work to leisure schedules, I think it will be highly unlikely for all to be there simultaneously. I understand the neighbors have a lot of time and money invested in their property, but I hope they will not begrudge the other citizens of Shelton a share in the lifestyle to which they have become accustomed. Some of us do not have the space or property to have a vegetable garden; but that doesn't mean we should be kept from using land set aside for the purpose, in a respectable manner. Shelton has made a wonderful, determined, laudable commitment to farming and open space within the town's borders. I see this garden as another way for the community to share its natural resources with all the residents instead of just a chosen few. I think the community garden is about joy, giving, sharing and creating relationships within our community which can make it a stronger and more pleasant place to live. I hope the residents of Longview neighborhood can share my thoughts in that regard. Thank you.

Irving Steiner, 23 Partridge Lane

I am here to talk about the community garden, which I think is a wonderful thing. The only problem with it at the moment is, none of the neighbors were alerted to this selection, as I understand it, which was rather rude and crass and shouldn’t be allowed. Any neighborhood that picks up a garden should have the right to know up front that the administration is putting a garden in there, or wants to put a garden in there. I had a garden in 1940 and it was nearby and the reason it was a success, it was located in an area where many people that wanted the garden could get to it quickly and easily. That's
a criteria that you need for any garden. Plus, the interest in a garden is sometimes quite false, particularly for people who have never had one before. When they realize that they’re driving two or three miles to get to a garden, it requires attention at least four times a week, they'll lose interest in that and then you'll have weeds growing up in those plots. What you really have to do is get a group of people that do want a garden in the proper location and say, “if you don’t maintain it, you’re going to have to suffer a penalty.” The penalty would be to pay for the people that are going to have to weed that garden because you’re not doing it on your own. I think with that kind of responsibility you might see the list for people interested in the garden arrangement slightly reduced. I think that’s the criteria that this should start with and I believe you'll have a lot better success if it is done properly with advance warning. No one likes a shock in their neighborhood. I don’t think there’s a person in this audience that would like that to happen to them. I’m part of that group myself. In addition, I’d like to also speak about the fact that why is there so much interest in this issue and also, all issues that do not have anything to do with land adjustment, land processing. Nothing’s happening in this City presently because of the trial up in West Haven which involves this administration and the Mayor and I think the reason that all the activity is here and on other non land issues is basically because nothing else will be done until that trial reaches its end. I’ve been up there every day listening to that trial and I’m concerned that we are going to have to suffer a bit as a result of what’s happening up there. Day one we had Mr. Matto, Moochie, and Mahoney and day two we had Ziegler, collection for Stevenson, collection for Housatonic, Mary Ellen [inaudible] and these are the bills that were being evaluated for all of the wood and the wood stock and material that went into the Mayor’s house. We had Randy Szkola who was in front of the lawyers and the lawyers insisted on asking him a lot of detailed questions and he was working with the FBI and those wires and some of the information...

Alderman Anglace noted that Mr. Steiner has been speaking for more than five minutes.  

Mr. Steiner stated, oh, yeah, I figured you’d shut me down John. I know. I understand. I’m getting onto tender nerves here.

Alderman Papa stated, people also read the newspapers.

Mr. Steiner stated, I know. And some don’t if you don’t mind. Do you mind me delivering it to them first-hand? And Mr. Szkola, his life was threatened up there and that’s the reason he went to the FBI and I don’t blame him, I’d have done the same thing. God bless him that he had the courage to do it. In any event that’s my speech. Thank you.

Ingrid Waters, 261 Long Hill Cross Roads

I also would like to address the community garden. I am surprised to hear that people are on that list that evidently drive across town to get to that garden. If these people want to have a garden there should be a small parcel set aside in their area so they do not need to travel across town. Reason being this part of Shelton has a lot of traffic due to overdevelopment in this area. We have a lot of people coming in here to shop. We have a lot of people driving through to Route 8. A lot of people driving through to Route
110. We do not need additional traffic on small back roads to get to a garden. I was under the impression, I followed it very closely, in Bridgeport their community garden is right in the City. The neighbors can walk to it. Here, people evidently have to come in cars. I don’t think that is a very good idea. I agree with everything that Randy York said. I think she presented it very well, especially all the safety issues and especially what goes on today, you have to know at any given time who goes in and out of these gardens, and it could cause a problem. Also there being no water. How is the water coming in if you have water barrels, you’ll have mosquito infestation. So there are a lot of drawbacks. I think before the City of Shelton goes ahead and starts a community garden in that area, other areas should be looked at. For instance, White Hills must have plenty of lovely areas where small gardens can be located. So please give it consideration before you go ahead with that garden. Thank you.

Harley Pastore, 150 Yutaka Trail

I’ve been going to school for 13 years now; I’m a sophomore. I have worked so hard to get where I am. I’m an AP student and Honor student. Next year they’re getting rid of sports and they’re getting rid of extracurricular activities that we need. Sorry, I’m kind of winging it right now. I don’t have anywhere else to go except for Shelton High. I have no money to go anywhere else. I’m kind of riding on the idea that I can get some kind of scholarship through Track or academic. Next year they’re going to cut the budget so I don’t have any of that. All of the kids in Shelton are facing this problem except for the ones that are going to other schools. It’s ridiculous right now. They’re cutting back teachers and everything that we have that we need to get into college is just gone. We need to increase the budget and just stop, like, I don’t know how to explain it. Sorry. We need something to make our school better, because right now everything that we’re doing is just getting messed up. Thank you.

Dina Marks, 30 Ballaro Drive

Good evening. I’ve actually contacted several of you by e-mail earlier, but I did not contact all of you. I just want to read that, and it won’t be even five minutes. I’m a lifelong Shelton resident, a veteran Shelton teacher, and a Shelton parent. I’m here to ask that Shelton residents, well, for you, to support funding Shelton education fully. Our Board of Education is facing a budget crisis the likes of which Shelton has never seen. At last count, five administrators and 72 certified teachers, which is 18 percent of our entire teaching staff, are facing layoffs if the Mayor’s 0.15 percent increase budget is passed. His proposed budget will cut 3.45 million dollars off of the Board of Education’s proposed budget. In addition, 73 non-certified staff, custodians, nurses, secretaries, tutors, and paraprofessionals will be cut as well. In total, the Superintendent projects that about 150 people, 150 contact people with our students, will lose their jobs come July 1st. I can hear you already saying this is just a scare tactic. Is it really? Have you watched or read the news about the many towns in Connecticut facing similar layoffs? That’s because the No Child Left Behind laws force school systems to take specific actions to make sure that all students succeed. This involves added staff, materials and sometimes out of district placements to make sure that every child has a fair chance. It’s a nice idea for which there are no funds. The federal and state governments are not
giving cities enough money to fund their mandated programs, so the added costs fall on
the Boards of Education. A non-residential out-of-district placement may cost $40,000
for one student. For a residential placement, which is often mandated by the court or by
DCF, it might be as much as $70,000 for one student. The school system is responsible
for paying the educational costs of all residents, even for these placements. As a result,
many of these students are being brought back into local schools to cut costs. But they
will need the teachers and paraprofessionals that are being cut to meet their
educational needs here. In addition, the zero percent increase that the Mayor proposes
actually leaves the Board of Education at a deficit. Unemployment costs for teacher
layoffs must be paid by the Board of Education, since we are not a corporation, leaving it
1.2 million dollars in debt before another dime is even spent. As a taxpayer, I’d rather
pay that money to paychecks for employing people – teachers – who touch our children’s
lives, than on paying out unemployment checks. One area that may be cut completely is
after school activities. Band and chorus have already been cut down. All other non-
academic activities are at risk as well, including, at Shelton Intermediate School, sports.
Never mind pay for play. Coaches, lights, security and custodians for practices and
games will not be funded over classes. Education is our primary goal, and that must
come first. Speaking of education, closing another elementary school would be
considered if the City is in dire need of money. Class sizes at the elementary level could
go as high as 27 students per class. Get rid of so-and-so, they’ve been here too long and
new teachers work cheap. The Teacher’s Union will gladly entertain any reasonable
retirement package that the City offered. Negotiations continue next week, but the past
offers have fallen quite short. I like my taxes low, you might say. Well, so do I. The low
tax rate will bring more money into Shelton if you can sell your house for a decent price.
Real estate agents are often asked about the quality of the school system. Shelton High
School is up for NEASC accreditation next year. They will automatically be put on
probation if funds are not supplied to support the students to NEASC standards, and that
includes all of the things that the students have spoken about tonight being cut.
Colleges are assured by the NEASC accreditation that students are well prepared and
students credits transfer easily to other high schools if they move to another high school.
Few parents want to move into a district with a non-accredited high school. Our CMT and
CAPT scores would suffer as well. Students would not get the help they need to reach
the state goal because reading and math tutors are going to be cut.

Alderman Anglace noted that five minutes has elapsed.

In closing, I just want to say that the biggest casualty here is going to be our students,
and if you cut our budget from what it was proposed, you’re not cutting, you’re basically
going to be leaving us with what we need to essentially educate our children to where
they need to be. We’re talking no fringe benefits. It’s going to be what we need to give
our kids a good education. Thank you.

Ken Dugan, 16 Laurelwood Drive

I’ve lived there since 1987. My first home in Shelton was on Rocky Rest Road. Both my
kids have gone through the Shelton School System. Mainly what I came here tonight
was to talk about the opposition to the community garden. I echo what the others have
said, specifically Randy York; I agree with everything she said. Tonight I just don’t think there’s a place for the flow-through of traffic on Longview. A lot of things have gone through my head tonight since listening to other people. While I can appreciate the lady who was up here living in the condo and not wanting to have to maintain the outside of her house or her property, by the same token those of us that live in our neighborhood all have minimum ¾ acre lots and we’ve chosen to do that because we want a little space and buffer room around our house. That gives us enough property on our own lot to put in a garden of any size we want. I used to have a gigantic garden on my property until the deer found a way through my yard and they ate everything I put in there, so I just stopped doing it. Also, correct me if I’m wrong here, with the pipeline running through that property, this other gentleman was saying about thank God we don’t have condos there, I don’t think they could build on that property. Am I correct in that assumption? So, that’s really not an issue there, building condos or houses on there since the pipeline has gone through. The other thing I want to mention tonight, because my kids have gone through the school system and I’m kind of away from that, but since I’ve lived in Shelton for over 30 years now, it’s always been an argument between the town and the Board of Education with cuts, and budgets, and everything else. Our youth today is tomorrow’s future. We should not cut back on that. The Lauretti administration of which I’ve been a supporter since he’s been the Mayor is always touting and talking about how good the financial situation of Shelton is. We are the apple of Connecticut’s eye. If that’s the case, we should be able to afford to not cut these programs.

Corrine Kapral, 174 River Road

I am the future of Shelton. My generation is the next Mayor, Board of Education, and the next ones to take your seats. I demand and I hope this City demands that you invest in my future, and the future of my generation. How can I give back to my City when I’m an adult, if you don’t put anything into us now? We need our extracurriculars, our foreign languages, our art and our music. Thank you.

Alderman Anglance stated, I want to thank that young lady for being so short and to the point.

Allesandro Maione, 276 Meadow Street

So let’s take a field trip through time and space, say maybe about six years ago, to Shelton High School. Shelton High School was ridden with drugs. There was heroin everywhere. It just wasn’t a good place. I remember hearing rumors, just terrible rumors. I was terrified to go to this place. Finally, Dr. Smith comes in and fixes all this, and now all this that she has fixed is about to be stripped from her hands and she’s worked for pretty much nothing for the school if you take away her budget and everything, all of the money, for the school. So if you take away this money and make these budget cuts and these extracurricular activities, these kids are probably going to turn to drugs and we’re going to have another heroin problem and more drugs. I think we should probably put some more money into their budget and help out a little bit. Thank you.
Alex Beardsley, 64 Beech Tree Hill Road

I’m going to be a senior next year and I have never been a good student. The only thing I’ve had was music and art my whole life. If you cut that it’s just going to make me go more downhill and I’ll probably be in high school for the rest of my life. So please don’t cut that. Dr. Smith is the best thing to happen to this school, so don’t cut the security guards either, because we need those, we know we can walk into school and nothing will happen. Thank you.

Mandy Blakeslee, 164 Village Drive

I came here tonight because I’m a parent of four children, three of which are in the school system now. I’m gravely concerned about the budget cuts that I see happening in the future if you pass the Mayor’s budget as it is. I think keeping taxes low is an admirable goal but I think you’ll find, if you talk to enough people, that that’s not necessarily what they’re looking for. I think a lot of people are willing to pay a little bit more. I mean, don’t double my taxes – nobody likes to part with their money – but people I think are willing to pay a little bit more to get what needs to be done, done. I don’t think the goal is to just keep taxes low. The goal is to be able to get value for your money. I think when you’re purchasing something you don’t go to the store and necessarily say, “I want the cheapest thing.” You want to get what is going to be a good value. I grew up in Shelton; I’m a lifelong resident, and part of the reason I came back to Shelton was my experience in the school system. I truly, sincerely believe that I got one of the best educations around that I could. I had wonderful teachers and I don’t want to see a lot of those teachers now lose their jobs. I don’t want my children to be sitting in classrooms that have a lot more kids than they have now. Right now they’re lucky to have a good size classroom. Some of them have paraprofessionals in the classrooms and if those people are taken away, how are the teachers going to be able to get done what they need to get done? As I say, it’s nice that we want to keep taxes low, but I think a lot of people are willing to pay a little bit more, and I’m certainly willing to pay a little bit more to get the needed City services accomplished. Thank you.

Sheila Johnson, 31 Hearthstone Drive

I’ve lived in Shelton since I was six years old. I attended Lafayette School, Shelton High School, Shelton Intermediate School. I’m still in Shelton; my husband was born and raised in Shelton. Since childhood I have been very confused about the direction that the town has taken. I remember in the 70s when we closed Ferry School and Huntington School. I remember closing Ripton, yet renovating and beautifying the Board of Education. The old Shelton Intermediate School wasn’t good enough; we closed that. Now we decided it is good enough; we can renovate it and open that up after we’ve already built a new school. So, we built a new school and now we’re going to close down yet more schools. I just don’t understand the waste in taxpayer money. It seems like we’re responding to an immediate need, but we’re not looking at the future of Shelton. So we’re doing this once again with the budget cuts. We’re going to take money away and funding away from these Intermediate and Shelton High School students that can create a well-rounded individual. That’s what I want as a parent. My children are in
Shelton schools. As a graduate of Shelton High School, I attended their CNA program. I became a nurse’s aide, I became a nurse. I’m currently the director of nursing in one of the largest nursing homes in the State of Connecticut. Would I be here right now had I not had that well-rounded education and extracurricular activities that were provided to me? No, I wouldn’t. I don’t know what road I would have taken. I am fearful for my children, possibly my grandchildren someday, if we don’t look now at the road we’re going to head in 20 years with the budget cuts. If there are no after-school activities, these children are going to head down the wrong road. If there is nothing to point them into the direction of a career, perhaps through RCA program, perhaps through different CASH programs. Where are they going to be? And I, too, ask this Board to think about when you were in school, and what mattered to you, and please bring that back to the Mayor and ask him to re-look, and revisit and think about what’s best for the children and the future of Shelton. Thank you.

Carolyn Findlay, 53 Greystone

I’m a teacher at Shelton High School and also the parent of two children who went through the school system who are now 29 and 25. I’ve been here. I’ve done this. I remember candlelight vigils through many administrations. I very clearly remember Mr. Anglace saying to us as parents, and I think it’s still true today, it’s not the Board of Aldermen who tell the Board of Education how to spend the money. That’s true. That’s very much a true fact. The point being is what I’m here to ask you to do tonight is that obviously you can see the concern from the students. Had you been at the High School today you’d have heard a lot of concern from the students. It was very widespread. We’re trying our best to dispel rumors. We’re trying our best to keep the students as calm as possible. What I would say to you as a parent of graduates, as a current educator in the system is the keep the dialogue open. We have heard positive things in that the Board of Aldermen are still in conversation with the Board of Education. What I would like to hear is that that conversation is going to continue and that the budget as it has been proposed is not one that’s final but one that is still up for discussion. I think if both sides work together we should be able to do what’s right for our students. I think that’s the primary concern. To think that the individuals, I know many of you up on stage, do not care about education is a great mistake. I know many of you very strongly, I’m sure all of you, are concerned with education. Many of you have very close ties, immediate ties, to the educational system. And you know what’s done. I just ask that you keep those lines of communication open between now and May and have both sides sit down at the table in meaningful discussions. That’s all I have to say.

Alderman Anglace stated, we don’t respond, but there’s one comment I have to make. That is that keeping the dialogue open is an excellent reference because many of us have been continuously working with our counterparts from the Board of Education and the administration from our Board of Education. Example, for over seven years I have served on the Board of Education’s Technology Building Committee. Those contacts, those monthly meetings, developed a sense of understanding and dialogue between us that’s existed over the past seven years. We’re in tough times. Everybody acknowledges that; we’re in tough times. There’s over 170-some-odd families in this town that are facing foreclosure on their property. There probably are more in addition to that. It’s
serious, but you’re right, we can’t just say, because somebody proposed a budget – this is a five-month process. It starts back in November with the Departments, it goes through the Mayor, it goes through the Board of Apportionment and Taxation, it comes to the Aldermen. Dialogue must ensue throughout that entire five months. We’re not blind. There’s a lot to consider. There’s a lot of people that write us; there’s a lot of information that we receive. Ultimately we’ve got to make a decision. You make this decision sometimes – I’m sorry for spouting off here, but we make decisions some years, we don’t even know, and the same is true for the Board of Education, and that’s what happened last year, we don’t even know what the State’s going to give us. Know what I mean?

Joan Kapral, 174 River Road

I do agree with you that we are in tough times; I think we all know that. However in my house, the first people to tighten their belts were the adults, not my children. I’m against Mayor Lauretti’s proposed budget for the Board of Education. In the words of Jay Leno, “What the heck? What’s he thinking?” Three years ago I moved from Stratford to Shelton and I believed it was the best decision I’ve made for my children. Now I find myself at a town meeting again, in another town, fighting for the rights of my children. They deserve the quality education, and that means they deserve safety, sound counsel from the Guidance Department in regard to planning their futures, quality teachers, and the extras that keep them stimulated in positive ways. As a former realtor and current loan officer, the number one question asked by a prospective buyer is, “how are the schools?” I don’t think offering them the possibility of a lovely garden is going to keep them coming to Shelton.

Terrence Gallagher, 43 Judson Street

I’m in favor of the community garden at Klapik Farm. I’m in favor of the parcel that the Garden Committee picked out. Not because my wife, Theresa, is on the committee, but I think it’s actually good having walked the property and having looked at the property when the City was proposing buying the land from the Klapik’s as open space. I remember when the City was looking at buying that; it was the idea that it might be a ball field some day. I thought that was a good use for the land, when we went ahead and bonded to buy it I thought that was a great idea. I think the access off Longview Drive is good access. I drove there Sunday, there were people walking up and down the road, I was able to drive my car down the road, there were families with little kids and tricycles and I was able to drive to the end of the road and park. I didn’t run over anybody. You just drive slow. I don’t think the type of people who are going to come out to a community garden are going to go racing up and down the road. These aren’t the Hell’s Angels planting asparagus at the end of the road. It’s people like Guy Beardsley in his old straw hat and his hoe. These are nice people. I think folks have whipped themselves into a tizzy over this with a lot of misinformation. I particularly don’t like the little scary brochure that went out saying that my wife misled people and didn’t give them advance notice. This is totally false. Theresa has probably sent out at least three rounds of notification to all the neighbors in the area. She probably put out more notice on this than the next two or three City projects combined. The Garden Committee was just appointed by you folks a couple months ago, and they started notifying people right after
their first organizational meeting. They tried to get the community involved. The Conservation Commission has looked at different parcels around town. They didn’t pull this parcel out of thin air; they looked at parcels that were the right size, had the right soil, had the right fertility of soil, were on State farmland soils. They tried to find places that were good to farm. The Klapik field at the end of Longview is actually a very good field to farm. You’ve got a Garden Committee made up with all kinds of people who are the best gardeners and farmers in town. They know much more than I do about farming. If they say this is good dirt, I tend to believe them. The traffic is probably very benign. They didn’t pull these numbers out of thin air. They’ve done a report that they’re forwarding to you folks. They’ve called other towns’ community gardens, they know what the traffic these generate in other towns. It’s not a huge amount. You can drive down that street or any other street without endangering anybody’s children or their property values or the tranquility of their neighborhood. This is not going to be a huge traffic generator. It’s a very benign use. I’m just worried that we get these groups coming in, they get ideas in their head, and also these “not in my back yard, not on my street, not in my neighborhood” attitudes. You can see it over and over again in town. You see the people arguing against having the Dog Park at Nells Rock Road because they’re worried about traffic, even though most towns when you go and look at their dog park have very low traffic use. I support having a Dog Park there because I think people should use our open space. I think if it’s done right, that’s a good use. I think having Paugussett Trail go through Mayflower Lane is a good use considering the City spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy open space there. But the residents of Mayflower are convinced that the little old lady from the Appalachian Mountain Club hiking through is going to have her dog attack their children or is going to break into their house. You can’t reason with people sometimes when they get these ideas in their head. I think we’re all adults and can have an intelligent discussion about what we use in our town, where we put certain facilities. I think the Garden Committee is doing a great job and I think we should encourage people that volunteer like that for their community shouldn’t be harassed and harangued because they stick their nose up above the tree line and try to do something nice for the town. I’m in favor of the Klapik’s property for the gardens, and I favor the access off of Longview Road. It’s a nice street. It’s a good access. I think it’s cost effective. The Aldermen can monitor how it goes in the first year. If something’s got to get tweaked, and new access has to go in, if another parcel has to get opened up because 500 people want community gardens, we can certainly manage that. I think we can have an intelligent dialogue on the subject. Thank you.

Julia Romanova, 18 Longview Road

Not to get into an argument with the gentleman who just spoke, but as a resident on that street, I can assure you that up until the point where the Garden Committee started gathering, we had no communication about what was going on. We got a note and then directly after that, a few days after, we got notes from the school already offering plots to people. So this is just our side. And this is where it gets most personal because we as residents of that street really take it very seriously because all the traffic as proposed by the Garden Committee is going to be on our street. Talking about that again. It is incredibly frustrating to us the way the Garden Committee has handled the issue, because it feels like all our requests have been completely disregarded as far as putting
things, putting notes of the meetings, the minutes were not even, the information was not even in the minutes after the meeting that we attended. We requested different times for the meetings and it didn’t take place. There were a number of issues which I’m sure you heard. As far as being frustrated, I personally feel like this situation is being shoved down our throats because we have very many issues at stake, living on the street, and I don’t want to repeat all the issues that we’re concerned about, but the thing here is, things get shoved down people’s throats left and right these days. It’s the type of world we live in and I understand. But this situation is different, and this is the case where things could be done differently. Either a different location or different access – not through our street. You, I believe, have the power of making it happen differently where when a community is asking – not even one or two people – not that that would be any less significant but the whole community is asking not to put the access on the street. It’s really, you know, the situation where you guys can address our requests. Where some other committees have just disregarded them. That said, on a totally different note about school budget cuts. I’m fully against the issue of cutting the budget. I think it’s really crucial that the programs, extracurricular activities and music, art, physical training, be available to the kids that are now there in school, and for future generations to come. I’m speaking as a mother of two young children. If you take that away, that’s gone from the schools, what’s left? The bare minimum. Kids are stripped from a lot of things that will create them as personalities in the future, and it’s really crucial for them to have that. Thank you.

Jill Wakeley [no address given]

First I’d like to say I’m in support of all the High School kids that just came out and spoke against the budget cuts. My own son is a 15-year-old Shelton High School football player. He came home today and said, “Mom, did you hear that they’re going to cut football, and I’m finally going to make varsity, and now they’re going to get rid of the team?” So, I told him, you know, I really fail to believe our Aldermen would literally cut the budget so deep that he wouldn’t be able to play football next year, and not to worry. So I hope you don’t make me eat my words. I’m also here tonight in opposition to the Longview Road access to the community garden. The big picture here is the fact that we’ve got a whole neighborhood and plus against this garden access through Longview Road. Not only is the neighborhood opposed to it because most, you know, the most pressing issue is the traffic. The most important issue to us is the traffic. I’m a former realtor in the City of Shelton. I worked for Real Estate Two, I worked for Century 21, I worked for Roscoe, I worked for Elmer Craw. I can tell you that putting a community garden at the end of the street will devalue the property. You may not be able to get written proof of that, or it may cost thousands of dollars to do that, but just it takes common sense if you’re driving around looking for a home for yourself that there’s a community garden, you know there’s a lot of traffic going down there, and you’re not going to pay as much for that house. So that’s a fact. But the traffic that it brings is really alarming and that’s an issue to us. We’ve also heard that the Klapik’s are not in favor of this garden either. The City purchased this property from them, apparently, for public use. They only required a fence to be put alongside their property when the City uses this property. They knew they wanted a fence because the public will be on the other side of the fence. So we do not feel an access through Long Hill Avenue was so
critically important to them at the time when they sold this land. They did not stipulate that all access to this property should be through Longview Road. Since they’re opposed to it and we’re opposed to it and the names that were submitted, I should say the streets that were submitted to us with the list of people who wanted to do gardening there are primarily from Huntington, Nell’s Rock area, White Hills area, that it’s not even necessary to be in this part of town. They have really not established need for gardening in that particular area. I have a 2/27/2010 e-mail from Theresa stating that we now have about 50 preregistrations. This week she was asked to present a list of addresses and I guess she only came up with 38. So somehow, some other person was in charge of keeping the registrations from that point on where they couldn’t be produced. So we have 38 that could actually be produced to this date. With the traffic study she handed out at her Garden Committee, a piece of paper that says “Traffic Assessment.” Okay, she states, “The Connecticut Community Garden Association was queried for the number of times that an average plot in a community garden is visited per week. The representative of the association who has a Master’s Degree in Environmental Management conducted a survey of ‘many gardeners’ and received feedback from several garden coordinators.” Okay, she’s giving this great weight. She’s presenting this fact to us that we should put great weight in it. We asked her for the name of this representative who conducted this survey and wanted to know, is this a formal survey or an informal survey, because we wanted to get a copy of it and find out exactly how many gardeners were contacted. Was this a few people or a lot of people?

Alderman Anglace noted that five minutes had elapsed.

She also stated that there was 1.2 times visit per week to the garden. We wanted to know how was that average arrived at. Was that a figure that was divided by 52 or a figure that was based on maybe 26 weeks worth of gardening time. That would affect the average trips per week greatly. Common sense would say if you have a garden you would be going there more than 1.2 times per week. .2 times, I’m not sure how you do that. It’s like having 1.2 children. I think we can all figure how many times we need to water our gardens and know that this figure could double or triple. She compared her figures that she presented on Killingworth Community Garden. The population in Killingworth is 6,500 people. The population in Shelton is 40,000 people. This little town started out in 2008 with a garden of 26 plots. She quoted it as having 50 plots. Yes, it was expanded to 50 plots the following year. And then it was expanded to 65 plots the following year after that. So there’s a track record for these gardens to be expanding. We have no guarantees that this is not going to be expanded on the 40 acres that is there. The Klapik’s have had gardens in that first plot. We have eye witnesses here who have seen the Klapik’s garden from way back then, it was a successful garden in the front site where they could use Long Hill Avenue, if the City insists on putting this garden there. We know the City can do whatever they want to do. We’d like to think that we have Aldermen who can see the numbers of people who do not want this there. There is a need that has not been established for this particular area of town. We would like them to slow down. Take another year. Look at some more sites and place this garden in a better part of the City where it could serve more people. We’re not against gardens. We’re not against gardeners. We think this makes no sense and we’d like to appeal to your judgement.
FIVE MINUTE RECESS

Steven Permar, 591 Long Hill Avenue

I’m also here representing Pauline Carroll and Joan Klapik who couldn’t make it today. I’m against the garden on both Longview and Long Hill. I don’t really believe that Long Hill Avenue in the front parts has been used as anything but a hay field, because that’s what Klapik’s and Carroll’s used the property as - hayfields. As far as traffic on Long Hill, traffic on Long Hill is pretty bad. You have the school, convalescent homes, Asbury Ridge, so you do have a lot of traffic. You have Sikorsky traffic going up and down the road so it is a busy road; I understand that. But you have to have the facts - it’s been a hayfield. A lot of the Klapik and Carroll property is as the City might know, wetlands due to drainage in back of Long Hill School, but I am against the community garden on Long Hill and on Long View. Thank you.

Glen Gaetano, 19 Greenfield Drive

I’m here actually for the Board of Education review, but just a comment on the community garden. We lived in beautiful and progressive Burlington, Vermont for 15 years and my wife and daughter certainly enjoyed the community garden there and I’m not taking a position on the current one. But in any case I do hope at sometime the City does have a such a thing, it’s a wonderful activity for everyone and I hope you find a good place for it wherever it might be.

Just regarding the budget I just hope, and some of the teachers mentioned that it’s a very fair, thorough, and I hope quickly done on behalf of the youngsters of the school to let them know, let the community know, keeping a dialogue open, what is going on, because its not fair to the kids to have things being told everyday what’s being cut, what’s not happening. So please let us know what you’re doing and how you’re doing it. It’s the best thing to communicate with people and it’s really quite vital. And the other thing some have mentioned being the apple of Connecticut and certainly you get what you pay for, and in any case if we have to pay extra money to have our education better I think we would all do that. Certainly not a great increase but if that is necessary, then many people would be amenable to that. I certainly understand people can’t, on a budget, the elderly, and we’re not asking for more and more taxes. But we have to sustain a great education in this town for the youngsters. And what’s really important and I didn’t realize it until my two children who are 9th and 11th graders at Shelton High School, my wife does teach. They’re AP students but they take music and they take art and I really found out for the first time how critical those activities are for those kids. My son wants to be a rap artist and he writes. And I’ll tell you one thing, months ago there was a kid from Shelton High School who was down at Toad’s in New Haven. He put on a performance down there that was incredible. He’s talented. He went to Shelton High School and I’m sure he was in the music program. And he was just - I went down there and it was impressive to see such a performance from one of our kids. And there were 50 kids from Shelton down there following him. So it’s very important for the youngsters to have that. Again, I hope you keep it moving. Let us
know. We’ve got wonderful teachers there - Mrs. Marks who taught my son Tyler. We have people - Ann Demway I’m sorry. We have people like that. They’re incredible teachers and to be involved with the school and to see that; I don’t know if you’ve gone to the school I went and put on a slide presentation to my daughter’s class in history about, I was in the Navy in Italy and Egypt and it was just so great to be with kids and see what they’re doing in the school. There’s just so much going on there. And we’ve got the teachers so let’s support them and let’s support these kids. Thanks.

Patricia Barber, 15 Longview Road

I’m here to oppose the garden on the cul-de-sac. I also would like to know if they had an independent traffic study done and if we can request one, because there’s so much traffic going up and down the street if the garden was there. Also, I think the land should be preserved for open space, because there’s a lot of deer and the garden - they said they want to put an 8 to 10 foot fence up. I think that’s going to be a problem with the deer eating the vegetables and it also attracts the coyotes, which my dog has already been attacked once by two coyotes in our own yard. And I have called the City of Shelton and there’s basically nothing they can could when the animals attack. And they said if you go on the animal conversation that there has been an increase of attacks on small children and people. If somebody doesn’t realize there’s that much wildlife up there and somebody’s gardening by themselves this can be a real hazard if somebody’s in a field gardening and they don’t realize the coyotes are around. Thank you.

Victoria Gasiorowski, 48 Kings Highway

I’m a student, a sophomore at Shelton High School and I’m also a student of RCA in Trumbull - the performing arts school. And that is a huge part of my life and now programs like RCA, the drama, sports they’re in jeopardy of being cut. And like, you know, people have said before, I would just like to enforce it that we are the future of this community. Now, in a couple years when I’m applying for colleges, if programs get cut, even if I have the grades, I’m not quite sure what I’m supposed to put on my transcript. I mean, there’s going to be students that have the same grades as me, but say they’re the star of the football team, they are going to make it before me and them I’m going to be stuck. So I would just like to say how important these programs are to me. And I think I would be a much different person without them you know, because I go there, I dance, I have many friends there. I’ve learned a lot from my peers; it’s been a great experience. I mean, I go to RCA and I’m with students from Bridgeport, and you know, it’s much different. So, it’s a great learning experience, it’s a great place to be and I just don’t want these programs to be cut. So thank you, if you could just considered that, thank you.

Kathy Mafucci, 359 Shelton Avenue

I don’t wish to be redundant. I know many people have gotten up and pretty said much of what I wanted to say tonight. The only thing I can say is many of you have seen my
face, I’ve been in many of the meetings dealing with finance, going to all of the Board of Education meetings. I myself have children, have gone through the Shelton school systems; I myself am an educator here in Shelton. For many, many years, and you will understand this, there has been much discord between the Board of Education and the City, and maybe some are not aware of just how much we have cut back and how much we’ve tried to do more for less. But if I could possibly do anything tonight, I wish that each and every one of you attend or go to the schools, get one of our visitors passes and walk the halls. Talk to the kids, see what we do every single day. I’ve heard everyone get up here and talk about how much people are hurting and the property values, and the number of people that are going through foreclosures. But I would like to look at the flip side of the number of people who are choosing to not settle in our town because of the constant discord and fighting. I thought when Mrs. Findlay said it perfectly when she said, at least at this point if we leave the avenue of communication open, it ensures at least some flexibility and knowing that maybe if you see what we do on a daily basis, maybe you’ll better understand; maybe you’ll understand what your money is going for. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace stated, in the interest of keeping the communications open and us understanding, let me share with you, I want to introduce Alderman Anthony Simonetti. Does anybody know that he was the chairman of the Shelton High School Renovation Building Committee?

Alderman Simonetti stated, it’s still going on, John.

Alderman Anglace stated, I want you to know that we are not just sitting up here; we are in the schools, we are doing things with the Board of Education and there is, and has been considerable dialogue. Does anybody else wish to speak?

Jim Beatrice, 22 Longview Road

I’m new in town. I moved in last year although my father did graduate Shelton High, class of 1945. I’m here to discuss the community garden. The project name is community garden. I’ve seen an awful lot of emphasis on the word garden or farm but on very little emphasis on the word community. Just to reiterate some of the comments - the concern about the traffic and so on. But I’m sorry we did feel some what shut out by the Garden Committee, we raised a number of issues that didn’t seem to be pushed up to you folks and so on. Thank you for the phone calls that have been returned by the Aldermen that I have called. Just a couple thoughts on a couple conversations that I had with Guy Beardsley. He mentioned that it’s important we have an ongoing management of these gardens and so that connection with the community is important. Our sense in the area is that there’s very little community support in the area of the Klapik’s. Another conversation with the active chairwoman Mary King, she noted that you don’t necessarily have to have the garden on a farm piece of land, that sometimes the garden can be brought to the people perhaps garden boxes and so on, that dirt can be brought. It’s important to have the community involved. So just a couple thoughts on that. Also, sociologists tell us that there are certain sized social groups that people feel comfortable with, have a certain level of connectedness with. Three to five people, nine to fifteen, the next one up is thirty to forty-five and as you go up its something like
90 to 150. So my thought is keep the garden in that 30-45 range. Have multiple
gardens in the 30-45 range, have a sense of community and that way I think your going
to get more than this 1.2 times a week here. You’ll have people with a social aspect as
well as learning the gardening. Thank you for your time.

Royce York, 10 Longview Road

I’ve lived in Shelton pretty much all of my life and I’m here to speak or express my
displeasure of the proposed plan to use the Klapik property at the end of the Longview
Road for the community garden and Longview as the access road. I am also against any
idea of using Long Hill Road as an access point. I don’t think the garden community is
actually proved there is a need or desire to have the garden in the location. I don’t want
to be repetitive. We’ve looked at it; we’ve FOI’d it. The street addresses, a total of 38 in
a city that has over 40,000 residents in it. I think it’s pretty obstructive and damaging to
an existing neighborhood to just plow a road through its road or plow a path through to a
community based garden. I do have problem in regards whether it actually is a
community based garden or not. Our investigative work in regard to those names would
really reveal that most of those people as you have heard before live outside our
immediate neighborhood area. In addition, I would also like to mention too that the
Klapik land has always been used for passive recreation and we’ve used it for walking,
hiking, jogging and bird watching. It’s used on a frequent basis, you can be walking up
there and see plenty of people at any given time using the property. It would appear
that the idea or what concept has been used is contrary to some who have claimed that
it’s rather elitist for us as a neighborhood to think that it should be used just for us.
However, it would appear that this idea has come from those of upper economic status
and not from those that represent the true concept of what a community garden is
designed to serve - gardeners who want or need to supplement food on the table. And
when we look at that list, we’ll see that most of those, I should say at least half of those
people that had interest in it live on at least an acre or more lots, and come from that
White Hills or Huntington area. My other primary concern is the cost to the City
residents. Community gardens are expensive to run. They need a lot of maintenance,
they use a lot of water, and that particular area you’re going to be using plenty of water
to take care of gardens up there. It can be extremely expensive. And I think under the
circumstances what we’re hearing from the Board of Education, I think that most of us
on Longview as well as Laurelwood and Long Hill would rather see the money diverted
into the BOE. There’s another primary issue that has to be concerning over that location
is the safety aspects and access for fire. It’s a primary concern you’ll have one path in
and one coming out of there. There’s no backup way to get out of there. It needs to be
really examined by the Fire Department to determine whether it’s actually usable for
that purpose. And vandalism is another important aspect of it, it’s going to be an issue
up in that area. Our point as far as where we live, it’s been too big, too fast. We were
not included in any of the process contrary to what Mr. Gallagher had spoken before
about Terry notifying us. We were notified very late in the game in regard to it, and
that’s probably why many of us are upset over the whole entire concept. Thank you.
Tom Harbinson, 15 Soundcrest Drive

I want to say a little something first about the Board of Education issue. Since everyone has been touting it, I pretty much lived on the same street all my life and I went to the elementary school Long Hill. And when I was in probably fifth grade we had an arts program where Principal Mackniak had us put on the show “Peter Pan” and arts was an integral component of my education. I later participated with The Youth CONNection and some of their summer stock theater. I became an accomplished organist and I’m probably the only one in the room who has played the pipe organ in Shelton High School. My brother also went to the elementary school Long Hill and the high school and so on, and participated in the Track program. If he were here today, he would tell you that he’s still holds the high school record for throwing the javelin. I say that because the arts or sports programs are an integral component of what shaped me as a student and then as a future citizen of Shelton that has gone on to participate in my community. And so, I’m not going to express any knowledge of the budget process between the Board of Education and what’s a valid amount or not a valid amount, but I will say that there are components to the program of education that are important to producing people in this society that will contribute and as an earlier speaker said, perhaps at your desk someday. I also want to point out that some of the Advanced Placement programs, or in my day they were called “electives,” are extremely important to your education. Just yesterday one of my previous teachers was recognized at the White House with a Congressional gold medal, Jane Tedeschi was my aeronautics teacher when I was a sophomore in high school and she was a former Woman’s Air Force service pilot, and just recently received that recognition. So there were some great teachers in the school back when I there and I’m sure there are today.

I do want to speak about the community garden however. It’s a little disappointing when the community opposes something, traditionally because it’s “in their backyard” is the term. But I believe it’s moreso because they are not informed or possibly misinformed. The information as to what guides the City decisions is available for all the public. The purchase of the property, thanks to many of the people who are in front of me making affirmative decisions towards it, was purchased many years ago in light of our Open Space Plan. A

In addition to the Klapik property, the Carol property, the Behuniak property, the Tall property, the open space dedication from the subdivision at the extension of Stowe Drive and so on. They all cumulatively followed a plan. The property was purchased with general tax payer money and that’s from the entire town whether you are “well to do” in White Hills as some people have said, that’s a tone I really do not like, because you know, there’s some well to do people in our end of town, I might be one of them. The community garden is a component that was asked for by the citizens of the community whether that be 30, 35 or 60 it was asked and it was looked at by our leadership. We looked at several properties, Conversation Commission was asked by the Garden Committee, which is an ad-hoc committee that you created in response to the citizen request, we looked at the properties the City has ownership of. And we looked at that in light of soil type, drainage, space and so on, and we recommended this is the parcel to look at. There is much more to do by the Garden Committee in terms of the list of who gets a garden plot, what the size of the garden plot is, where the
water comes from, access, all that stuff. Management has to still be worked out, It’s not a done deal being shoved down somebody’s throat. The amount of cost, the amount of traffic. I’ve heard some wild claims on both sides. I do think there are some things that could be contributed to more dialogue as was expressed about the Board of Education. Obviously the neighborhood nearby is concerned about what happening in their neighborhood as an amenity for the community. When we have open space parcels throughout town that we want to keep an eye on, we have a land keeper program that somebody nearby can keep an eye on if there’s any violations of that open space. Naturally, people who live close to the garden will be more aware of the ongoing weekly, daily activity, so I’d recommend that going forward, the Garden Committee might think of adding somebody to that that’s from the neighborhood that can add some input to that process. But in closing, this is a community open space that’s owned by all citizens of Shelton, whether you live in a house on a ten acre parcel, or you live in a condo and you’re a single mom, whether you have a piece of property that you can grow vegetables on but you chose not to, or a piece of property where its rocky soil and all shaded and you just don’t have the opportunity. It’s whether you want to just grow flowers or whether you want grow vegetables because you’re out of a job. Bottom line is, citizens have asked for it, you’re responding to it, and the process continues. Thank you very much.

Vera Gaetano, 19 Greenfield Drive

I’m here as a parent, I’m here as a teacher and I’m here as a taxpayer. I’d just like to say that we are in a position to really lose a lot in Shelton. We are on an upward trend. Dr. Smith has made tremendous strides in what I would call cleaning up the high school, changing the expectations. If we start cutting programs, it’ll take us years to regain those teachers. They will move on to other school districts. They are not going to come back to Shelton High School and have to restart the process again of tenure, being bottom man on the totem pole and risking again being cut. We jeopardize our accreditation like realtors have said tonight if we are not accredited or we’re put on warning status, people will not want to move into the community. We will be on the downward trend. I realize we are a Valley town. I did not grow up here, my husband grew up in Derby. I’m familiar with the politics that go back and forth. We are in Fairfield county, we like to, for some reason, compare ourselves to Derby and Ansonia but they are not our competition - the other schools in Fairfield county are. We’re not preparing our kids just for competing in Shelton, we’re not competing in the United States we are trying to prepare our students to function in the world where you need to have languages, you need to understand other cultures, you need to be really prepared if you want to succeed as we go forward. I’d like to say that people are teaching students at the moment. Unfortunately for the tax payers people cost money. We have not figured out a way to put a computer in front of students and have them do courses online and eliminate teachers. The State requires that we get higher education, we get higher degrees, we cost the school district more money. Yes, we can hire people who have tenure, or fire people who have tenure, fire people who have been here a long time, and we will lower our costs, but we’re going to start with young teachers who have little experience in the classroom and need time to grow. Teaching is one of the most difficult jobs anyone can do. I challenge anyone in this room to walk into a classroom
and manage a classroom and deal with students today. I do it because I love it, but I can
tell you I have done many other things where I have earned an easier pay check and
been able to go home at night and have no responsibilities, no papers to corrects, what
am I doing tomorrow, whose parents do I need to call tonight about something that
happened in the classroom. I just have say that we really have to be careful where we
go; I know there is a long standing history here with the mayor saying no, the budget
doesn’t not need anymore money. We really stand to lose a tremendous amount as a
community and we will not be able to get it back anytime soon. I hope you will keep that
in mind as this whole process unfolds. I think its going to be very gritty and very dirty; I
somehow always land on my feet, I a new teacher in Shelton. I’ve been here three
years, but I will land on my feet. I’m not so sure about some other people and again
please be aware that we would take perhaps years but maybe even decades to get back
to where we are today if we start laying off many people. Thank you very much.

Alderman Anglace asked if any other member of the public wished to address the Board.
He noted that several e-mails had been received and will be filed with the Town Clerk
upon submission of these completed minutes. Being no other speakers, he declared the
public session closed. 9 p.m.

ADD ON

Alderman Papa MOVED to add Item 9.3 – Waiver of Bid for Purchase of Police Vehicles
to the agenda; SECONDED by Alderman Kudej. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION
PASSED 8-0.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Alderman Papa MOVED to waive the reading and approve the following meeting minutes:

1. PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES – JANUARY 26, 2010
2. REGULAR FULL BOARD MEETING – FEBRUARY 11, 2010

SECONDED by Alderman Finn. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 8-0.

5.1 FINANCE COMMITTEE

No items.

5.2 PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

No items.

5.3 STREET COMMITTEE

No items.
REPORT OF THE MAYOR

None presented.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Alderman Anglace stated, I’d like to thank the Board for their thoughts and their prayers for my wife. She is now at the Wicke Health Care Center and making slow and steady progress. I thank you all for the generous fruit basket that you sent.

6.0 LEGAL REPORT

6.1 CORPORATION COUNSEL BILLING

Alderman Papa MOVED to authorize a total payment of $1,878.08 to Corporation Counsel Welch, Teodosio, Stanek and Blake, LLC for services rendered per statement dated March 5, 2010 with funds to come from the Legal Fees Account 001-1900-411.30-03; SECONDED by Alderman Kudej. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 8-0.

6.2 ASSISTANT CORPORATION COUNSEL BILLING

Alderman Papa MOVED to authorize a total payment of $315 to Assistant Corporation Counsel Ramon Sous for services rendered per statement dated March 1, 2010 with funds to come from the Legal Fees Account 001-1900-411.30-03; SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 8-0.

7 LEGISLATIVE - OLD

7.1 ITEMS FROM PUBLIC HEARING

No items.

8 FINANCIAL BUSINESS OLD

No items.

9 FINANCIAL BUSINESS NEW

9.1 MARCH STATUTORY REFUNDS

Alderman Papa MOVED, per the recommendation of the Finance Committee, that the report of the Tax Collector relative to the refund of taxes for a total amount of $53,460.67 be approved and that the Finance Director be directed to make payments in accordance with the certified list received from the tax collector with funds to come from the Statutory
Refunds Account 001-0000-311.13.00. SECONDED by Alderman Kudej. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 8-0.

9.2 ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR TANKER 59

Alderman Papa MOVED to appropriate the sum of $2,040.28 for additional costs associated with the repair of Tanker 59 with funding to come from Vehicle Risk Retention Account #203-0000-610.80-75; SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 8-0.

9.3 PURCHASE OF TWO POLICE VEHICLES – WAIVER OF BID

Alderman Papa MOVED, per the recommendation of the Purchasing Agent, to waive the bids for the purchase of two new Ford Crown Victoria Police Vehicles for the Police Department in the amount of $43,984 with funding to come from Police Seizure Fund Account #208-0000-510-80-75; and further,

MOVED to authorize Mayor Mark A. Lauretti to sign any and all necessary documents to effectuate same. SECONDED by Alderman Finn. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 8-0.

10. - LEGISLATIVE - NEW

10.1 ITEMS TO PUBLIC HEARING

10.1.A AMENDMENT TO ORDINANCE #795 – POLICE CHIEF CONTRACT

A public hearing is scheduled for March 23, 2010 at Shelton City Hall.

10.1.B AMENDMENT TO ORDINANCE #743 – FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION

Corporation Counsel Welch stated, let the record reflect that the Ordinance 743 – Flood Damage Prevention – the federal and state government has looked at it and have two minor comments received today.

A public hearing is scheduled for March 23, 2010 at Shelton City Hall.

10.2 SUNNYSIDE SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK PROJECT

Alderman Papa MOVED to adopt the following Resolution; SECONDED by Alderman Finn.

Alderman Kudej stated, I received a communication from the people on East Knollwood that they do not wish to have sidewalks; it was interfering with their life, the road was too narrow, they’re not willing to give up any easements. I would wish that East Knollwood would be eliminated from the scope of the project.
Alderman Anglace stated, the point is well taken in my view in that it is not essential to the project. They made points that, I believe, the Mayor concurs with and would have no problem eliminating it from the project – it would not impact the Safe Routes to School Grant program that we’re applying for.

Alderman Kudej MOVED to AMEND the motion to “adopt the following Resolution with the exception of East Knollwood,” SECONDED by Alderman Finn. A voice vote was taken and the AMENDMENT PASSED 8-0.

A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED AS AMENDED 8-0.

Resolved,

WHEREAS, the City of Shelton has published a legal notice display ad, mailed a news release to a number of officials and agencies, and mailed a formal letter to abutting property owners, announcing a public information meeting for the proposed Safe Routes to School project known as the Sunnyside School Neighborhood Sidewalk Project; and

WHEREAS, a public information meeting was held on February 23, 2010 at Sunnyside School from 6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. at which meeting residents had an opportunity to voice their concerns; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Aldermen has considered the concerns of the residents from the public information meeting and finds that the proposed project is in the best interest of the City of Shelton, and will promote the health, safety and general welfare of its residents and provide for the convenience and safety of the public.

Further, be it resolved by the Board of Aldermen of the City of Shelton, based on the above information, and by virtue of this resolution, hereby fully supports the proposed project.

11 EXECUTIVE SESSION

At approximately 9:10 p.m. Alderman Papa MOVED to enter into Executive Session to discuss the following items:

11.1 Loren Casertano – Worker’s Compensation
11.2 Cachillo – Worker’s Compensation

and invited Corporation Counsel Welch to remain in the Auditorium; SECONDED by Alderman Farrell. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 8-0.

Return to Regular Session

At approximately 9:26 p.m., Alderman Papa MOVED to return to Regular Session; SECONDED by Alderman Finn. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 8-0.
Alderman Anglace noted that there were no votes taken in Executive Session.

**MOTIONS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION**

11.1 Loren Casertano – Worker’s Compensation

No action.

11.2 Cachillo – Worker’s Compensation

No action.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Alderman Kudej MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 8-0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Bruder, Clerk  Date Submitted: _____________________________
Board of Aldermen

DATE APPROVED: ______________BY: ________________________________
Mark A. Lauretti
Mayor, City of Shelton