

CONNECTICUT JOURNAL

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ALTHOUGH few taxpayers bother to attend the routine meetings of municipal councils and boards, the spirit of Connecticut's Sunshine Law is that they should feel welcome to watch their business being transacted in town hall. But what about watching in the first selectman's living room?

The monthly meetings of New Canaan's 12-member Board of Finance are usually held in Town Hall, but the June meeting took place after dinner in the home of Henry S. Noble, the First Selectman.

Board of Finance meetings are not usually popular pastimes for New Canaan residents, but Virginia S. Tarika, president of the League of Women Voters, likes to go. So she and another member of the League arrived at Mr. Noble's house at 8 P.M., and in pursuit of the public's right to know, knocked at the front door. They were escorted to a patio to wait for the meeting to begin.

"We were informed by Mr. Noble about 8:10 that the meeting was postponed to 8:30, because they were not finished with dinner," she said.

The two women, who were joined by Terry Spring, another Selectman, were offered coffee and dessert, but declined. When the Board completed its meal, they all moved to another room for the meeting.

"It's not what you would call an ideal climate for a meeting," said Mrs. Tarika, who later protested to Mr. Noble, but did not take the issue further. "I do understand Mr. Noble's situation. It was not a meeting that had a long, involved agenda, and it was kind of their end-of-the-year dinner, but we would have preferred either moving to Town Hall after dinner, or if he had held the dinner on a different evening."

What will probably be the last ground-breaking for a corporate office building in Greenwich will occur this fall, attended not so much by nostalgia as by a court-ordered settlement concerning zoning on the site, which is on a stretch of the Cos Cob waterfront owned by Joseph Chimblo, a local builder.

The 75,000-square-foot, three-story, single-tenant structure will share the 6.8-acre property with 75,000 square feet of condominiums, or a maximum of 75 units. The complex will be ready for occupancy in a year-and-a-half, Mr. Chimblo said, with the office space renting for \$25 a square foot and the condominiums selling for an average of \$200,000.

Mr. Chimblo's own adjacent land is said to be the only other corporate location in town under current zoning laws which permit only 75,000 square feet of office space in most areas.

Mr. Chimblo estimates that he spent between \$150,000 and \$200,000 over an eight-year period on legal fees, maps, surveys, engineering and architectural renderings. During that time, the local zoning laws affecting his property were changed three times, reducing his office potential from 350,000 square feet to 25,000 square feet to zero. The most recent change occurred two years ago when office use was eliminated entirely by a special waterfront zone.

The settlement, reached under pressure from Superior Court Judge Donald Celato, sustained Mr. Chimblo's appeal to build an office structure, but reduced its size from the 196,000 square feet he had anticipated.

Greenwich has made an all-out effort in the past few years to stop the urbanization which has brought more than 2.5 million square feet of office space into

town since 1966, in spite of a study commissioned by the town that showed corporate offices will be financially beneficial.

According to William B. Lewis, Mr. Chimblo's attorney, the study was suppressed and had to be obtained through a hearing before the state Freedom of Information Commission as supportive evidence for his case.

One of the few persons to make an on-stage appearance at both the Democratic and Republican State Conventions at the Bushnell Memorial Hall was Jonnie Duncan and she wasn't running for anything.

Mrs. Duncan works for the State

keynote address by Sen. Lowell P. Weicker Jr.

Mrs. Duncan said she favored anything that "can provide first-hand knowledge for deaf viewers" and that she received a favorable reaction from some hearing-impaired persons who Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired and with her hands interpreted for viewers of Connecticut public television the nominating speeches for State Senate Majority Leader Joseph I. Lieberman of New Haven, who unsuccessfully sought the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor. The Republicans liked the idea so well that she was invited back to interpret some of their speeches, including the

had watched the conventions. "They were very encouraged and they would favor it being done more often," she said.

Glastonbury may not have to pay back \$910,000 it got from the Department of Housing and Urban Development in exchange for a promise — yet unmet — to build low- and moderate-income housing, an H.U.D. spokesman said last week.

It had looked like the town would become the first in the nation to have to return a grant for failure to meet its own housing goals after the town council voted this spring to reject a proposal for low-rent apartments. The H.U.D. area director in Hartford recommended to his superiors in Washington that the Community Development block grant be "recaptured," and the unspent portion was frozen. However, \$68,000 had already been paid for various municipal improvements.

Now, Glastonbury is proceeding through the preliminary stages of developing new plans. "We have advertised for developers to submit proposals," said Donald C. Peach, the town manager.

The last proposal, for a 71-unit complex, faced opposition from residents who said that the site was on floodland, and that the project would cause traffic congestion. Proponents have suggested that an undercurrent of dislike for the low- and moderate-income tenants was another factor.

At the new site, "there aren't the considerations of possible flooding, and the traffic situation is different," said Mr. Peach, who said he was sure there would be some opposition.

But this time, he said, "if the town drops the ball, then I'm sure that's the end of the ball game."

The H.U.D. area director in Hartford has recommended that Glastonbury not be given a grant next year.

The "Houley For Anything" campaign has ended with a job for Robert Houley although not quite the one he had in mind.

The State Senator from Vernon, who was running for the Democratic nomination for Lieutenant Governor or, as he admitted, any position he could get on the six-candidate party slate, has been appointed deputy campaign director for Ella Grasso.

The "Houley For Anything" bumperstickers he distributed, in retrospect, gave the wrong tone to the campaign, he said. "I did it way back then for the fun of it, but as I went from town to town, I wasn't taken seriously. I would never do it that way again. It would be a straight open 'Bob Houley for X,'" he said.

Before the Democratic State Convention last month, Mr. Houley's supporters chopped the "For Anything" off the remaining stickers, before plastering the "Houley" on bumpers, walls, and any other available surfaces. However, Mr. Houley still failed to get the nomination for Lieutenant Governor, and withdrew after the first ballot.

Mr. Houley, whose pay as a Senator is \$13,000 over the two-year term and who worked as a part-time car salesman before joining the Grasso campaign, has been open about his desire for a better-paying political job. Working as assistant campaign director under Howard Klebanoff, he will earn about \$400 a week, he said.

Rumors that Mr. Houley will be rewarded with a commissionership if Mr. Grasso wins re-election are at this point "pure speculation, and everybody's speculating," he said.

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Convention
regular...
All-purpose
candidate

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Top: Jonnie Duncan translating Sen. Lowell P. Weicker Jr.'s remarks into sign language at Bushnell Memorial Hall. Above: Robert Houley, campaigning for 'anything,' had second thoughts about his bumper stickers

The New York Times/Alan Decker and Ken Laffal