

January 25, 2011 East Haven, CT

Mayor April Capone announced her plans to address the building at 200 Tyler St, known as, the old high school. The building has been mostly empty since the 'new' high school opened on Wheelbarrow Lane in 1998. The building has sat rotting and blighted for many years and is reaching a critical point due to the lack of attention and maintenance before 2007. Mayor Capone explained "One of the main problems facing us is that the building was never properly shut down. That was evident when I first took office and stopped the heat from pouring out of the windows. My administration has been successful in our efforts to stop the building from hemorrhaging tax dollars, as it had been for more than a decade before I took office. Now that that has been accomplished it is time to move forward and look to the future."

In looking toward the future the mayor will take the unprecedented approach of involving the entire community in the decision. The first step of the plan involved 22 letters (see sample letter below) sent out this week asking members of the community to take an 'advisory' role in this process. The responding participants will meet with the mayor once per week to work on full 'business plans' for 2-3 ideas for the property. The Mayor went on to describe, "We will not be a group seeking *ideas* for the property; many wonderful ideas have already been submitted to this office. Instead, the committee will choose 2-3 concepts to focus on and create, full detailed business plans to present to the public for their vote in the November election. In this way the entire voting population will have a say in the future of 200 Tyler St. It will be a lot of work but in the end the community will have a solution obtained in a fair and equitable manner that is supported by the majority."

Town Clerk Stacy Gravino Piccirillo discussed the efforts by saying "I believe this is the first time in recent memory that any item has been placed on the general election ballot in this manner. Usually, an outcry from the public forces a referendum but it is nice to see Mayor April taking a proactive approach in involving the community." When asked about the legality of such a move the Town Clerk responded "The Mayor and I have spoken to the Town Attorney and the Secretary of State's Office and it appears that putting an item on the general election ballot is an acceptable practice. Most importantly because this will be placed on the ballot of a regular election there will be no additional cost to the taxpayers."

When asked why she chose this method for moving forward with this property, Mayor April stated "Making decisions on important issues in the community is something that I do every day, however in this case the decision is too big and for so many in the community, too emotional to be made by just one person. I believe we all benefit by having registered voters taking an active role in this process."

More interesting than the process were the names on two of the letters; Ken McKay and John Finkle. Both are Republicans declaring candidacy to run against the Mayor in November and have been asked by Mayor April to join the committee. "I have asked for bi-partisan support and input on many issues and this project is so important that both Republicans and Democrats need to be involved in rolling up our sleeves to get the job done. My hope is that they will accept my offer and come to the table ready and willing to pitch in to this collaborative effort." Mayor April ended by saying "I look forward to 2011 being the year that East Haven comes together to tackle the project at 200 Tyler St in a way that we can all be proud of."

John Doe
123 Mockingbird Lane
East Haven, CT
06512

January 18, 2011

Dear Mr. Doe:

I want to thank you for expressing interest in the property at 200 Tyler Street (aka the old high school). This property is an important piece of our community and its status needs to be addressed.

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to be part of an ad-hoc committee that will act as a special advisor to the Mayor with respect to this specific project.

Many ideas have been submitted to my office and I want to make it clear; *the goal of the committee is not to generate or solicit ideas*. Our function instead will be to focus on two or three ideas, of the committee's choosing, and develop full business plans for each option. These detailed plans will be presented to the public for their information and then placed on the November 2011 general election ballot.

This will be an intensive process requiring one meeting per week and a fair amount of work to ensure the people of East Haven are presented with viable options for the future of this property.

I believe it is unprecedented for East Haven, having a representative form of government, to place an item on the ballot for a direct public decision. However, in this case the decision to be made is so deeply tied to the fabric of our community that it deserves the full attention of all registered voters.

Please respond to Stacy at the number below by February 8, 2011 and inform her if you will be willing to participate in this vital effort to shape the future of our community.

I thank you in advance for your participation and willingness to work with me to address an issue of this magnitude which affects all East Haven residents.

Sincerely,

Mayor April Capone