

MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF CHAIRPERSONS
JANUARY 23, 2012 – 6:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Dean Antipas (TC), Paul Bates (HMC), Bruce Fafard (EDC), Dave Scott (IWA), Jeff Pritchard (PC), Brae Rafferty (CC), Dave Scott (IWA), Sue Sutherland (ZC)
Staff: Murphy, Norris, Silsby
Also Present: Fitzgerald (PC), Ferreira (RTM)

Acting Chairperson Antipas called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Staff distributed an excerpt from the Economic Development Policy Statement (1981–1984). This statement lays the ground work for the Chairpersons' Committee and what its mission is.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF October 17, 2011

MOTION: To approve the minutes of October 17, 2011, as amended

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Scott.

A few typos will be corrected.

Vote on the Motion was 5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 2 abstentions (Antipas and Sutherland)

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Property Maintenance and Blight Prevention Program – Update

Staff gave an update as to what has been discussed in recent meetings. He noted that the October meeting focused on areas of the ordinance only. The Town Council has supported, by Resolution, to hold at least one public information session to gain input in the development of the ordinance. This public meeting will be held in February. Staff distributed documentation and stated that Groton Long Point and the City of Groton will not be included in this program.

2. Ethics Ordinance – Update

Councilor Antipas noted that the Ordinance was approved by the Town Council and will now be sent to Counsel, for further review, before coming back to all boards and commissions.

3. Spicer Property Open Space Grant – Update

Staff explained that the Town is working with the Spicer's and Pulaski's in preparation for creating a sales agreement to purchase the property. The \$650,000 grant money will be used to purchase this open space. The intent is to work with the Town Council to get endorsement to use open space funding to purchase this land. An additional grant has been applied for, as well. To date, the Council has supported the

purchase. An extension has been granted by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) through April 2012. An overview of what has been accomplished up to this point was given. It was noted that the Town Council discussed this last week and authorized the Town Manager to move forward on a development of a purchase and sales agreement.

4. Mystic Education Center - Update

Staff stated that the State has put out a request for solicitation to developers. The Town Manager and the Director has received inquiries from people who are interested. The State has decided to extend the solicitation period through February 2012. It was noted that the DEEP conveyed Northern and Eastern portions of the land near this property.

5. Mystic Streetscape - Update

Staff stated that the majority of the sidewalk work has been done. The remainder of the work to be done is basically utility work. CL&P will begin additional work on January 30th; transformer work and the installation of light poles are being scheduled. The complete project should be completed around June 30, 2012. A final schedule will be forthcoming. All utility lines are being installed underground. The bridge work should be completed by April 15, 2012 (second year). There will be alternately one-way traffic temporarily. Details were given relative to what the state is doing. Staff pointed out that Route 1 will be shut down for a 52-72 hour period at one point. Another phase of bridge repair work will begin next year. The bridge house will be a completely new structure, identical to the existing bridge and will be built in the exact same location. Specifics were given about Phase 2. An additional \$1.3M has been obtained towards completing this work. The hope is to look into creating more on-street parking along Water Street.

Discussion ensued about the progress of the sidewalk and the delays that have occurred.

6. Energy Efficiency and Conservation Projects and Program – Update

Staff gave background information about this program and what is covered under the grant. He spoke about the action plan, the bid process, and explained that four (4) firms are being interviewed this coming week. Details were given about the library lighting project budget and bids. Staff noted that a formal committee has been set up by the Town Council to succeed the original Task Force on climate change. A copy of the Town Council resolution and committee members will be available at the next COC meeting.

Discussion ensued about the status of the solar panel project at the transfer station. Staff noted that the Public Works Director and the Town Manager are in discussion. This has also been discussed by the Town Council. Minutes are available via the town's website at www.groton-ct.gov.

7. Identification of Topics for Discussion

Staff referred to the policy statement.

Relative to a concern about the wetlands, an inquiry was made about the status of the house on the corner of Packer Hill Road and Cow Hill Road. Staff will be meeting with the Town Attorney this coming week and will request an update regarding our enforcement action there. The Town's Environmental Planner is working on this with the Director.

In regards to actions raised about the Historic District Commission, staff will get an update for the next meeting.

Per request, Staff will prepare an update on the status of the Town's Economic Development plans for 2012 for the next meeting. Discussion followed about project implementation for 2012. Staff gave a brief update and will add this to the next meeting agenda. Copies of the Economic Development Strategic Plan of 2006, includes many of the projects being worked on.

Staff stated that discussions relative to the ten-year update for the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) will soon be discussed. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be prepared before the end of this fiscal year. The Planning Commission will be involved in the 12-18 month process. An update will be included for the next meeting.

V. REPORT OF CHAIRPERSONS

Chairman Fafard gave an update about the happenings of the Economic Development Commission, which includes working with the business community to maintain, grow, and attract new businesses. One project that is currently being discussed involves looking at incentives, how the EDC promotes itself with technology and marketing, and conducting a series of interviews to look at how other regional EDC's market their activities. Staff noted the importance of implementing the 2006 Economic Development Strategic Plan and that his staff is assisting the Commission to implement the plan.

Concerns were raised about the speed limit of boats in the Mystic River.

Updates were given about the applications and referrals that the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission have been reviewing.

The subject of generating a list to help the town maintain stewardship of various open space areas throughout the town was brought up by Conservation Commission Chairman Rafferty. The thought is to allow boy scouts to assist in maintaining these areas.

VI. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff gave an update about the latest round of natural hazard mitigation plans currently being discussed. Areas throughout town are being looked at, in the event of a catastrophic natural hazard. Some of the issues being discussed include wind and power line and emergency preparedness, etc. He hopes to include the issue of climate adaptation and flood map issues. An update and meeting notes are available in the OPDS, as well as at the Council of Governments (COG) office.

Staff attended the latest local coastal flood hazard mapping meetings and noted that additional changes to flood maps and coastal hazard areas are forthcoming. The public will be notified after the town reviews the changes. Staff gave an update about the Economic Forecast meeting that he attended. He referred to a new effort by the State Office of Policy and Management, to update the State Plan, and about the state of the economy. An update will be given at a future COC meeting.

Relative to an inquiry about a railing at Snake Hill, Staff will get an update for the next meeting from the Public Works Director.

Discussion followed about the blight program and what staff would need to carry out this enforcement program. Staff stated that a full-time employee would be needed to enforce this program effectively. It was noted that the Town Council has not yet made any decisions.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to Adjourn was made by Rafferty, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously at 7:01 p.m.

Prepared by: Robin M. Silsby
Office Assistant II
OPDS