

MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF CHAIRPERSONS
OCTOBER 19, 2009 – 6:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Bates, Martin, Pritchard, Rafferty, Scott
Staff: Strother, Norris, Silsby
Also present: None

Strother called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Acting Chairperson Rafferty began the meeting.

Norris summarized his position in Planning and Development Services and projects he is involved with.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF July 17, 2009

MOTION: To approve the minutes of July 17, 2009

Motion made by Bates, seconded by Scott

Pritchard referred to the first sentence under the Landfill Operations Update and requested to delete the word “landfills” and replace it with the words, “solid waste programs”. He referred to the Identification of Topics for Future Discussion and requested to delete the question mark at the end of the first sentence and replace it with a period.

MOTION: To change the two items referenced above.

Motion by Pritchard, seconded by Bates, so voted unanimously

MOTION: To approve the main motion as amended.

Motion by Scott, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. 2010 Meeting Schedule

MOTION: To adopt the 2010 Meeting Schedule

Motion made by Bates, seconded by Scott, so voted unanimously

2. Multi-Modal Transportation Study for Mystic Seaport Area

Strother gave a recap of the previous Transportation Study that was undertaken with oversight by the Town of Stonington and participation by Groton. The first study was essentially a Phase I effort which identified areas to research further. She

distributed a draft Scope of Work for the new study and discussed what the study will encompass. She spoke about pedestrian and traffic flows and referred to the committee that will be overseeing this study. She added that there will be a public involvement process. Discussion followed about locations, signage, and marketing. She noted that in addition to Stonington and Groton, the Mystic Chamber of Commerce, Mystic Seaport, Mystic Aquarium and Olde Mistick Village will be involved.

3. Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Initiatives

Planning Project Manager Rick Norris gave details about the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant and money that would be available from the Department of Energy. He explained the grant process and noted that the Town is awaiting approval of its application. He explained his involvement in the Task Force for Climate Change and Sustainable Community, which he staffs. He noted that the grant would be used to develop an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy and Action Plan for Groton. This would include developing a carbon footprint for Groton and benchmarking the municipal buildings and facilities. He explained that the task force would also like to do two retrofit projects; one municipal building and one school, depending on the availability of funds. Several projects could be considered depending on cost. He stated that both Groton Utilities and CL&P will participate in energy efficiency measures, with CL&P possibly providing 40%-50% of the project costs. He noted that the Town is a member of the Local Government for Sustainability (ICLEI). ICLEI, in conjunction with DEP, is planning to conduct a series of workshops to create a Coastal Climate Adaptation Plan for which Groton will be the model community. He noted that coastal climate impacts and potential vulnerabilities will be evaluated. There will be three workshops and a plan will be developed with the assistance of many local stakeholders. This will be a one-year program.

Discussion followed about green roofs, solar panels, LED lights, and other ways to conserve energy. Other topics discussed included insulation values for future building projects, standards, reducing the carbon footprint, and other conservation measures.

Scott gave an update about development in marsh areas and sea level rising.

When asked about the new FEMA flood maps, Norris stated that new draft flood maps are available for viewing at OPDS. Discussion followed about the time period when people can contribute input before the final flood maps are adopted and printed. Norris will look into when these draft maps will be available for the public to view.

Pritchard felt that the busing of children to school should be considered during the carbon footprint study and any future school building plans.

Relative to a question by Scott, Norris stated that the temporary parking lot at Fitch High School was removed, grass planted as required by DEP, and is being used as a practice field by Fitch.

4. Property Maintenance Program Update

Strother spoke about the NRZ Property Maintenance Code and explained that a provision to create an appeals board needs to be included in the ordinance. As such, an amendment to the existing ordinance will be heard before the Town Council on Tuesday October 20, 2009, in order to add the Building Code Board of Appeals as an amendment to oversee any appeals. She stated that this maintenance code is not town-wide but restricted to the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone. Discussion followed about having a town-wide maintenance code ordinance and the enforcement of such a program. Strother will add this to the January agenda and have staff provide an overview and update. She stated that having a town-wide maintenance code would most likely require additional staffing. Strother gave an update about sign usage in town.

Strother gave an update about the Chipperini property demolition permit, as well as court actions. Discussion followed about the timelines related to building permits.

5. Central Hall Building, West Main Street – Update

Strother gave an update on Downtown Mystic and stated that the Central Hall building plan has not moved forward, very likely due to the current economy. She noted that the owners of the property have recently undertaken renovations to other buildings in the Downtown area which they own. She noted that the Mystic Streetscape Project is scheduled to begin in spring 2010, and gave an update on the work that is currently being done on the Stonington side.

A question was raised about the Thomas Road Bikeway Project, and Norris stated that no construction work has yet been done as the project is in the State permitting phase.

6. Identification of Topics for Discussion

Strother will add the NRZ property maintenance code update and town-wide property maintenance code status to the next agenda.

Scott spoke about the Colorado consultant hired by the Town to undertake the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, and the discussion that took place at a recent public meeting regarding Copp Property restrictions. Scott referred to the legal issues according to its deed restrictions. Others had similar concerns about the deed restrictions.

Relative to a question by Bates on a current proposed regulation sign amendment, Strother stated that the public hearing in regards to the temporary signs amendment, is scheduled for November 4, 2009 at the Town Hall Annex by the Zoning Commission. Bates explained his concerns with the wording of the proposed amendment and thinks that the word “garage” needs to be clarified further. Discussion followed about what types of signs are being used throughout town and what is prohibited. Pritchard stated that the Planning Commission opposed the allowance of temporary signs and noted the reasons for their opposition.

V. CHAIRPERSONS UPDATES

Scott brought up the topic of the current Ledge Light Health District's (LLHD) proposal to require residents to pay a fee to obtain permits for their existing and future septic system discharges. Other details of the proposal were explained. Discussion ensued about the LLHD's proposal and whether or not the plan is feasible. Many members expressed their concerns with this new proposal.

Scott referred to a wetlands issue at the corner of Judson Avenue and Route 1.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to Adjourn was made by Bates, seconded by Martin, so voted unanimously at 7:27: p.m.

Prepared by: Robin M. Silsby
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OPDS

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