

MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF CHAIRPERSONS
APRIL 15, 2013 – 6:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Pritchard, Scott, Bates, Sutherland, Rafferty, M. Somers

Staff: Norris, Galetta

Others Present: Mayor Somers (6:22 p.m.)

Acting Chairperson Pritchard called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF July 16, 2012 and October 15, 2012

MOTION: To approve the minutes of July 16, 2012 and October 15, 2012

Motion made by Bates, seconded by Rafferty, 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention (M. Somers). Motion passed.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. POCD – Update

Staff explained that the consultants are proceeding with the report phase of the project, after which an informational session to seek public input will be held on May 15, 2013. The initial report, which will focus heavily on environmental sustainability, will be reviewed by Planning at the April 17, 2013 meeting.

2. Thomas Road – Update

A meeting was held 3 weeks ago about the Thomas Road bikeway, at which time the status of permit applications and reports were reviewed. It has been determined that less easements will be required due to the purchase of the Spicer property. The start date will depend on the Army Corp of Engineers. A few required items still need to be resolved with the City of Groton. Discussion followed about removing phragmites and concerns were raised about potholes. Staff will inform the Director of Public Works about the pothole problem. It was noted that this project is not included in the CIP.

3. Energy Efficiency and Conservation Projects and Program – Update

The consultant's report is now complete and will be posted on the Town's website. Details of the consultant's methodology were given. The type of projects to be included was discussed, which will include town vehicles, both gas and diesel powered. The report gives information on what work could be done as well as the payback for such projects. The report will be used to develop CIP projects.

4. Update Regarding Pfizer Site Reuse

Staff noted that Pfizer intends to tear down the building and a potential buyer is looking into reusing the site. DECD has been involved. It is unclear as to why Pfizer decided to tear down the building and sell the land.

5. Spicer Property Open Space Grant – Update

Staff stated that the Town recently purchased the property. He noted that the deed language gives rights to do small amenities for educational purposes. The Town plans to consider outdoor classroom options. Questions remain whether this property falls under the jurisdiction of Parks and Recreation.

6. Meeting Dates of Boards and Commissions

Planning Commission meeting dates were reviewed and it was noted that the Commission meets on the same night as the Committee of the Whole. No action was taken.

7. Identification of Topics for Discussion

An inquiry was made about the status of the Burnett's Corners property at the corner of Packer Road and Cow Hill. Staff will report back at the next meeting.

Mayor Somers gave an update on the status of the development of an ethics ordinance in the Town of Groton. It was noted that the Council of Governments (COG) has an ethics ordinance and that if something came up, the COG could be the reviewing entity. This item will be added to the next agenda for further discussion.

V. OLD BUSINESS – None

VI. REPORT OF CHAIRPERSONS

Sutherland discussed the Special Permit for Pizzetta which was recently heard by the Zoning Commission. She felt the Commissioners came up with a good solution that gives a timeframe of one year for review. The Commission will hold a public hearing in June 2013 on Zoning Regs. 8.3. Regulation 8.3 covering language such as what is considered when reviewing special permits. Future regulations reviewed will include buildable land and the watershed. The Zoning Commission is hoping to get input from the Planning Commission.

VII. REPORT OF STAFF

Michael Murphy, Director of OPDS has recently returned to work part-time. Staff noted that OPDS has hired 2 new staff people. Kristin Clarke recently joined the staff as the new Economic Development Specialist. Paul Dickson was hired as an Inspection Services Tech. Some of his duties will involve rental code inspections, helping out with the blight ordinance, and some of the work performed by the former Planning Tech.

Staff gave an update on the Mystic Streetscape project. Phase I work is essentially done though there are a couple of benches and a historic board to be finished, as well as some punch list items which the Town Attorney is now involved with getting the contractor to complete. Relative to Phase II, the Town is waiting on the State to give approvals before going out to bid. This item will be on the next meeting agenda. It is hoped that construction will begin in the fall. That project would be followed by Thomas Road Project in the spring of next year. Phase II is expected to be a simpler project entailing only sidewalks and curbing. The impact to the downtown area will be significantly less than Phase I and will be

completed much quicker. As part of Phase II and widening the road on Water Street, staff is trying to work with the abutting property owner and make sure no parking spaces will be lost. Discussion followed about parking issues on Pearl Street and how that could be addressed with the merchants. There was also discussion about poles and light fixtures that are lopsided and what might be done to improve their appearance.

Staff noted that the Blight Ordinance is awaiting the final version from the Town Attorney, after which a public hearing will be scheduled.

The EDC website is being reviewed and updated. EDC policy incentives are being updated, and will be sent to the Town Council in the near future.

The Mystic drawbridge has recently re-opened to two-way traffic. It was noted that the Coast Guard required the bridge to be operable by April 15, 2013. It is expected that the punch list items should be completed by the middle of May 2013. Additional work is still needed at the bridge house.

Relative to a house on Water Street that is being renovated, Mark Somers, a member of the Historic District Commission, reported that a dormer is being added and the owner has indicated it will be his primary residence.

Regarding the so called "green wall" in downtown Mystic, Staff reported that the owners need to come back to the Planning Commission for approvals. It is believed that the electrical easement item has been resolved. A sewer issue has been resolved for the existing building. The new building will be tied into sewer and water at the time of construction. Staff will ask the principals to attend a future meeting to provide an update to COC members.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to Adjourn was made by Scott, seconded by Rafferty, so voted unanimously at 6:44 p.m.

Prepared by: Lynda C. Galetta
Office Assistant II
OPDS