

MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF CHAIRPERSONS
APRIL 16, 2012 - 6:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Somers, Antipas, Bates, Fafard, Martin, Pritchard, Rafferty,
Stebbins, Sutherland, Williams (6:26 pm)
Staff: Norris (6:04 pm), Strother, Quinn, Silsby

Acting Chairperson Antipas called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF January 23, 2012

MOTION: To approve the minutes of January 23, 2012

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Rafferty, so voted unanimously.

Norris arrived at 6:04 p.m.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Antipas referred to the memo distributed tonight, which corresponds to tonight's meeting agenda.

1. Energy Efficiency and Conservation Projects and Program - Update

Staff stated that the contract has been signed and the consultant has been gathering data. A list of buildings in town is being completed and all pertinent information will be included in a projects spreadsheet. Also being considered is the town's process of doing projects and town regulations. He explained that the funds have all been encumbered.

Staff reviewed the lighting project at the Groton Public Library. He explained that the contract has been signed and work will begin soon. Financial details were given. Because bids came in higher than grant money received, additional funds needed for the project will come from the library contingency fund. Project completion should occur within the next couple of months.

An inquiry was made about solar panels.

Mayor Somers gave an update about CL&P and the grant process. She explained the Town Council's position and noted that there were no competitive bids on this project.

2. Property Maintenance and Blight Prevention Program - Update

Staff stated that a Blight Ordinance informational meeting was held on 3/8/12, whereby 30 to 40 people were in attendance. A PowerPoint presentation was made showing residential and commercial properties and input was received from the public. Meeting minutes for this meeting are available via the Town's website and were included in tonight's meeting packets. The majority of people in attendance felt that the

town needs this blight ordinance though some were opposed. Language is being drafted and Staff will report back to Town Council Group II.

An inquiry was made about the high tide line, to which Staff stated that the Director will report back on that matter at a later date.

3. Economic Development Program – Update

Staff attended a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new dock at the Sub Base. She gave a brief update on the BRAC status and what has been done to invest in sub base improvements.

Referring to changes occurring at Pfizer, Staff stated that a realtor will be attending the next EDC meeting to discuss marketing future uses for that site.

Relative to businesses growing in Groton, Staff noted that the Mystic Business Park has 7 buildings that are presently full. The building at Kingsbridge Square is now fully leased, and the office building at Trails Corner has a new owner. The new Oyster Club Restaurant in downtown Mystic is doing very well. A new Vegan Restaurant will be opening up at Factory Square. Five Guys and Panera Bread are also doing well. A new veterinarian clinic will be opening up on Cow Hill Road and Kohl's has made major facility improvements.

A discussion was held about the gas station that recently opened up on Route 1 near Fishtown Road and what they are allowed to sell without being considered a "true" convenience store. Staff stated that the owner would need to apply for a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) if they want to be a "true" convenience store.

Staff noted that the EDC Web Page Sub Committee is working on updating the Town's website. Currently, there is limited funding in the budget for marketing. She noted that the Town Council has added a \$10,000 budget for next year's marketing.

Staff gave an update on the streetscape project. He spoke about the work that CL&P is doing. CL&P's work won't be done by the end of July and a punch list of items will be put together and finished before final completion. Work is currently being done on Area 2, south of the bridge, and the sidewalk should be installed by the end of the week. Staff explained that pollution was found on the corner of West Main Street and Water Street, with lead being the primary contaminant found. This area is being abated and the work will progress once that has been completed. It was mentioned that many locals are not going to downtown Mystic to support the businesses, which is crucial to the businesses at this time, although tourists are visiting on weekends.

A concern was raised about the steel plate at the corner, which Staff will follow up on for the next meeting. Discussion ensued about lead hazards and pollution found in downtown Mystic. Staff stated that paving is scheduled to be done at the end of June. She added that the barges are being moved soon.

Williams arrived at 6:26 p.m.

4. Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) – Update

A concern was raised about the people who were previously on the POCD Steering Committee and whether any of the local public was involved in the process. Staff will refer this item to the Director.

Staff explained that the hope is to incorporate energy efficiency standards into the POCD process.

5. Spicer Property Open Space Grant – Update

Staff referred to the memo distributed tonight, noting that the process is on-going. Somers gave specifics about the cost of the project and noted that some Town Councilors are not in favor of spending money on open space, at this time. She explained that the funding aspect is currently before the Town Council. Discussion followed about the grant and money coming from contingency. It was noted that the signed agreement has not yet been signed by the Spicer's. Somers stated that there is no issue with the grant expiring.

Sutherland noted that an upcoming clean-up of Birch Plain Creek is happening this coming weekend.

6. Identification of Topics for Discussion

Staff distributed a FYE2013 Major Program/Planning and Grant Initiatives work program outline, giving updates to the Mystic Streetscape Construction (Phase II), the Thomas Road Bikeway Design and Construction, the POCD Update, Climate Preparedness Initiatives, Downtown Gateway Streetscape Design, Blight Code Development and Implementation, and FEMA Mapping Project/Public Process.

Mayor Somers raised the issue of the construction of the sidewalk down Thomas Road, which the Town Council has concerns with.

Staff gave specifics about the Mystic Streetscape Phase II Project, relative to the finances, the location, and the work that needs to be done. This project will go out to bid this fall and the project may begin next year. The potential for additional parking in Phase II will exist.

An inquiry was raised about delivery trucks blocking Factory Square intermittently. This parking issue may be considered by the Traffic Commission in the near future.

A question was raised about the use of the property at the corner of West Main & Bank Streets. Staff explained that that area will be used to house some infrastructure for the streetscape project (eg a hydrodynamic separator) and will be landscaped as a parklet.

An inquiry was brought up about climate change and sustainability (Energy Efficiency Committee), to which Staff explained the process. Staff explained the need to form a committee in order to put those plans into action. He noted that UConn is willing to get involved. Somers noted that the Town Council recently formalized this committee and stated that a slate of members was chosen to serve on this committee. Information relative to this committee was distributed to members prior to tonight's meeting. There will be approximately 12 people serving on this committee. Antipas

noted that this issue is currently before legal counsel. If changes are made, it will be sent back to the Town Council for review.

Information relative to the run-down house at the corner of Cow Hill Road was given. The court order giving approval to demolish the building was granted. The Town Public Works Department will demolish this building sometime in June.

An update was given about newly appointed Historic District Commission (HDC) members, including alternate members. Discussion ensued about guidance being given to the HDC, as well as the decision process. Quinn stated that the HDC follows statutory guidelines and is an autonomous commission. Somers noted that the subject of the HDC is currently being discussed with the Town Council Group II Committee.

V. OLD BUSINESS - None

VI. REPORT OF CHAIRPERSONS

Stebbins inquired about the streetlights outside of Annex and whether they are working properly. Discussion followed about the type of lights they are and how they operate.

VII. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff referred to an upcoming CCM Municipal Leadership Training Workshop scheduled for May 17, 2012. Staff will distribute this notification via email to all members.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to Adjourn was made by Bates, seconded by Stebbins, so voted unanimously at 7:03 p.m.

Prepared by: Robin M. Silsby
Office Assistant II
OPDS