

MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF CHAIRPERSONS
APRIL 20, 2009 – 6:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Bates, Brown (sat for Martin), Pritchard (sat for Sherrard), Scott,
Rafferty, Sherrard (6:39 p.m.)
Staff: Murphy, Strother, Silsby
Excused: Town Manager Oefinger, Mayor Watson
Also present: Silsby, Lokken, Fitzgerald, O'Beirne

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

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF January 26, 2009

MOTION: To approve the minutes of January 26, 2009 as written

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

Murphy stated that a Parks and Recreation presentation will be made tonight.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Downtown Mystic Construction Projects Update

Strother gave an update on the Mystic Streetscape Project. She noted that 16 easements have been completed as well as other required legal documentation. The hope is that the project will go out to bid in May 2009 with the possibility of hiring a contractor by July 2009, and work to begin in the fall 2009.

Murphy stated that an application for stimulus money has been submitted and is awaiting final approval. The possible \$2M funding would assist in the completion of the 2nd phase of the Mystic Streetscape Project. Plans for the 1st phase are on file in the Office of Planning and Development Services (OPDS).

Strother noted that the Mystic River Bridge Project is slated to begin in January 2010. She explained the importance of staying on schedule with the Streetscape Project. Staff stated that the Department of Transportation (DOT) may be holding informational meetings sometime in the future.

Staff gave details about the upcoming Multi Modal Transportation and Traffic Study. Separate legislation in Congress regarding the Mystic Seaport has been refined and after a consultant has been chosen by the Town of Stonington, the study will continue for several months.

2. Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update

Parks and Recreation Director Silsby explained the need to update the existing 20 year old current Town of Groton Master Plan. He stated that \$75,000 of funding has been appropriated and a consultant has been hired. He noted that Murphy was part of

the Team in selecting the firm of Norris Design from Colorado. The actual work began last fall. He hopes to have final recommendations by June 2009, after which time public input will be requested. Benefits of the Master Plan were reviewed.

Manager of Recreational Services Lokken gave a presentation showing the process and preliminary results of the draft master plan study. He stated that Norris Design of Colorado and local Landscape Architects Kent and Frost Associates have been involved in the process. The project's purpose and vision were explained in detail. Community input including a town-wide survey has been completed. Lokken spoke of the Town's Strength and Challenges as well as Key Findings and Areas of Focus. He hopes to have the final recommendations determined by April, a draft Master Plan and presentation by May, and the final Master Plan by June.

Sherrard arrived at 6:39 p.m.

Park facilities in the Town were discussed as well as the results of the town-wide survey. Natural Resource areas for potential development were reviewed. Potential facility usage of Colonel Ledyard School and ball fields in Town were discussed. Staff stated that the focus of the plan is on facility and program needs. Staff noted that this information will be useful while updating the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). A new Bill regarding open space lands was discussed. Lokken added that open space is a strength of this community and protecting natural resource areas is important. Silsby stated that this Committee will be notified of the upcoming public informational meeting. National Standards/guidelines were discussed. It was noted that the draft master plan will soon be available for public viewing via the Town's website and a public presentation will be made.

Sherrard arrived at 6:39 p.m.

3. Regional Source Water Protection Program Update

Staff explained the status of the water quality management plan and its benefits for the future. He explained that \$200,000 was authorized by legislation for completion of this program. The report is available via the Groton Utilities website or at www.dwqmp.com/plan.php. Staff distributed copies of the executive summary and explained the process as a whole. He noted that the CIP will include source water protection recommendations and improvements. Phase 3 of this process will be the implementation at the local level. The administration committee will move ahead with the next phase in May. The importance of protecting the reservoir was noted.

4. Property Maintenance Issues

In regards to a question about the status of the property at 23 Library Street, Staff stated that this matter is currently in the courts and as of April 16, 2009, the owner was supposed to respond though she has not yet done so. The Town Attorney will now be moving forward.

He spoke about the town-wide property maintenance code and how it could be applied to other areas of Groton. Staff explained that currently, the Town applies certain ordinances throughout the entire town. He noted that jurisdictional issues would need to be reviewed. He explained the need to create a property maintenance board of

appeals which would be applicable to the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) at this time. He stated that a referral to the Town Council will be done to initiate this matter.

Staff explained that the PMC the Town has is an international maintenance code but only applies to the NRZ area. Discussion followed about a town-wide maintenance code for businesses.

Staff gave an update on the gas station that will be opening on Route 1 in the old Cumberland Farms site near Noank Ledyard Road. He noted that all land use agencies have given approvals.

5. Identification of Topics for Future Discussion

The issue of the Town being more environmentally “green” at the town landfill was brought up. It was suggested that possibly the public should be more enlightened on this subject. Staff will look into a change in town dump hours with DPW and report back to Bates.

Relating to the Shellfish Commission, Secretary of the Shellfish Commission A. Neil Brown referred to the Zoning Regulation changes and asked if small salt water estuaries could be taken into consideration if changes are occurring on the land. Staff stated that regulatory processes are required. Brown reviewed a map with the Committee pointing out the shellfish and sampling areas on the small salt water estuaries. He explained that the Nature Conservancy has been approached about sampling and testing. The specific issue of sharing information with other shellfish commission areas was raised. Results would be available to the general public.

6. Other

Staff spoke about the Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR) regarding watershed and impacts of impervious areas. He referred to the Nature Conservancy and shellfish areas.

Brown spoke about contamination sources that are affecting shellfish areas.

Staff explained that the Town is monitoring wells and gave details about monitoring requirements at the Flanders Road, Welles Road, and landfill sites. Sampling schedules were noted. Questions should be directed to Kristin Doundoulakis in the DPW.

Staff stated that there is nothing to report regarding the Central Hall building, but he did note that approval is still needed from the Historic District Commission for minor amenities.

Discussion ensued about changes to the Table of Permitted Uses in the Town’s zoning regulation amendments in regards to classification of uses.

V. CHAIRPERSONS UPDATES – None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 7:42 p.m. was made by Sherrard, seconded by Rafferty, so voted unanimously.

Prepared by: Robin M. Silsby
Office Assistant II
OPDS