

MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF CHAIRPERSONS
October 18, 2010 – 6:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Bates, Martin, Pritchard, Rafferty, Sherrard (6:14 p.m.), Stebbins, Steever (6:15 p.m.), Sutphen (6:16 p.m.)
Staff: Murphy (6:15 p.m.), Quinn, Norris, Silsby
Also present: Mick O’Beirne

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

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF July 19, 2010

MOTION: To approve the minutes of July 19, 2010

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

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Meeting Schedule for 2011

MOTION: To adopt the 2011 Meeting Schedule

Motion made by Stebbins, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously as written.

2. Capital Improvement Plan and Process (FYE 2012-2017)

Norris distributed a handout and read through the list showing the methodology for prioritization of qualified capital projects, which included new projects for review. He is still waiting to get additional project input from various departments.

In regards to an inquiry about sustainability objectives for the future, Staff spoke about language being expanded in the CIP and looking at renewable energy. Topics discussed included flood plains and repaving roads. A priority of projects will be determined.

3. Property Maintenance and Blight Prevention Program – Update

Staff stated that he met with the Committee of the Whole (COW) and it was decided that it would be best to stay away from a property maintenance code like the one implemented in the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ). Staff and Group II of the Town Council would prefer to deal with blight issues. Staff is now in the process of putting together an outline of an ordinance. The biggest complaint of blight is overgrown vegetation. Staff explained about the hearing board, the blight officer, and what penalty system might be imposed. An inquiry was made about overgrown vegetation in a town Right-of-Way and site line issues. It was noted that currently, there is nothing on the books to address overgrown vegetation and other blight matters.

Discussion followed about the additional costs the town would incur to hire an inspector as well as other related costs to carry out the provisions of the ordinance. He noted that a vacancy exists in the Building Inspection Department due to the recent resignation of Building Inspector Glen LeConche. Details were given about the NRZ Property Maintenance Code and how that program is carried out. Staff will give an update at the next COC meeting regarding the actions of the Town Council.

4. Mystic Streetscape and Utility Relocation Project – Update

Staff distributed a map and reviewed the Downtown Mystic Streetscape Improvement Plan. A recap of what will be included in the project was given, what the process will involve, and timelines. The goal is to keep both travel lanes open, though there may be short periods of time when only 1 lane can be used. Information can be obtained on the Town's website (www.town.groton.ct.us) A construction office has been set up behind the Ancient Mariner whereby town staff Norris and Department of Public Works Inspector Matzdorf will be on-site to handle the day to day requirements and complete the necessary inspections. He stated that the groundbreaking held on October 14, 2010 was well attended. Other specifics about the plan were given. Staff stated that utility easements will be assigned to CL&P by the Town.

A meeting regarding the Mystic River Bridge will be held by CONNDOT on October 27, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at the Hoxie Fire House in Noank.

5. School Reuse Task Force's - Update

Staff stated that the Groton Heights Reuse Task Force meeting was held today. Information about future meetings can be obtained by contacting the Town Manager's office. A listing of those on this task force was distributed. Staff noted that no activity is currently occurring at the Noank School. The temporary parking lot has been removed.

5. Identification of Topics for Discussion

Relative to the Ethics Workshop that was held on June 30, 2010, a request was made by Commissioner Sherrard to obtain a draft report for the COC. This will be addressed at the next COC meeting. Staff agreed.

Reference was made to an article in today's Day paper about the Town of Groton receiving approximately \$650,000 in funding to purchase the 30-acre Spicer-Pulaski property on Thomas Road A report from the Town as to the status of the intent to purchase this open space was requested. Staff explained the process for these types of purchases, stating that the Town Council would need to move forward with the process. He stated that the application process and other mechanics of the purchase can be labor intensive and that no schedule has yet been set. Staff stated that no contract yet exists since the grant was only awarded a few days ago and that the Town match portion will need to be addressed in the future, depending on the negotiated price. Members noted the importance of getting public input. This item will be added to the next agenda.

V. REPORT OF CHAIRPERSONS

An update on the Climate Change Task Force was provided by Steever. It was noted that his Committee's report should be available in December and that all COC members will receive copies.

An inquiry regarding the status of updated FEMA flood maps was made. Staff gave information about flood damage relative to the recent flooding problems that occurred in March 2010. He stated that, to his knowledge, no new FEMA maps have been printed. He believes that the only changes that were made were relative to areas in Groton Long Point.

It was noted that a public report regarding the previously held Adaptation Workshop will be made on December 2, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex in Room 1. Staff stated that OPDS is coordinating with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and formal invitations will be sent out to all agencies by the Town. The formal report will be finalized at a later date, after the December 2nd presentation.

VI. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff reviewed a map showing areas damaged throughout the Town after major flooding that occurred in March 2010. He gave an update about the possible reopening of River Road. He stated that an itemized list of the flooded areas that corresponds to this map may be available. This map was generated from 911 calls. He noted the importance in determining sea level rise and storm surge, in order to better plan for the future. Storm outlets will also be looked at in the future. Staffing time will affect the ultimate goal. It is Staff's hope that this item, relative to at-risk storm areas, could be integral to CIP projects for the future.

Sydney Van Zandt noted that during the flooding, there were water problems at the pump station near Williams Street, which backed up into neighbor's properties. This, in turn, may have affected shellfish areas in Beebe Cove.

Staff spoke about the zoning amendment process regarding new erosion/sediment control regulations. He stated that the item is progressing and a hearing will be held in early December. Staff added that this will improve the town's site planning process.

It was noted that the Harbormaster position may soon be vacant. This position is a three-year term. The Harbor Management Commission is now considering recommendations to be given to the Governor.

Staff will add the Thomas Road Bikeway update to the next agenda.

Staff gave an update on the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG). A draft report is being finalized on the benchmarking and carbon footprint efforts. A schedule for implementation is forthcoming and a RFQ later on in the process. He noted that the library retrofit project has not started yet but hopes to move forward soon. OPDS will recommend that the Town set aside the \$18,000 rebate and keep it in a separate fund as seed money for future projects. Discussion ensued about

the importance of energy audits and becoming self sustaining as a community in the future.

Since this may be his last meeting, Task Force Chairman Steever thanked the Committee of Chairpersons for being able to sit in on it's meetings during his involvement with the Climate Change Task Force, whose charge expires in December.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to Adjourn was made by Stebbins, seconded by Nado, so voted unanimously at 7:46 p.m.

Prepared by: Robin M. Silsby
Office Assistant II
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