

**TOWN OF STONINGTON
MYSTIC RIVER BOATHOUSE PARK IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Stonington Police Department Meeting Room
173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Tuesday, January 9, 2024

5:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 PM.

Present for the meeting were Mike Crowley, Tom Switz, Mike O'Neill, David Brown, Steve Planchon, Sarah Clement (filling in for Chris Gasiorek), Jim Kelley, Danielle Chesebrough, and Chad Frost.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Seating of Alternates (if necessary) & Welcome to new Recording Secretary

4. Comments from the Committee

Rob Simmons offered his time, service, tools, etc. towards site work, cleanup, or anything that may help to push this project along. He has had a dream to see this land become a park that can then be further developed with a boathouse.

5. Approval of Minutes for the MRBIC/BOS Joint meeting of December 4, 2023

Mr. Switz made a motion to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Planchon, all were in favor, 5-0.

6. Correspondence

Louis Allyn, Chairman of the Mystic Harbor Management Commission, submitted and discussed a document regarding harbor safety and management. The topics discussed, as written on Mr. Allyn's document: "1. Waterfront safety and accessible to persons with a disability; 2. A project to install marker pilings for the natural channel running north from the end of the Federal channel to south of the 195 bridge; 3. Review and approval of a DEEP Permit Application." Mr. Allyn also displayed and discussed a map of the river access point and the potential parameters of the dock that will be there. Per Mr. O'Neill, there should be a discussion regarding increasing or changing the location of "obstacles". There was also brief discussion regarding the reasoning

for the length and 'angle' of the dock. Mr. Allyn offered his email as a means to continue the discussion: allynlouis6@gmail.com.

David Brown introduced himself as the new liaison between this committee and the Board of Finance. It was explained for Mr. Brown that this committee oversees the design, construction, and execution of the actual park while a separate commission is in charge of the boathouse aspect of this project. Mr. O'Neill explained that the Town will attain possession of the boathouse and have a lease agreement with Stonington rowing programs.

Tom Longo, member of the Mystic Harbor Management Commission, discussed a kayak system that allows for easier access in to and out of kayaks and for launching them into the water (EZDOCK). Pamphlets were passed to Committee members. Mr. Longo offered the idea of installing these at a few locations along the river to help with handicap accessibility, elderly residents, disabled residents, etc. Mr. Frost mentioned that this was discussed in 2017 as part of the initial project and was voted on, however it only exists now as a 'background' idea. There was a discussion regarding the logistics of installing these, including ramp necessity, ramp lengths, etc. Mrs. Chesebrough was in favor of the idea if the respective commissions are also in approval. The Committee discussed the possibility of including this plan with the approval, contingent upon the funds being raised.

7. Old Business

a. Discussion - Status on budget, permits and RFQ

Mrs. Chesebrough confirmed that the Town was rejected by both of the living shoreline grants, however they are actively looking for other grants that may fit this project. They are optimistic about closing the roughly \$500,000 left that is required for funding. An RFP (request for qualification) has been sent out and proposals are due back January 24th. A small committee will make a selection and then discuss funding. There could be action with the park by the summer / fall of 2024 as the Town would not need 100% of funds raised to begin.

Mrs. Chesebrough also confirmed that DOT will not allow a left turn into the park as currently constructed. The changes that would be required would push the permitting process back another year or so. The Committee agreed that this restriction only pushes the issue farther down the road where people will have to turn around.

Rob Simmons commented that beginning site work would create more incentive for public funding. Mrs. Chesebrough confirmed that the Town is not allowed to touch the site until they have received DOT approval.

Mr. Frost further discussed that funding and a lengthy permitting process have been the main barriers for this project.

The Committee briefly discussed the process of moving the house on site; a separate meeting will be scheduled.

Per Mr. Frost, RACE has submitted all documents to DEEP, received blessing from the Shellfish Commission, and will continue to work with the Mystic Harbor Management Commission.

Stonington Little League reached out to offer excess fill, however it was not the right material.

Mrs. Chesebrough confirmed again that they are looking for more relevant grants to apply for and they can also re-apply for the rejected grants, however they would have to wait for the next application cycle.

b. Update - Stonington Community Rowing Center

Mr. O'Neill discussed that funds are continuing to be raised as they have not quite reached their goal of \$2,000,000. They will soon look to create a rough construction schedule and are projecting a 6-9 month build process. Mr. O'Neill also discussed the strong presence of rowing in Stonington, the uniqueness of this project across the north-east, as well as an informational event on January 23rd at the Westerly United Theater.

8. New Business

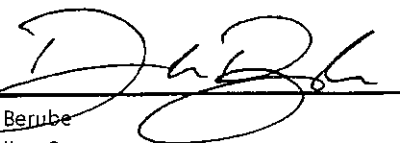
a. Discussion - Requests for future agenda items for discussion

Mr. O'Neill proposed that the February meeting be canceled due to lack of expected activity, seconded by Mr. Switz, all were in favor, 5-0.

9. Comments from the Public: None

10. Adjourn

Mr. O'Neill made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Crowley. All were in favor, 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 PM.

X 
Derek Berube
Recording Secretary