

TOWN OF STONINGTON
MYSTIC RIVER BOATHOUSE PARK IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

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

Monday, August 7th, 2023

6:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:03pm.

Present were Chairman Nick Kepple, Vice Chairman Mike O'Neill, Thomas Switz, Jim Kelley, Susan Cullen, Debbie Downie, and Breck Perkins.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Seating of Alternates (if necessary)

Jim Kelley seated as an alternate.

4. Comments from the Public

None

5. Approval of Minutes for the MRPBIC Meeting of June 5th, 2023

Thomas Switz made a motion to accept the meeting minutes. Seconded by Breck Perkins. Chairman Kepple abstained. All in favor, motion approved.

6. Correspondence

None

7. Old Business

A) Report from Town Staff

Susan Cullen provided a reminder that the regularly scheduled meeting for September falls on Labor Day, so if a meeting is needed it will have to be a special meeting on another date. Susan Cullen also provided a reminder that at some point the committee will need to discuss and vote on changing the meeting times to 5:00pm.

B) Report from Community Rowing

Mike O'Neill relayed the Community Rowing updates. They are continuing to fundraise which is tough, but currently are having good results. There are meetings coming up to discuss donations and discussions to come on pricing.

8. New Business

A) Update regarding Waterside Engineer Contract

Waterside Engineer withdrew from the project. They had to back out due to health issues. Proposals were sent to 7 new engineers. One has responded so far with a price four others responded that they would not respond. The state is being asked to sign off on the bid. If they are not willing to do so the project will have to go out for a lengthy public bid. Most engineers that turned down the project cited they didn't have the capacity to take on project.

B) Update regarding Demolition Permit

In July the zoning side of the permit is good, but the demolition side is a struggle. State statute says the town cannot physically demolish the structures which was not something that was known ahead of time. The town can do all the preparation for and clean up after the demolition but is not allowed to do the demolition itself. The demolition permit can be submitted under the towns name and insurance in the meantime and be changed out later. There is no rush to get to demolish, but it would be a dramatic change to show the public the project is progressing.

Vice Chairman O'Neill asked about the timeline on the dock permit. Susan Cullen shared that the original timeline was 6-9 months. Debbie Downie shared that once the project starts local senators can put pressure on DEEP regarding the timeline. When DEEP came out they brought 3 incoming and 3 outgoing members to the site to learn about the project which means there is a good group of individuals aware of the project. Debbie Downie also shared that DEEP is very excited about the project.

Breck Perkins shared a concern that everything will be built but still be waiting on the dock. Chad Frost stated that the full project should be permitted together. Dock designs should be short it all just needs to be packaged and submitted. They are just waiting on state approval for the increased price of the project. There was a 1.5 difference between old and new contracts which is not unexpected for costs to go up. Susan Cullen shared the work she put in to back up why the price had to increase to the state. If the project has to go out to a public bid it would be an additional two month minimum.

C) Update regarding permits achieved

The project is through local permitting and ready aside from OSTA. The state side is waiting for final answer on new contract bid being accepted. If OSTA has an issue with the current submission the plans will be revised based on their requests and resubmitted, but resubmissions go to the back of the line so it would take some time before approval is reached. The process time is about 6 weeks.

9. Comments from the Public

10. Comments from the Committee

Chad Frost will come discuss next month having a construction manager there will be some internal discussion on helpfulness first. Breck Perkins shared that he has had some conversations with Perkins Farm and they are willing to donate fill stored on site and has a big pit available to take. Debbie Downie will find out what the fill needs to be tested before.

Chairman Kepple shared that it is a good time for a community update. It can be discussed at the next meeting, but potentially an October community update or a press release. Individuals have taken a swipe at the project online questioning the management and budget allowance of the project. The

chairman would hate to see the project become a political issue in upcoming elections. He would argue that the project has been handled very well given the level of complication of the project.

Vice Chairman O'Neill shared a banner that was created to put on the side of the current rowing building. Discussion was had to create another banner that was Mystic River Park centric to also be displayed in the same area. The banners will work together to show the community what is to come and that it is one unified project.

Breck Perkins also shared that the town website and Facebook page only contain older outdated imagery related to the project. Susan Cullen will reach out the town's social media to have it replaced with current imagery. Groundbreaking could begin in spring/summer of 2024.

11. Adjourn

Thomas Switz motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Jim Kelley. All in favor motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 6:57pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Cullen on behalf of Mary Stout

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