April 22, 2015

The Stonington Board of Selectmen held a special meeting on this date at the Stonington High School School at 7:00 p.m. Present were First Selectman George Crouse, Selectman Rob Simmons and Selectman Michael Spellman. Also present were members of the public and press.

(1) Call to Order

Mr. Crouse called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

(2) Approval of the Minutes

- A motion was made by Mr. Simmons and seconded by Mr. Crouse to approve the April 7, 2015 Board of Selectmen special meeting minutes. The vote was 2 in favor with Mr. Spellman abstaining.
- A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to approve the April 8, 2015 Board of Selectmen special meeting minutes.
- A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to approve the April 13, 2015 Board of Selectmen special meeting minutes.
- A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to approve the April 21, 2015 Board of Selectmen special meeting minutes.

(3) Public Hearing – Discuss Charter Revision Commission's Amendments to the Charter

- Mr. Jon Nickerson stated that he applauds the committee. He stated that the town needs a fresh new perspective on how we govern and have a choice with who we elect into office. He stated he would like the Selectmen to endorse the recommendations. Mr. Nickerson stated if there were any other changes to the Charter he would like people to be able to speak more at the Board of Finance meetings.
- Ms. Ginny McCormack stated that a person is endorsed by both parties so that both people will virtually be appointed. Ms. McCormack stated that when she shared the petition with her neighbors they felt the same way. She stated that we need to change the process. Ms. McCormack stated that their concern is how the Board of Finance is elected. She stated that having an odd number of members will make the election more competitive. She stated that it doesn't matter how we vote because the party candidate is guaranteed a seat on the board. Ms. McCormack thanked the Charter Revision Commission for focusing on their request. She stated that if there were too many changes people will vote down the charter reform. Ms. McCormack urged the Selectmen to allow voters to make the right decision in November.
- Mr. Mark Mercier stated that he was one of 150 people who signed the petition and the reason he signed it was because he was told that the Charter Revision Commission would look at everything. He stated that the Commission should have done more. He stated that his Commission came in with a single vision. He stated that the Charter revision is a work in progress and there is still a lot to be done.
- Ms. Kristen Morehouse stated that she could not vote for the Selectmen if they don't do what the majority of people here say tonight. She stated that there were hundreds of people at the Board of Finance meeting last year asking to reinstate the school budget and they didn't. They had absolutely no incentive because the democratic process doesn't exist. She stated that the Selectmen need to put this on the ballot so we as citizens can vote and get our charter changed.

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- Mr. Jack Morehouse stated that he supports the Charter Revision Commission's change to how the Board of Finance is elected. He asked the Selectmen to please put it to a vote.
- Mr. Kevin Bornstein stated that he would like to express his hope that the Selectmen endorse the Charter Revision as put forth to them. He stated that 3 out of 4 things that they recommended were implemented. He stated that there was a comment made that many things weren't looked at. Mr. Bornstein stated that a 5 member Board of Selectmen was discussed. He stated that a motion was made and there was no second. Mr. Bornstein stated that the notion of a town manager was discussed at length a no one made a motion. He stated that things were discussed and looked at. He stated that what is right is to make it a true competitive election. He stated that it doesn't reduce, diminish or change the powers of the Board of Finance. Mr. Bornstein stated that he hopes the Board of Selectmen will support it all.
- Ms. Janice Lamb stated that she is there as a parent of two children in the district. She stated request the work of the charter commission regarding the way the Board of Finance is chosen on the ballot to be voted on. Ms. Lamb stated she experienced frustration last year after attending the hearing when over 600 people were there to ask the board of finance to reconsider putting money onto the ballot and they ignored their request. She stated that the way the process works now does not feel like a democracy.
- Ms. Christina Korinek asked the Board of Selectmen to please put the changes from the Charter Revision Commission on the ballot in November.
- Ms. Grace Murray stated that she wasn't under the impression that the Charter Revision Commission was looking at anything other than the Board of Finance. She thanked the charter review commission for their hard work and their dedication. She stated that she thinks their recommendations will result in a greater representation of the demographics of the overall town on the Board of Finance. She stated that she experienced frustration at several Board of Finance meetings where she felt her voice was not being heard.
- Ms. Christine Hansen stated that she had a very simple request that the Selectmen trust in democratic process and allow the Town of Stonington to vote on this.
- Mr. Mike Fauerbach thanked the Charter Revision Commission for the effort they put into this. He stated that people might not support each and every view of the Charter Revision Commission but it is expected to have different views. He stated that if the Board believes in the democratic process let the voters decide.
- Mr. Dan Kelley stated that he was one of the petition signers. He stated that there are a lot of good people serving on the Board of Finance but this is about democracy. He stated that we can show the kids how democracy works. Mr. Kelley stated that the result of the money not being put back in the budget resulted in the petition. He stated that the Board give them a chance to vote them up or vote them down. He stated let's keep the democratic process rolling.
- Ms. Sue Fornara stated she has been here for years and it's been pretty much the same Board of Finance. She stated that if they're representing the town, they're not doing a very good job. She stated that the Selectmen put it on the ballot.
- Mr. Chris Fornara stated that he was there to voice his support to put it on the ballot and let the people vote on it.
- Ms. Harriet Statchen read her written statement which is attached to these minutes as Exhibit A.

- Ms. Brenda Hultgren stated thanked everyone on the Charter Revision Commission for all of their work. She stated that they did everything they were supposed to do and now it's time for the voters. She also read written statements from Shana Garrett and Pat Hambly which are attached to these minutes as Exhibit B and C respectively.
- Mr. Bruce Yarnall stated to let the voters decide. He stated to let the Charter Revision Commission go through with the recommendation of term limits. He stated that each town committee nominates a person for the Board of Finance. He stated that there should be an odd number of seats. He stated that they set the tax rate without representation. Mr. Yarnall asked the Board of Selectmen to let the voters decide.
- Ms. Eileen Morehouse stated that she had no idea she was voting for people of the Board of Finance that no matter what they would be voted on. She stated that this needs to be put on a ballot.
- Ms. Bonnie Cusack stated that she supports the recommendations and the people of Stonington deserve the right to vote on it.
- Mr. Tim Cusack stated that he supports the right for the people of Stonington to vote on changes to the Charter.
- Ms. Tricia Lance stated that she supports the changes brought by the Charter Revision Commission. She stated that the Board of Finance should be elected officials and people should be able to vote.
- Mr. Bill Sternberg said Dudley Wheeler got it right when he said he doesn't have to listen to the voters. He stated that he doesn't like everything in the report and he's not a big fan of term limits. He stated that term limits lose the benefit of experience. Mr. Sternberg stated that you can either accept or reject it in its entirety. He urged the Selectmen to accept it and move forward and get it on the ballot in November.
- Ms. Ann Marie Pasquin requested the Selectmen to put it on the ballot and let the voters decide.
- Ms. Jennifer Herbst stated that she supports the recommendation and that the Charter Revision Commission worked very hard. She urged the Selectmen to put it on the ballot.
- Ms. Deborah Dempsey stated that 600 people came to have their questions heard. She stated that we deserve fresh perspective after 4 years. She stated that we can't be progressive if we don't have regular change. She asked the Selectmen to let us vote and let Stonington be progressive.
- Mr. Robert Statchen served on the Charter Revision Commission. He stated that the Town of Stonington is an outlier on how it selects its Board of Finance. Mr. Statchen stated that there are 73 charter towns in Connecticut and he looked into how 35 of them select their Board of Finance. He stated that 2 towns appoint and Stonington has parties select. Mr. Statchen stated that there are 6,000 people who are unaffiliated and can't serve on the Board of Finance. He stated that if all members were elected their credibility would increase. Mr. Statchen said the simple solution is let the voters decide.
- Ms. Lisa Sabbadini stated that she is in favor of letting the voters decide on changes in town.
- Ms. Cindy Naddeau asked the Selectmen to give us a chance to change this. She stated that right now we could flip a coin and it wouldn't make a difference.

- Ms. Alice Sasso asked the Selectmen to give us a chance to vote on this. She stated there is voter apathy here when you look at the number of people who show up to vote. She stated that maybe they feel that their voice isn't heard.
- Ms. Patti Naslund stated that she supports putting this on the ballot and that it was very easy to get signatures on the ballot.

(4) Comments from the Public

Ms. Eve Aldrich read a prepared statement which is attached to these minutes as Exhibit D.

(5) Correspondence

- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Andrea Carey expressing her interest in serving on the Commission on Aging.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Harry Boardson expressing his interest in serving on the Planning & Zoning Commission.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Suzanne Capizzano thanking the Selectmen for their thoughtful look into helping business thrive in Pawcatuck and Stonington.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Jon Nickerson expressing his disappointment with the Board of Finance.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from John Bolduc expressing his interest in serving on the West Broad Street School Committee.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Carole Nossek regarding trash and debris littering the streets.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Alisa Morrison expressing her interest in serving on the Permanent Town Building Committee.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Bruce Anderson expressing his interest in serving on the Stonington Harbor Management Commission.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Ashley Gillece expressing her interest in serving on the West Broad Street Task Force.

(6) Reappointment/Resignation

Stonington Harbor Management Commission

- A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to reappoint Jay Spalding to the Stonington Harbor Management Commission.
- A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to accept the resignation of David Motherway from the Stonington Harbor Management Commission.

(7) New Business

Body Armor Bid Award

A motion was made by Mr. Spellman and seconded by Mr. Simmons to approve the request from Chief Darren Stewart to award the bid to Stillman Uniform. Discussion: Mr. Spellman stated that he was happy they are 3A level vests. The vote was 3-0 in favor of awarding the bid to Stillman Uniform.

Stonington Village Improvement Association Request for Use of the Town Dock

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons and seconded by Mr. Spellman to approve the request for the use of the town dock. Discussion: Mr. Simmons stated that the farmer's market is an ongoing activity and is supported by the neighbors. The vote was 3-0 in favor of approving the request by the SVIA to use the town dock from May 23, 2015 to October 24, 2015 for the farmer's market.

Stonington Borough Request for a Building Permit Application Fee Waiver
A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to waive the building application fee in the amount of $146 for the repair of a broken water pipe in the Borough fire house.

Historic Documents Preservation Grant Resolution
A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to adopt the resolution.

Morgan Stanley Enabling Resolution
A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to adopt the resolution.

Plan of Conservation and Development Recommendations

- Mr. Simmons thanked the POCD Subcommittee, the Mystic Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Westerly-Pawcatuck Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Commission headed by Chairman Blunt White for the time and energy they have spent looking into this matter. Mr. Simmons stated that Mr. Crouse had asked him to establish a relationship with the business community and he has had hosted numerous meetings and has met with numerous people and they have expressed themselves on this issue. He stated that a week or so ago he asked the town attorney how to proceed with the POCD. Mr. Simmons stated that the Board of Selectmen can accept, reject or send recommendations forward. He stated that he met with several members of Planning & Zoning including the chairman and inquired of them what their attitude would be if we sent recommendations forward in the spirit of mutual cooperation. He stated technically they could reject all of those recommendations but he was comforted by the fact that in each and every case he was assured that serious consideration would be given to these recommendations. Mr. Simmons stated that having a Director of Planning would be good for the town overall. He also stated that this is a living document that will have an oversight committee. Mr. Simmons further stated that he married Keith Brynes' memo with recommendations from the EDC and comments from other people.
- Mr. Spellman stated that the fishing fleet is the heart and soul of this community. We have the last commercial fishing fleet in the State and we should do everything in our power to see that it continues.

The following are recommendations from the Board of Selectmen:

- Eliminate Policy 8.2.5 (Village Districts) and maps of potential Village District boundaries.
- Eliminate Task 6.1.7 (increasing open space set-aside).
- Eliminate Task 5.3.4 (Buildable Land Regulations).
- Eliminate Task 3.2.8 (restricting conversion of summer dwellings to year round dwellings in coastal flood zone).

A motion was made by Mr. Crouse, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to eliminate the above.

- Modify the text of Policy 8.1.2 to eliminate mention of Village Districts.
- Modify Task 8.2.6 to read "Encourage greater use of the Town's master planning tools."

- Modify Tasks 9.3.4 and 10.2.5 to include the words "and streamline the permitting process."
- Modify Policy 10.1.2 to read "Strive to diversify the tax base and achieve grand list growth of at least 1% per year."

A motion was made by Mr. Crouse and seconded by Mr. Spellman to approve the above. Discussion: Mr. Spellman stated that he would also like to have Connecticut General Statutes 8.2J eliminated from the paperwork. The vote was 3-0 in favor of approving the above.

- Add a new policy to encourage bringing a new 100+ employer to Town in the next 10 years.
- Add a new task to investigate rezoning land with available public utilities for modern commercial/industrial uses.
- Add a new policy to actively market Stonington for business.
- Add a new task to work with local businesses to assure their expansions take place in Town whenever possible.
- Add new task to investigate developing local incentives for business attraction, retention and expansion.
- Add a new task to create a new zoning district for Mystic Aquarium that offers additional flexibility for future growth.
- Add a new task to investigate the creation of a new zoning district for Maritime Drive that allows a broader range of commercial uses, focuses less on manufacturing, better reflects the current businesses on Maritime Drive and preserves the character of the area.
- Add a new task to investigate increased flexibility in parking regulations to encourage reuse of existing commercial buildings.
- Add a new task to investigate a regulation to allow sandwich board signs for businesses.

A motion was made by Mr. Crouse, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to approve the above additions to the POCD.

No action was taken the by the Board of Selectmen on 5.1.6 and 5.1.14.

- Modify 2.1 – change "Community Survey" to "Community Questionnaire" to avoid misleading the reader that professional sampling and analysis methodology was used.
- Modify 4.1 – change "Support Farms and Farmers" to "Support Farmers, Fishermen, Lobstermen and Aquaculture".
- Modify 4.1.2 – change "Establish a town Agricultural Commission" to "Establish a town Agricultural and Aquacultural Commission".

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Crouse and voted unanimously to approve the above modifications.

- Modify 4.1.5 – change from "Convene local farmers and produce groups to identify business needs and opportunities" to "Convene local farmers, produce groups, fishermen, lobstermen (Southern New England Fisherman's and Lobsterman's Association) a nd aquaculture groups to identify ways to improve Town policies towards their businesses and to encourage business opportunities between groups".

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Crouse and voted unanimously to approve the above modification.

- Modify 10.3 – change title from "Retain and Support Existing Businesses" to "Retain, Support and Encourage Business Development". Mr. Crouse stated that he read 10.3.1 as helping the businesses that are already here.

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to approve the above modification.

- Add new initial task 10.3.10 – "Consider changes to MC-80 marina zoning regulations to address the continued success of small and large marinas". A motion was made by Mr. Simmons to add the above language.

After some discussion Mr. Simmons amended his motion to change the initial task to "Investigate changes to address some of the unique requirements of small and large marinas. The motion was seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to approve the new initial task.

- Modify 4.3 – change "Work with famers to implement best management practices for agriculture" to "Advise farmers to implement best management practices for agriculture".
- Modify 1.5 – Include the following sentence "in consideration that the Town has been without a Director of Planning for over 2 years, after the position is filled, the Planning and Zoning Commission will work with the Planning Director to review the POCD for possible updates and additions".

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Crouse and voted unanimously to modify the above.

- Modify 6.1.1 - A motion was made by Mr. Crouse and seconded by Mr. Simmons to recommend 15% instead of 21%. Discussion: After some discussion Mr. Crouse withdrew his motion.

- 6.1.13 – "Consider a recommendation to local legislatures that PA-490 be modified to a lower minimum acreage requirement from to modify the lower minimum acreage requirement from 25 to 15 acres".

A motion as made by Mr. Spellman, seconded by Mr. Crouse and voted unanimously to approve the above language.

A motion was made by Mr. Crouse, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to move the recommendations to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

(8) Comments from the Public

- Marsha Standish, Tax Assessor, stated that one of the changes that the Selectmen made was for 1% increase in growth to the grand list but they are also now requesting 20% go to open space. If you put more land into open space that means the grand list is going to drop.
- Bill Lyman stated that he commends the Board of Selectmen for passing the recommendations back to P&Z. He stated that the changes that came up are good. He

also stated it is important to get a Director of Planning in here. He stated that a lot of what hasn't been talked about is there are many tasks in this proposal that require implementation. He stated that we need to get implementing. Mr. Lyman stated that the Director of Planning will feel like he is coming in at the end of the process relative to the plan but he would rather think that he is coming in at the beginning of the implementation. He stated that they went over many of the tasks and recommendations that were made in 2004 and many of those were accomplished but there were more that were not accomplished because they ran into roadblocks and when they ran into roadblocks they were stopped. Mr. Lyman stated that they want this thing to be continually implemented and continually updated and changed as needed.

- Mr. Crouse stated that the EDC once this is implemented is in control of what the EDC wants to do and the tasks can be amended, changed, added or dropped.
- Mr. White asked if this is an endorsement of plan with the changes or are these recommendations.
- Mr. Simmons stated that they were recommendations.
- Mr. White stated that they haven't endorsed the body of the plan so for the plan to be approved it would have to come back to you.
- Mr. Tamsky stated that they didn't reject it.
- Mr. Crouse stated they have not rejected it they sent on recommendations. He stated that they could have passed it as presented they did not. He said they could have said negative things and that would have forced a majority vote b ut they picked a third one and hopefully they will institute some of these recommendations.

(9) Comments from the Selectmen

- Mr. Simmons stated that the process that they followed tonight is designed to be collaborative and not confrontational. He stated that we all live here. Mr. Simmons stated that what they are trying to do is shape the document to reflect the concerns of business community that the development portion needed a little more work. He stated that he is a conservationist but he believes that we just passed the largest bonding project in the history of the town and he also knows that our grand list is flat. Mr. Simmons stated that he also knows that if we run into trouble paying for these infrastructural improvements in our town it is going to put a further squeeze on the taxpayer whether it be the private homeowner or the business owner and none of this is good for the future of the Town. He stated it is a balancing act and he thinks the opinion he got from speaking to the members of the Planning & Zoning Commission is give us your recommendations and we will take them seriously.
- Mr. Spellman stated that his expectation of the town that the people who work on the various commissions will work collaboratively and work in the best long term interest of the town. He stated that he has full confidence that the commissions are going to do that. He stated that this document with a Director of Planning is going to create an opportunity for the town. Mr. Spellman stated that he would like to more for the kids in the town. He stated that there are a lot of things that we can do. He also stated let's use this as an opportunity for the town. He stated let's do what's in the best interest of the town, let's work together and let's make sure that we get what we need and move forward. Mr. Spellman stated let's give the kids a town they can live in.

(10)Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Bell
Recording Secretary