

August 25, 2022

The Stonington Board of Selectmen held a special meeting on this date at the Stonington Police Department at 5:30 p.m. Present were First Selectman Danielle Chesebrough and Debbie Motycka Downie. Selectwoman June Strunk arrived at 5:47 p.m. Members of the public and press were present.

**(1) Call to Order**

Ms. Chesebrough called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

**(2) Pledge of Allegiance**

**(3) Condolence**

The Board issued a condolence regarding the recent passing of Board of Finance member, Mr. David Motherway and his friend Mr. Brian Collie of Colorado. The Board of Selectmen extended their sympathies to the family and friends of Mr. Motherway and Mr. Collie as well as to the Board of Finance members that served with Mr. Motherway. Ms. Chesebrough asked for a moment of silence.

**(4) Interviews – Planning and Zoning Commission**

The Board interviewed Gary Belke, Bill Middleton and Hannah Cedermark for the Planning and Zoning Commission. Lynn Conway was absent.

**(5) Comments from the Public**

None

**(6) Approval of Minutes**

- A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 10, 2022.
- A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the special meeting minutes of August 12, 2022.

**(7) Correspondence**

- Ms. Chesebrough took in correspondence from Hannah Cedermark in the form of an application for the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Ms. Chesebrough took in correspondence from John Nazzaro in the form of an application for the Board of Police Commission.

**(8) Appointment/Reappointment/Resignation**

**Reappointment – Zoning Board of Appeals**

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to reappoint J. Jeffery Walker, Raymond Dussault and James Stanton to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

**(9) Old Business**

**Discussion – Lease between Town of Stonington and Saint Michael School**

Ms. Chesebrough noted that since the last meeting, she heard from a few residents with positive comments in regards to the proposed long-term lease between the town and Saint Michael School and also had a few people reach out with some questions. One of the key questions that came up was in regards to the rent amount and capital repairs on the building.

She noted, the basic terms of the new lease would be for 15 years, with the option to renew for an additional 10 years. The same, current nominal rent of \$300 per month would stay in effect, but with St. Michael assuming responsibility for all building costs. The Town of Stonington retains ownership of the building, and the use of the building as a school cannot change during the tenure of the lease.

St. Michael School has spent have spent \$365,000 over the past 28 months on capital projects in addition to the \$300 per month rent. Amortizing that amount of the period of the lease so far suggests that their rent has actually been \$13,035 per month in addition to the \$300 per month rent payment.

Future capital projects planned for next summer on the exterior including having all the brickwork repointed, cleaned, and sealed as well as repainting the exterior trim. Using a rough estimate of \$300,000 for that work, and adding it to what has already been spent and amortizing over 40 months (utilizing the past 28 months and future 12 months) the cost is approximately \$16,625 per month in addition to the \$300 per month rent payment.

In discussion, Ms. Downie noted it would be helpful to show what the monthly cost was to the Town prior to St. Michael's renting the space. Ms. Strunk also asked for a further breakdown of the \$365,000 that St. Michael's has spent on capital improvements. Ms. Chesebrough noted another question that had been asked by a resident was in regards to how tuition was spent in the school. St. Michael's has reported that 55% of operational cost are covered by tuition with capital projects being funded through donation and grants specifically donated for capital purposes.

St. Michael School will hold an open house, including a tour to see the improvement made, on August 30<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7:00 p.m.

As this is a long-term lease it will need approval at a Town Meeting which is tentatively scheduled for September 12, 2022.

**Discussion – Lease between Town of Stonington and Stonington Rowing Community, Inc.**

Ms. Chesebrough noted that since the last meeting, she had not received any feedback on the lease. The lease has been revised slightly since the last meeting.

She noted, the proposed lease is for 25 years, with the option to renew for another 25 years so long as an active, community rowing program is being run out of the facilities. The lease would not go into effect until all the buildings and related work are completed.

A key part of the end vision is for Stonington Community Rowing, Inc. (SCRI) to raise funds to construct a Boathouse and meet State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) requirements for restoring the 'Lovelace' house that must remain on the site. SCRI plans to raise \$2.5 million to make this plan a reality, and have already raised over half that amount to-date.

The SCRI has taken on the momentous task of not only raising all the funds required to build the newly named Jim Dietz Community Rowing Center, Hart Perry Boathouse, and public restrooms, but also address improvements needed to restore the 'Lovelace' house. Once construction and improvements are complete, SCRI give these properties to the Town, in exchange for a long-term lease.

In discussion, Ms. Downie stated she spoke with Mike O'Neil who was able to answer some of her questions. Ms. Strunk questioned the timeline for the building project. Ms. Chesebrough stated that the responsibilities of both parties are outlined in the MOU. Ms. Chesebrough noted that once all projects are completed the Stonington Community Rowing Inc would only be leasing the building and rowing dock from the Town.



An informal meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on August 31, 2022 at Latitude 41 For those interested in learning more about progress taking place in regards to the rowing center and the public park.

As this is a long-term lease it will need approval at a Town Meeting which is tentatively scheduled for September 12, 2022.

#### **New Business**

##### **Discussion – Tax Abatement Request from Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc. regarding Copps Brook Nature Preserve**

Ms. Chesebrough stated a request was received from Avalonia Land Conservancy, a non-profit organization, to abate 2021 taxes in the amount of \$3,782.25 that were remaining after their recent acquisition of a portion of the Copps Brook Nature Preserve. Based on State Statue this request will need to go before a Town Meeting for approval which is tentatively scheduled for September 12, 2022.

##### **Request - Additional Appropriation of ARPA grant funding, from ARPA contingency line for Stonington Veteran Monument Art Installation Project**

Ms. Chesebrough stated that a request for an additional appropriation of \$86,420.00 of ARPA grant funding, from ARPA contingency line item for the Stonington Veteran Monument Art Installation Project. This item was approved by the Board of Finance at their meeting of Aug 3, 2022.

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the additional appropriation of \$86,420.00 of ARPA grant funding from the ARPA contingency line to fund the Stonington Veteran Monument Art Installation Project.

##### **Request – Building Permit Fee Waiver for Stanton-Davis Homestead Museum**

Mr. Brian McCormick, Vice President of the Stanton-Davis Homestead Museum, a non-profit organization, requested a building permit fee waiver of \$196.90 associated with a project at the museum.

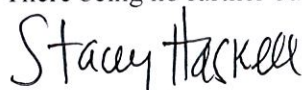
A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the building permit fee waiver of \$196.90.

#### **(10) Comments from the Selectmen**

- Ms. Downie stated that a meeting regarding the Boathouse Park was held with the Police Department who were happy with the lighting updates and the possibility for police parking at the park. She noted that results from the testing at Stillman Ave property are still pending.
- Ms. Strunk had no comments.
- Ms. Chesebrough stated she was working to find State/Federal opportunities to assist the fisherman with the purchase of an ice machine needed at the Town Dock. She noted that Winn Company reached out to stated they would be holding a community conversation with residents, Senator Somers and Rep Howard sometime in mid-September to discuss the changes that they have made to the original design of the Coggswell Street building and also reconfirmed they are not seeking a tax abatement.

#### **(11) Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.



Stacey Haskell

Recording Secretary