

October 26, 2022

The Stonington Board of Selectmen held a special meeting on this date at the District Office at 6:30 p.m. Present were First Selectman Danielle Chesebrough and Debbie Motycka Downie. Selectwoman June Strunk was available via phone. Members of the public and press were present.

(1) Call to Order

Ms. Chesebrough called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

(2) Pledge of Allegiance

(3) Public Hearing - 2022 Special Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Green Infrastructure at Enders Island

Ms. Chesebrough called the public hearing to order at 6:35 p.m.

Ms. Chesebrough gave a brief overview stating that this Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is part of a non-competitive income round through the State. The State of CT will not allow the Town to compete for this grant with a different project.

Ms. Chesebrough introduced Mr. Andrew Woodstock, Director of Real Estate Development with Eastern CT Housing Opportunities and a certified CDBG Administrator to discuss the environmental and technical details of the project.

Mr. Woodstock gave an overview of his professional background stating that he has applied for, been awarded and managed over 25 million dollars in federal, state and local grants since 1994. He noted that his purpose is to assist in applying for the funding. The hearing is a part of the citizen Participation Plan required by the Department of Housing in all CDBG Applications. It is a step that is required prior to submitting the final application.

The application is for partial funding to upgrade the five existing septic systems on the site and combine them into a single system that provides pretreatment of the wastewater prior to its infiltration into the ground. The existing septic system is not in failure now. The end result of this treatment will provide a much cleaner wastewater quality than the technology currently in use in most homes in the area. This is accomplished with a recirculating biological trickling filter system. It exists in a tank in the ground between the building septic tank and the leaching system. The septic tank, as with all septic systems, separates solid waste from liquid waste. The waste in the septic tank is not actively treated but does allow for anaerobic digestion of the solid waste over time.

This new system takes the wastewater from the septic tank into a separate treatment tank where it is pumped through the filtration system with the addition of oxygen as many as 70 times in a 24-hour period. The rate of recycle is determined by the characteristics of the waste. During the treatment cycle, there is a portion of the waste that is pumped back into the septic tank to further reduce the nitrogen levels of the wastewater. This also serves as a self-cleaning process. Accumulated solids at the bottom of the filtration tank are pumped back into the septic tank twice a day.

Once the filtration cycles are complete, the wastewater is pumped out of the treatment tank to the leaching field for reabsorption. The wastewater is significantly cleaner than the normal wastewater resulting in a cleaner overall ground water infiltration in the leaching field.

The septic tanks, like all septic tanks, are pumped out to remove accumulated solids during regularly scheduled maintenance every 2 to 5 years depending on need and use.

This system is controlled electronically with a processor and sensors designed to optimize the system and allow for adjustments in the flows based on usage. Alarm systems are present to notify the maintenance staff of issues with respect to tank levels, pump failures, or other issues.

This system is currently in the design phase. It is being designed by Cherenzia Associates, Ltd of Pawcatuck. Design approval falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) because of the design flow (combining five systems into one large system). This design is ongoing and will change based on input from the DEEP. DEEP normally requires ongoing monitoring of the systems after they are installed to evaluate the effectiveness and performance of the system.

Ms. Susan Cullen, Director of Economic and Community Development gave an overview stating the State of Connecticut Department of Housing requires certain information to be discussed within the required public hearing for the CDBG Program.

The Town is required to review within the public hearing any previous Community Development Block Grant that has not been closed by the State Department of Housing. The Town of Stonington currently participates in the CDBG program with the Homelessness Prevention Grant and is the designated partner municipality that handles the coordinated access network (CAN) for the grant in the region. The grant is distributed to multiple non-profit agencies who are participating in the network in an effort to prevent homelessness in the region. The 2015 CDBG Grant for Public Housing Modernization at the Stonington Housing Authority also known as Edythe K. Richmond Homes was fully expended and is awaiting auditing.

The Town of Stonington generates a small amount of program income through earlier renditions of an older housing rehabilitation program from CDBG that no longer exists in the same format. Program Income is currently designated to be attached above the designated level to current programming within our modern grants and to promote CDBG national objectives.

St. Edmund's in conjunction with Town of Stonington, and the non-profit Eastern Connecticut Housing Opportunities (ECHO) have requested a new application for a project for their property on Enders Island. The grant award could be up to a maximum of \$600,000 to St. Edmund's. The property has a capital need to modernize the sub-surface wastewater disposal system.

The Town of Stonington as the responsibly entity for CDBG is eligible as identified in the current Department of Housing bulletin in the Small Cities CDBG Manual. The Town of Stonington is required to place on the record it's policy to protect the rights of every individual regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, age, lawful source of income, familial status, learning disability or physical/mental disability or sexual orientation.

The Town is required by federal and state law to comply with fair housing and civil rights laws and requirements and must certify that the project will be designed and administered in a non-discriminatory manner. The Town of Stonington posts the following documentation: Title VI Certification, Fair Housing Policy Statement, ADA Notice, ADA Grievance Procedure, Affirmative Action Policy

Statement, Fair Housing Posters in both English and Spanish, and Equal Employment Opportunity Posters in both English and Spanish.

Ms. Cullen noted that letters were submitted via email and mail in advance of the meeting. The letters are on file in the First Selectman's Office and available for review. Ms. Cullen read the names of those who submitted letters in advance of the meeting. They are as follows:

General Comments/Questions:

- Evan LeBras
- Cathy Marco – 23 Skiff Lane, Mystic, CT
- Kit Hartford
- Dr. Barry McGuire – 3 Sandpiper Lane, Mystic, CT
- Linda Watkins
- Diane Whitney – Hartford, CT
- Frank Marco – 23 Skiff Lane, Mystic, CT

Opposed:

- Vic Adler – Mystic, CT
- John Pryor – 29 Money Pt Rd, Mystic, CT
- Renate Gleysteen – 25 Chippechaug Trail, Mystic, CT
- Waller Walker
- Jeffrey Walker – Mystic, CT
- Gail Lane – 32 Money Point Rd, Mystic, CT
- Rod Cook – Mystic, CT
- Ethan Tower – 2 Yacht Club Road, Mystic, CT
- Marj Adler – 44 Nauyaug Point Road, Mystic, CT

Support:

- Katy Giffault - 54 Whittaker Drive, Stonington, CT
- Pamela Carroll
- Victoria Duclos Barrett
- Barry and Marie Saluk - 17 Skiff Lane, Mystic, CT
- Ed Szczesny - 24 Hyde Pond Ct., Mystic, CT
- Angelo and Patricia Messina - 14 Skiff Lane, Mystic, CT
- Shawn Robinson – Mystic, CT
- John Kiszkiel II - One Plover Lane, Mystic, CT
- David Lattizori, Groton Long Point, CT
- Kevin Miller - 81 Cove Road, Stonington, CT
- Mike and Carol Toner - 23 Niles Road, Mystic, CT
- David Cray - Colchester, VT
- Robert DiNapoli - Old Lyme, CT
- Paul Proto - North Haven, CT
- Deb Neuman – 24 Willow Street, Mystic, CT
- Barry Harrison
- Bruce McDermott – Mystic, CT
- Bob and Teri Banas – 4 Nauyaug North, Mystic, CT

- Barbara Hein – 37 Langworthy Ave, Stonington, CT
- Sen. Heather Somers, Sen. Paul Gormica, Rep. Devin Carney, Rep. Greg Howard
- Udo Virmalo – 30 Mistuxet Ave., Mystic, CT
- Josh Neuman – 24 Willow Street, Mystic, CT
- David R. Vance – 1 Yacht Club, Mystic, CT
- Teresa Pitt Green – Mystic, CT
- Shawn Powers – 298 Lestertown Rd, Groton, CT
- Kathleen Kennedy – 1 Yacht Club Road, Mystic, CT
- Sam Greenfield – 1 Northwet Street, Stonington, CT
- Fiona Saluk – 18 Lema Road, Mystic, CT
- Bridget Saluk – 18 Lema Road Mystic, CT
- Jason Martin – Stonington, CT
- Tracy Romano – 40 Cove Side Lane, Stonington, CT
- Diane Klotz
- Carol Martin – 3 Bayview Ave, Stonington, CT
- Tal Finney – Los Angeles, CA
- Members of the Saint Edmunds Retreat Board of Trustees:
 - Chairman: Kate Careb, Stonington, CT
 - Vice-Chairman: Frank Durst, Brentwood, TN
 - Rev. Thomas F.X. Hoar, SSE, Mystic, CT
 - Lynne Wilson, Downingtown, PA
 - Thomas Bennett, Nashville, TN
 - Rev. David Cray, SSE, Colchester, VT
 - Timothy Duffy, Califon, NJ
 - Dr. Dennis Flanagan, Mystic, CT
 - Robert Goossens, New Haven, CT
 - Mary Ann Hanley, Bristol, CT
 - Karen Huffer, Norwich, CT
 - David Lattizori, Groton Long Point, CT
 - William Long, Killingworth, CT
 - John Macari, Stamford, CT
 - Chadwick McEachern, Selma, AL
 - Mary Kate Mason, Mystic, CT
 - William Phelan, Braintree, MA
 - Richard Pryor, Falmouth, MA
 - Dr. Ray Quinlan, Fairfield, CT
 - Dr. Tracy Romano, Stonington, CT
 - Dr. Harris Stratyner, New York, NY
 - Lynne Greene, New York, NY
 - Mark Visconti, West Hartford, CT
- Dexter Murphy – 10 Chippechaug Trail, Mystic, CT
- John Fullerton – 50 Salt Acres Road, Stonington, CT
- Lynn and Jim Wilson – 4 Seagull Lane, Mystic, CT
- Elizabeth Beach Goddard – Stonington, CT

- Rob Valenti
- Dillon Ochs
- Lou Allyn – 14 East Forest Road, Mystic CT
- Olivia Georgetti-Ochs
- Christopher Mancini

Prior to opening the floor to comments from those who had signed up to speak, Ms. Chesebrough noted that the Board of Selectmen are not the regulators for zoning matters and the hearing is not a zoning meeting. She stated issues pertaining to zoning regulation decisions should follow the legal process which includes the Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Superior Court.

The following spoke with general comments/opposition:

- Cathy Marco – 23 Skiff Lane, Mystic, CT (also provided a letter for the file)
- Frank Marco – 23 Skiff Lane, Mystic, CT (also provided a letter for the file)
- Marj Adler – 44 Naubaug Point Rd, Mystic, CT (did not wish to speak just noted her opposition)
- Fred Deichmann – 4 Ice Pond Road, Mystic, CT (also provided a letter for the file)
- Ethan Tower – 2 Yacht Club Rd, Mystic, CT (also provided a letter for the file)
- Anne Budding – 3 Skiff Lane, Mystic, CT (did not wish to speak as her concerns had been addressed by others)
- Patricia Reardon – 46 Naubaug Point Road, Mystic, CT (also provided a letter for the file)
- Eugene Winchester - 46 Naubaug Point Road, Mystic, CT (also provided a letter for the file)
- Sara Lathrop – 7 Osprey Lane, Mystic, CT

The following spoke with general comments/in favor:

- Lou Allyn - 14 East Forest Road (also provided a letter for the file)
- Barry Saluh – 17 Skiff Lane, Mystic, CT
- DJ Careb, 17 Lamberts Lane, Stonington, CT
- Kate Careb, 17 Lamberts Lane, Stonington, CT
- Chris Rixon – 33 Meadowood Lane, Old Saybrook, CT (also provided a letter for the file)
- Dexter Murphy – 10 Chippechaug Trail, Mystic, CT
- Tom Hoar – Enders Island, Mystic, CT

In summary, those who spoke in opposition noted concerns mainly focused on believed zoning violations. Additional concerns included traffic; recovery program operations; private litigation; increase to number of program residents and use of federal taxpayer funds.

In summary, those who spoke in favor noted the new technology including benefits to the environment/ecosystem and the pretreatment of wastewater reducing contaminant as well as support of the recovery program.

An overview of questions answered by Mr. Woodstock and Ms. Cullen included the CDBG process and clarifications about the application; the town cannot apply for the funding to be used elsewhere; the town does not put any money up front; the State will be the final deciding factor on whether or not the application moves forward; flow rates included within the application are based on current health codes. It was also noted that the Town Planner stated that there were no current zoning violations at Enders

Island and that a coastal site plan exemption would be invoked. Ms. Cullen reviewed a letter submitted by the Town's attorney stating that the Town is not currently involved in any litigation with Enders Island. Questions that were not germane to the hearing, such as zoning issues, could not be addressed.

Ms. Strunk and Ms. Downie provided general comments.

With there being no further public comments, Ms. Chesebrough adjourned the public hearing at 8:04 p.m.

The Board reconvened the special meeting at 8:05 p.m.

(4) Discussion – Items related to the 2022 Special Community Development Block Grant

Ms. Chesebrough thanked everyone for their participation in the public hearing and for sharing their views. The Board shared their thoughts on the importance of clean waterways, impact on the sound, the ability to be the first in the State to be utilizing this type of sustainable technology and moving through the governance process noting that the final decision on the application will be made at the State level.

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the 2022 Special Community Development Block Grant application including the following items:

- Citizen participation plan
- Financing Plan and Budget
- CDBG Resolution
- Fair Housing Resolution
- Certificate by applicant
- Affirmative Action Policy Statement
- Local Assurances

(5) Award of Bid – CDBG Consultant

The Department of Planning received one bid for the CDBG Consultant on Oct 7th, 2022 from Eastern CT Housing Opportunities (ECHO). They were chosen through an interview and evaluation process through standardized CDBG procedures for consultant selection. The Department of Planning is requesting the bid be awarded to ECHO in the amount of \$78,000. This fee is fully reimbursable from the 2022 CDBG grant and there is no out of pocket cost to the Town of Stonington. It was also noted by the Department of Planning that ECHO was notified that they were working at risk on this application as the grant had not been awarded.

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to award the CDBG consultant bid to Eastern CT Housing Opportunities in the amount of \$78,000.

(6) Comments from the Selectmen

None

(7) Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.



Stacey Haskell

Recording Secretary