

January 10, 2024

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, Selectwoman Debbie Motycka Downie and Selectman Ben Tamsky. Members of the public and press were present.

(1) Call to Order

Ms. Chesebrough called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

(2) Pledge of Allegiance

(3) Comments from the Public

Ms. Sally Duplice, Town Clerk, urged the Board to have the Charter Revision Commission move the items of Town Clerk and Tax Collector becoming non-elected onto the November 2024 ballot even if the other items up for discussion wait until 2025. She noted that if it is pushed to the 2025 ballot it would not go into effect until 2029 for the Tax Collector and 2030 for the Town Clerk due to their being up for reelection in 2025. She believes it would be in the best interest of the Town if her replacement comes with a resume and experience rather than being voted by political party and possibly having little to no experience for the job.

(4) Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Tamsky, seconded by Ms. Downie and voted unanimously to approve the regular meeting minutes of December 13, 2023.

(5) Correspondence

- The Board received an application from John Connelly who is interested in serving on the Stonington Housing Authority.
- The Board received applications from Bob O'Shaughnessy, Gisela Harma, Raymond Trebisacci, Linda Camelio, Cindy Ladwig, Marsha Standish, Stephen Adams, John Holstein and June Strunk who are interested in serving on the Charter Revision Commission.

(6) Appointment/Reappointment/Resignation

Appointment – Housing Authority

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Mr. Tamsky and voted unanimously to table this appointment to a future meeting.

Mr. Tamsky questioned the way applicants are appointed to Boards/Commissions. Ms. Chesebrough explained that applications are accepted at one meeting and considered for appointment at future meetings pending interviews. Those Boards/Commissions that have regulatory authority come before the Board of Selectmen for interviews. Those that do not have regulatory authority are interviewed by the First Selectman and also discuss the role with each Chairperson prior to being considered for appointment. Ms. Chesebrough noted that Mr. Tamsky and Ms. Downie can also reach out to those applicants in non-regulatory roles should they wish to speak with them prior to the consideration for appointment.

Appointment – Economic Development Commission

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Mr. Tamsky and voted unanimously to appoint Jonathan Collins to the Economic Development Commission.

Reappointment – Zoning Board of Appeals

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Mr. Tamsky and voted unanimously to reappoint Jim Stanton to the Zoning Board of Appeals moving from an alternate to a regular member.

(7) Old Business

Discussion – Charter Revision Commission

Ms. Chesebrough gave an update stating as it had been anticipated and was also expressed by Ms. Downie and Mr. Tamsky at the last meeting, the timeline to get items onto the 2024 ballot is very tight. The Town Attorney is in the processes of drafting a timeline to get items onto 2025 ballot. The Town Attorney will also be present at the Charter Revision Commission meetings to help guide the process.

Ms. Chesebrough shared the below next steps:

- February 9, 2024 – Application due date
- January 11-February 16th – Internal review of charter to create proposed list. Mr. Tamsky and Ms. Downie to review the charter and share their feedback with Stacey Haskell by February 16th.
- February 28th – Interview applicants; Town Attorney will be in attendance to review the timeline; and discussion of compiled proposed revisions will occur.
- March 13th – Consideration of the resolution which includes establishing the Charter Revision Commission, naming/appointing the members, seating a temporary chair and providing the proposed charter revisions.

In discussion, Mr. Tamsky shared that he would be in favor of moving the Tax Collector/Town Clerk item to the 2024 ballot if the other Board members would agree those would be the only items. Ms. Chesebrough noted that once the Charter is opened even if those are the only items given to the Commission, they can discuss anything they choose.

Discussion – Board of Selectman Assignments

Ms. Chesebrough will be liaison to the Commission on Aging, Climate Change Task Force, Cultural District Commission, Economic Development Commission, Stonington Harbor Management Commission, Housing Authority, Housing Opportunities Commission, Plan of Conservation and Development, Retirement Board and Shellfish Commission.

Mr. Tamsky will be liaison to the Architectural Design Review Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Finance, Mystic Harbor Management Commission, Pawcatuck Harbor Management Commission, Waterfront Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Westerly Library.

Ms. Downie will be liaison to the Beautification Committee, Board of Education, Flood Prevention Climate Resilience and Erosion Control Board, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission, Police Commission, Recreation Commission, Water Pollution Control Authority and Wequatequock Clean Water Cove Coalition.

(8) New Business

Discussion – Request 8-24 Review of Circus Lot Property

Ms. Chesebrough gave an overview of the property noting that the 8-24 review is the next step in the process of moving toward purchasing the property. She noted that the Circus Lot is 5.6-acre parcel of land that sits along the federally designated Wild and Scenic Pawcatuck River off of Noyes Ave in Pawcatuck. This parcel of land is currently owned by the Town of Westerly but located within the Town of Stonington. Per a reverted clause in the deed, Stonington has the right to purchase it back for \$35,000 so long as Westerly Water is no longer using it exclusively for water production purposes. Westerly Water has confirmed that they are not using the location for water production.

Creating a public park in this area has been an ongoing discussion in the community for over a decade. In the past two years, Stonington has invested in making progress toward this goal. The Town has done a topography and wetlands survey, Phase I and Partial Phase II environmental testing, created a concept

plan, and further engaged the community. In regards to the environmental testing, other than the groundwater which is associated with off-site properties, no significant environmental issues were found for the site soil itself. Generally, levels detected were below applicable regulatory criteria and would not limit site development.

All these steps have yielded positive results and plans are underway to take the final legal steps to purchase the land. Funding was approved during the last budget cycle of \$125,000 to allow for the purchase and to begin work toward creating this new local asset.

Once the 8-24 review has been completed by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the item can move forward to a Town Meeting tentatively in February.

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Mr. Tamsky and voted unanimously to approve sending the Circus Lot Property to the Planning and Zoning Commission for an 8-24 review.

Request – Use of Donahue Park

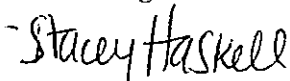
A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Mr. Tamsky and voted unanimously to approve the use of Donahue Park by the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce for the Duck Race on April 27, 2024.

(9) Comments from the Selectmen

- Mr. Tamsky stated he attended a meeting in Groton regarding resilience and sea level rise. He also noted that a resident reached out about a crosswalk near Seaport Heights on Route 27 that had previously gone before the Police Commission in 2021 but had not been completed. He referred the person back to the Police Commission and reached out to the Chair. The Mystic Harbor Management Commission will be discussing the kayak launch assistant at the Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee meeting.
- Ms. Downie attended several meetings regarding erosion control and the need for long/short term resolutions. She stated that the EPA is interested in looking at the aquifer in Pawcatuck. She attended a site walk regarding the RFQ for a construction manager of the Mystic River Boathouse Park project.
- Ms. Chesebrough held meetings with each department to review the operating and CIP budgets. The RFP for the North Pier closed and a panel will be established to interview the firms. A meeting has been scheduled between the engineering firm for the Waterloop project and representatives from Stonington and Westerly.

(10) Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.



Stacey Haskell

Recording Secretary