

TOWN OF STONINGTON
PUBLIC HEARING TO DISCUSS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
(CIP) BUDGET REQUESTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021/2022
Virtual Meeting
Thursday, October 15, 2020
5:00 PM

A virtual meeting was held on this date to allow public participation in the Capital Improvement Budget Requests for Fiscal Year 21/22. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook live and was available via audio on a conference line. A call in number was provided to allow residents the opportunity to suggest or comment on Capital Improvement requests.

Director of Administration, CIP Chairperson, Ms. Patti Burmahl, called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Ms. Burmahl noted that the purpose of the meeting is to receive recommendations and input from the public on items to be included in the Town's Capital Improvement Program for the 21/22 Fiscal Year. Capital projects include items such as major equipment, vehicles, construction of new facilities, or infrastructures valued in excess of \$10,000. The capital improvement advisory committee will review all projects later this month, and this committee makes the recommendations that then go to the Board of Selectmen for their review in January, which are then proposed to the Board of Finance. The Board of Finance reviews the requests and the final project list is ultimately approved by the town as part of the annual budget process. Ms. Burmahl reminded all that the Board of Selectmen meetings and the Board of Finance meetings where the capital improvement projects are reviewed, discussed and prioritized are also public meetings providing opportunity for the public to attend and provide comments at those meetings as well, which will take place in the first quarter of 2021.

Following the brief description of the program and process, Ms. Burmahl asked for input and comments from the public.

Mr. Rick Newton, Climate Change Task Force Chair, requested that an existing line item labeled Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation with a priority rating of A-Committed, be increased to \$500,000 per year. Originally proposed in 2018 and 2019 at \$100,000 per year, only \$10,000 was allocated for each of those years. Mr. Newton stated there are significant grant funds available that the Town is missing out on as a matching contribution required for the grant funds is not available.

Secondly, Mr. Newton suggested the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Stations, pointing out that the Town only has (3) EV charging stations and none on the eastern side of the town. Mr. Newton suggested a "B" priority rating and funding of \$50,000 and possibly shared with businesses such as Mystic Seaport or McQuade's Marketplace, which both have solar panels and may be interested in such a venture.

Mr. Newton advised that should the Town not use the funding for either of these requests, the Town should take advantage of Public Act 1977 which allows the Town to move funds into a Climate Change Coastal Resiliency Reserve Fund Account. This

account could be invested at a higher rate than other Town funds so a reserve could be built up. Mr. Newton felt that the Town will need Climate Change Reserve Funds in the future.

Another caller, Mr. Stephen Bessette thanked all in the meeting for their service noting the challenges of late. Mr. Bessette had sent an email prior to the meeting and acknowledged that his request would not make the list but did ask that the Board envision a parking lot garage on the current parking lot property of St. Patrick's Church in downtown Mystic. Mr. Bessette suggested that the Town work with the Church and acquire their parking lot property and in conjunction with the Church build a two- or three-story parking garage that can service the needs of Stonington and Mystic. Mr. Bessette realized this would be a multimillion-dollar opportunity and project and there was no money in the budget today or probably tomorrow but asked to begin to start thinking about the long-term parking needs of downtown Mystic.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jill A Senior
Recording Clerk