

Stonington Facilities Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 11, 2020
Human Services Building Community Room
7:00 pm
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The Stonington Facilities Committee held a regular meeting on this date, Tuesday, February 11, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. at Stonington Human Services Building Community Room.

Members present were Paul Sartor, Chairman; Don Maranell, Bill King and Deb Downie, Board of Selectwomen liaison. Also, present were Sandy Tissiere, Recording Secretary and interested citizens

Late arrival: Chris Donahue, Vice Chair, 7:20 p.m.

Members absent were Alisa Morrison, Sandy Grimes and Jean Fiore

1. Call to Order

Chairman Sartor called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Bill King was seated as an alternate.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The group joined together for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Comments from the Public

There weren't any public comments.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the special meeting minutes from January 14, 2020 were presented for approval.

Don Maranell made a motion and Bill King seconded to approve the minutes from January 14, 2020 as presented.

The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

5. Correspondence

Don Maranell shared a copy of an editorial from the New London Day, "Rebirth of Stonington school was a sound decision" (attachment #1) supporting the decision that was made by the selectman based on the committee's recommendations for the lease of West Broad Street school to St. Michael School.

6. 49 N. Stonington Road, Old Mystic

- **Residential Development**

Chairman Sartor discussed the document from Dave Reagan, Reagan Homes regarding residential use of the property (attachment #2). The committee discussed the potential number of homes that could be built, road access and the processes that would be necessary to develop the property.

- **Sewer**

Chairman Sartor said Alisa Morrison has been in contact in with Doug Nettleton, Director, Stonington Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), regarding the sewer connection to Old Mystic and was told it isn't in consideration yet. Chairman Sartor said he would like to have the Stonington Facilities Committee get on the agenda of the WPCA to confirm the process of connecting sewer to the Old Mystic property. Deb Downie said she would send Rich Cody's, Chairman, Stonington WPCA, contact information to Chairman Sartor.

Chairman Sartor spoke about another use of the building in its current state could be a parking lot for shuttle service to downtown. Chairman Sartor said he would check in with Leanne Theodore, Stonington Director of Human Services to see if there is need for their use of the building. The committee discussed the use of the parking lot for shuttle service to downtown and for special events.

7. WBSS

- **Status**

Paul Sartor said he contacted Father Perkins for an update. Father Perkins reported there still some particulars in the lease that need to be worked out but it is moving forward.

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8. New Business

Deb Downie reported on her tasks from the January 14, 2020 meeting:

1. Ms. Downie discussed with the Board of Selectmen whether the shelving from the gym in the Old Mystic building could be removed. It was agreed it could be removed by the town and Deb Downie will get reach out to get it on the schedule.
2. Ms. Downie said it was discussed at the Board of Selectmen meeting about the need for a town wide department space needs study. Ms. Downie asked if the committee could facilitate this endeavor. The committee discussed how this could be started and decided that Chris Donahue will create a list of town departments, the committee will create the list of questions collectively and Bill King will reach out to Van Riley, Stonington Superintendent of Schools to see if there is space available at the Stonington Public Schools District Office.
3. The present use of the 4th District Voting hall was discussed. Deb Downie said the Board of Selectmen have discussed potential uses for the building and the land. Deb Downie said this property is being assigned to the Stonington Facilities Committee for exploration of best use. Paul Sartor said there was a study done on the property by University of Connecticut Students and he will contact Keith Brynes, Stonington Acting Director of Planning to get a copy which will be shared with the committee.
4. The final item Deb Downie discussed was the Stillman Avenue mill property. Ms. Downie said, at this time, the Board of Selectmen, have to find out more information about what can be done on the property before making any decisions.

9. Comments from the Public

There weren't any public comments.

10. Comments from the Committee

Don Maranell said he is proud of the Board of Selectmen for supporting what the committee recommended for West Broad Street School. Mr. Maranell opined on the community reaction to the decision of the committee's recommendation to lease West Broad Street School to St. Michael School. Mr. Maranell and the committee commended the community members that supported the committee's recommendation.

11. Adjourn

Bill King made a motion and Chris Donahue seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m.
The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,


Sandy Tissiere, Recording Secretary

Rebirth of Stonington school was a sound decision

Published February 09, 2020 12:01AM

By **The Day Editorial Board** (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=editorialboard)

For nearly a year, neighbors of West Broad Street School in downtown Pawcatuck have not heard the laughter and happy shouts of schoolchildren at recess. The queues of school buses are gone. The clusters of parents waiting for their children to be dismissed from class each afternoon have vanished.

The void in the neighborhood began when the school ceased its nearly 120-year span as a public school in March 2019. Its doors closed and students relocated to the expanded and renovated West Vine Street School.

After months of this silence, no doubt most of West Broad's neighbors breathed a collective sigh of relief when in late January, the Board of Selectmen agreed to lease the building for three years to St. Michael School. Officials at the Catholic school, looking for more spacious and suitable accommodations than its aging Liberty Street buildings, have been interested in the West Broad building for years.

The Board of Selectmen decision came despite some persistent opposition from those who contended the historic structure should be marketed and redeveloped for another use.

We commend the selectwomen for agreeing to the lease. Despite the very modest \$300 a month St. Michael School will pay the town to lease the building, First Selectwoman Danielle Chesebrough correctly points out that the agreement means the town will save between \$77,000 and \$128,000 annually in utility and maintenance costs.

More important is what St. Michael attorney Nick Kepple so aptly pointed out during public sessions to discuss the school's future: the top concern of West Broad neighbors is that the building not be left vacant. Empty buildings can hang a perpetual cloud of uncertainty over a community. A 2018 report titled "The Empty House Next Door," completed by the Cambridge, Massachusetts think tank the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy focused on the negative impacts of vacant property. While the report mainly examined the vast quantities of vacant housing and commercial structures in Rust Belt cities such as Cleveland and Detroit, the study's conclusions about empty buildings certainly apply to other communities as well. Vacant buildings are public safety hazards, magnets for vandalism, arson and other crimes. They result in property value decline in the neighborhood and create a general sense of voicelessness and lack of hope in a community.

Leasing West Broad to St. Michael alleviates such risks and brings peace of mind to neighbors in an area of town whose revitalization continues to lag behind that of its neighbor across the Pawcatuck River – Westerly, R. I.

Residents who advocated that the historic school would be attractive to developers — and might in the future house apartments, offices or businesses — could be correct. But successful marketing of old buildings for such makeovers takes time, sometimes years. Examples of empty historic buildings waiting, and waiting, and waiting for rescue by a developer can be found in communities throughout the region.

The lease to St. Michael does not preclude a different future use for West Broad. It does buy town officials time to explore such options while ensuring the building is occupied. Best of all, it removes the risk that a vacant building poses and ensures the joyful sounds of happy schoolchildren soon will return to the West Broad neighborhood.

*The Day editorial board meets regularly with political, business and community leaders and convenes weekly to formulate editorial viewpoints. It is composed of President and Publisher **Tim Dwyer** (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=t.dwyer), Editorial Page Editor **Paul Choiniere** (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=p.choiniere), Managing Editor **Tim Cotter** (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=t.cotter), Staff Writer **Julia Bergman** (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=j.bergman) and retired deputy managing editor **Lisa McGinley** (/section/columnists_mcginley). However, only the publisher and editorial page editor are responsible for developing the editorial opinions. The board operates independently from the Day newsroom.*

STORIES THAT MAY INTEREST YOU

New London council's needless bow to Bernie (/editorials/20200210/new-london-councils-needless-bow-to-bernie)

Why is the City Council weighing into the national health care issue? And, if they insist on doing so, how about talking to their congressman who has some big ideas on the topic?

Romney stood tall, unlike his fellow Republican senators (/editorials/20200210/romney-stood-tall-unlike-his-fellow-republican-senators)

The Utah senator remained steadfast and true to his principles. This is what courage is all about. Some folks have it. Others choose cowardice over country.

49 N. Stonington Rd, Old Mystic

Dave Reagan <dreagan@reaganhomes.com>

To: Paul Sartor

Feb 6 at 3:12 PM

Hi, Paul per your request I looked at the feasibility of developing the above property into residential lots. I attached a sketch of a possible 6 lot subdivision. This would assume the existing building(s) were taken down and any environmental issues were abated.

The town typically requires open space but will take a fee of 10 percent of the value of the land as it sits prior to approved subdivision.

For example, if we use the current assessed value of \$132,300, then the developer would be paying to the town a total of \$13,300 divided by 6 lots. Each time a lot was sold then 1 sixth of the \$13,300 would be paid to the town.

It would take more time to evaluate for a road but as we spoke about the extra few lots it may create, more than likely would not pay for the extensive engineering and road costs that would need to go in for them.

My understanding the lots will need individual septic systems and typical water hook fees would be assessed per lot.

I estimate \$35,000 towards test holes, perc tests, surveys, engineering, application fees to go after a 6 lot approval for this property. This would not be a guarantee, as you know many factors will come into play, neighbors against, water flow, septic system capacities and so on.

Developers can risk not only money but time going through the process and ultimately getting denied or ending up with fewer lots.

For me, I would be interested in paying \$220,000 and fund the costs of \$35,000 for the engineering of 6 lots.

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Thanks,

Dave Reagan

Reagan Homes LLC

860.460.4857

www.ReaganHomes.com

Town of Stonington

Geographic Information System (GIS)

RA-20 ZONING



Map Date: 12/10/10



MAP DISCLAIMER: NOTICE OF LIABILITY

This map is a general survey and should not be used for legal purposes. It is not a warranty of any kind. The Town of Stonington and its officials assume no liability for any errors or omissions in this map. The map is provided for informational purposes only.

Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 100 feet



6 lots - no Remos