



TOWN OF STONINGTON

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

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November 1, 2019

PUBLIC MEETING CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

A meeting was held on Monday, October 28, 2019 to receive recommendations from the public on items to be included in the Town's Capital Improvement Program.

Committee Chairman Vincent Pacileo called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Those in attendance were as follows:

Ms. June Strunk, Chairperson, Board of Finance, brought attention to the meeting time and suggested that an after-hours meeting should be scheduled to accommodate the working public who may not be able to attend a daytime meeting. If another meeting would not be possible this fiscal year, Ms. Strunk strongly suggested that next year a later meeting time be taken into consideration.

Ms. Leslie Driscoll, a member of the Architectural Design Review Board, spoke with regards to the sidewalk issue and expressed her hope that monies would be appropriated to continue funding sidewalk projects. Ms. Driscoll pointed out the amount of traffic on Route 1 and added that a continuous sidewalk would benefit students and residents as well as provide economic growth to the area involved. Ms. Driscoll inquired if the Town had any information available on the sidewalk project as it stands and Ms. June Strunk added that the Town of Stonington webpage, under Planning & Zoning, Mr. Jason Vincent has posted reports and information on current projects.

Mr. Rick Newton, Chairman, Climate Change Task Force, spoke of the Town Resiliency Program, and suggested that specifically Line 92 of the FY19/20 budget should change the title from Coastal Resiliency Program to Climate Resiliency Program. While the coastal area has received quite a bit of attention, the Town needs to consider the upland areas in regards to the changing climate. Mr. Newton stated there should be an Inland Resiliency Plan and have a priority rating level of "B"-Urgent and increase the funding level of the Resiliency Plan line item. Mr. Newton pointed out that the line item is \$290,000 behind what it should have been if full funding had been received when first proposed.

Mr. Jim Lathrop, member, Economic Development Commission, agreed with Ms. Strunk's suggestion of a later meeting time to allow more residents to attend. He also would like to have another meeting, but at the very least take this suggestion into full consideration while planning next year's meeting.

Mr. Lathrop also spoke of the concerns regarding the sidewalks and the need for the Town to take on the project and earmark funding and spend capital and not just wait for grants. While realizing the issue is complicated, Mr. Lathrop feels by spending the money and showing good faith in promoting a continuous sidewalk, state and federal granting sources may become available.

Mr. Lathrop also discussed the Downtown area and the need for attention and spending in that area. Feeling that the Downtown Pawcatuck River area is economically beneficial to the Town, Mr. Lathrop spoke of underdeveloped property that stretches from Route 1 to Mechanic Street and attention in those areas would be a benefit to the Town. Speaking with regards to coastal resiliency, Mr. Lathrop pointed out the steel design along the river behind Donahue Park has withstood many storm events and feels the design is appropriate and should be utilized in other areas along the river as well. Promoting a downtown Riverwalk area, Mr. Lathrop suggested a line item in the CIP funding should be designated for enhancing that area and include the area behind the Pawcatuck Fire Department known as the Circus Lot, which should also be looked at for a type of Greenway project.

Ms. Laura Graham spoke in support of funding the sidewalks, stating that most importantly it was a safety issue in addition to a positive economic project. Pointing out that she had received over 408 signatures over a 2-week period during the budget process, Ms. Graham feels that the sidewalk issue is important to the community. Ms. Graham also noted that while areas such as the recent Spruce Meadows high density housing installed sidewalks as a condition of development, although generous, more priority in public sponsorship needs to take place.

Ms. Graham praised Mr. Jim Lathrop for his diligence in supporting downtown development and his recent purchase of Laura's Landing, a commercial building located next to the Pawcatuck River bridge on West Broad St. Ms. Graham hopes that with the renovation and rehabilitation of these older buildings more investors will consider the area, encouraging growth.

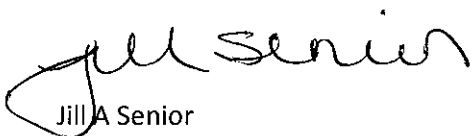
Ms. Lindsay Pyrke-Fairchild, member Climate Change Task Force, addressed climate resiliency and the need to increase funding to protect the Town's assets in addition to maintaining the Town's bond rating. Ms. Pyrke-Fairchild also inquired if enough research was being done to obtain grants to assist the Town with the cost.

Mr. Daniel Oliverio, employee of the Town of Stonington, Highway Division, stressed the importance of addressing the sidewalk issue in Town and feels the issue is being kicked down the road when it should be considered an utmost priority. Pointing out the safety aspect of continuous sidewalks from the High School to Downtown, Dan stated the Town should make the residents safety priority one.

As a final note, Ms. June Strunk added that the Bond Rating Agency has recognized that the Town is funding a Coastal Resiliency line item in the budget. Ms. Strunk noted that this has provided the Town with a AAA rating by Standard & Poor. To give an idea of the savings the AAA rating affords the Town, the recent \$5.2 million borrowed will see a \$65,000 savings in interest, and Ms. Strunk stated this approach is critical going forward.

With no further comments from the public, Chair Vin Pacileo called the meeting adjourned at 10:28 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Jill A Senior
Committee Clerk