

February 13, 2019

The Stonington Board of Selectmen held a regular meeting on this date at the Stonington Police Department at 7:00 p.m. Present were First Selectman Rob Simmons, Selectman John Prue and Selectwoman Jocelyn Kepple. Also, present were members of the public and press.

(1) Call to Order

Mr. Simmons called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

(2) Pledge of Allegiance

(3) Comments from the Public

None

(4) Approval of the Minutes

- A motion was made by Ms. Kepple, seconded by Mr. Prue and voted unanimously to approve the January 23, 2019 regular meeting minutes.
- A motion was made by Ms. Kepple, seconded by Mr. Prue and voted unanimously to approve the January 31, 2019 Board of Selectmen and Capital Improvement Program Committee special joint meeting minutes.

(5) Correspondence

- Mr. Simmons took in correspondence from First Selectman Mike Urgo requesting that North Stonington tie into the Stonington Municipal Sewer System.
- Mr. Simmons took in correspondence from Ms. Pamela Johnstone in the form of an application as an alternate on the Board of Assessment Appeals.
- Mr. Simmons took in correspondence from Mr. Brian Bottaro in the form of an application as an alternate of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Committee.
- Mr. Simmons took in correspondence from Ms. Alisa Morrison, Mr. Stuart Schwartzstein, Mr. Paul Sartor, Mr. Peter O'Connor, Mr. Andrew Kowal and Mr. Christopher Donahue in the form of an application for the Permanent Committee to Study the Needs and Use of Town Public Buildings.

(6) Appointment/Reappointment/Resignation

Appointment – Retirement Board

A motion was made by Mr. Prue, seconded by Ms. Kepple and voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Gary Shettle to the Retirement Board representing the Board of Education.

Resignation – Shellfish Commission

A motion was made by Ms. Kepple, seconded by Mr. Prue and voted unanimously to accept the resignation of Ms. Tessa Getchis from the Shellfish Commission with regret.

(7) Old Business

Discussion – Permanent Committee to Study the Needs and Use of Town Public Buildings

Mr. Simmons stated the Board voted previously to approve the repopulation of the committee but needed to clarify the scope and parameters of the committee.

Mr. Simmons stated that when the committee was originally formed it included five members with staggering terms. Mr. Simmons suggested that the committee follow the original format. Mr. Prue stated that two alternates should be included.

A motion was made by Mr. Prue, seconded by Ms. Kepple and voted unanimously to repopulate the committee with five regular members and two alternates.

The terms would include one member with a one year term, two members with a two year term, two members with a three year term and two alternate members with a two year term.

In discussion, it was suggested that those who finish out their term can request reappointment. With no further discussion, the motion carried.

(8) New Business

Discussion – Street Signage Regarding Renie Drive

Mr. Simmons stated it had been brought to his attention that there is a spelling discrepancy regarding Renie Drive in Pawcatuck where the signage on the street has it listed as Renee Drive and schools register students using Renee Drive. However, the legal name in the assessor's office is Renie Drive.

A motion was made by Mr. Prue, seconded by Ms. Kepple and voted unanimously to conform the legal name with the signage as posted to Renee Drive.

Discussion – Tax Abatement for Farming Buildings

Mr. Simmons stated he had received a request from the Stonington Agriculture Committee to adopt a provision which would allow for an exemption from property taxes for farm buildings. The item was sent to the Town Attorney for review. The Town Attorney recommended that the Assessor complete an analysis of how many properties may be impacted with the adoption of such an ordinance as well as a calculation of what the reduction would be from the grand list to better understand the financial impact to the Town.

Mr. Simmons stated that he would abstain from any vote on the item as his wife and members of his family own farm property.

Ms. Marsha Standish, Director of Assessment, gave an overview of the classification of farms and farm buildings.

Mr. Dave Hammond, Chair of the Economic Development Committee (EDC), stated that the Agricultural Committee began through the EDC but operates as a separate committee not a Town committee. He added that it seemed that if the abatement was approved the impact would be small to the Town but huge to the farming community.

A motion was made by Mr. Prue, seconded by Ms. Kepple and voted to approve that a further analysis be completed by the Assessor's office based on the Town Attorney's recommendations. The motion passed with Mr. Prue and Ms. Kepple voting in favor and Mr. Simmons abstaining.

Request – Award of Bid for Police Department Portable Radio

Chief Darren Stewart stated that three bids were submitted and the lowest bidder for the handheld radios was Marcus Communications, LLC. He added that they have worked with Marcus Communications previously and are familiar with the company.

A motion was made by Mr. Prue, seconded by Ms. Kepple and voted unanimously to approve the award of bid to Marcus Communications, LLC.

In discussion, Mr. James Sullivan, Director of Finance, explained further the bid specifications. Mr. Henri Gourd from the Board of Police Commission stated that the Board approved the bid and worked with their consultant to ensure the police received the best possible product.

With no further discussion, the motion carried.

Discussion – Trees on West Broad Street

Mr. Simmons stated that he received a letter from the Economic Development Commission (EDC) proposing changes to the Pawcatuck Streetscape specifically the removal of the trees on West Broad Street requesting replacement with decorative planters.

Mr. Simmons read a statement from the Ms. Julie Holland on behalf of the Beautification Committee which did not support the request from the EDC and requested community discussions with all stakeholders in advance of any decisions making.

- Mr. Dave Hammond and Mr. Jim Lathrop from the Economic Development Commission spoke in favor and to ask the Board of Selectmen to consider their request while ensuring the memorials from original donors are honored respectfully. Mr. Lathrop submitted a letter on behalf of Bogue's Alley to the Board. The letter was not discussed.
- Ms. Lisa Konicki from the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce stated that the Town of Westerly removed the trees in downtown four years ago and although business owners were satisfied did not handle the memorials correctly which has led to a backlash. She also encouraged the Board to convene a meeting with all stakeholders to include Westerly officials prior to any decision making. She added that both Towns should have a cohesive look and stated that the Chamber does not have a budget to assist in funding the project.
- Ms. Janice Mink spoke against the project stating that the issue is with the traffic pattern and not the trees.
- Ms. Melanie Goggin owner of Mel's Downtown Creamery spoke in favor of the project but stated that it was important to handle the memorials properly.
- Mr. Chris Donahue spoke in favor of the project stating that one of the memorials is for his grandfather and that something else should be done in its place to honor those original memorials.
- Ms. Leslie Driscoll stated that the Architecture Design Review Board should be included in the conversation.

A motion was made by Mr. Prue, seconded by Ms. Kepple and voted unanimously to have the First Selectman meet with stakeholders for further review and discussion, to report back findings to the Board of Selectmen and to take no action until holding a public hearing.

Discussion – CTGA Proposed Bill 5254

Mr. Simmons stated that he received a letter from Mr. Richard Newton on behalf of the Avalonia Land Conservancy and CT Land Conservation Council Advisory Board requesting that the Board vote to have the Town included in House Bill 5254 "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM AUTHORIZING MUNICIPALITIES TO IMPOSE A BUYER'S CONVEYANCE FEE ON REAL PROPERTY TO FUND THE PURCHASE AND STEWARDSHIP OF OPEN SPACE."

Mr. Newton stated that if enacted it would allow the voters of the Town the opportunity to decide if they want to establish an ordinance to collect a conveyance fee from buyers of real estate which would go to a dedicated Town fund for open space preservation and stewardship costs.

Mr. Simmons stated that if the Town was to be included in the Bill it would not be obligated to do anything and added that the Bill still has a long way to go to pass. He stated that if it did pass an ordinance would need to be created and approved by the voters of the Town.

Mr. Prue stated that it would not be fully implemented without an ordinance and doesn't bind the Town by agreeing to be added to the Bill.

A motion was made by Ms. Kepple, seconded by Mr. Prue and voted unanimously to approve the Town of Stonington ask to be included in House Bill 5254.

Discussion – SNEFLA Lease Extension

A motion was made by Ms. Kepple, seconded by Mr. Prue and voted unanimously to table the discussion to a future meeting.

Request – Assign Map 176, Block 2, Lot 3, Street Number 3 Chippechaug Trail, Mystic, CT 06355

A motion was made by Ms. Kepple, seconded by Mr. Prue and voted unanimously to approve the request.

Discussion – Permit Fee Waiver

A motion was made by Ms. Kepple, seconded by Mr. Prue and voted unanimously to approve a waiver of building permit fees for the Stonington Volunteer Ambulance Corp in the amount of \$82.00.

(9) Comments from the Public

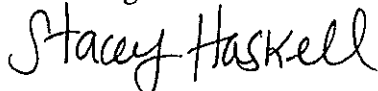
None

(10) Comments from the Selectmen

- Ms. Kepple thanked the Public Works Department for doing a great job on snow removal.
- Mr. Prue did not comment.
- Mr. Simmons stated that Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz came to town to meet with neighboring town leadership to discuss local issues including Education Cost Sharing, Town Aid for Roads, Local Capital Improvement Funds and the sidewalks in Pawcatuck. After which they toured the Town Dock and were briefed on the work being done at the South Pier as well as the issues face by our local fishermen. The Lt. Governor ended her visit at Grass and Bone to learn about culinary tourism. Mr. Simmons added it was a positive visit.

(11) Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.



Stacey Haskell

Recording Secretary