

**Town of Stonington
Board of Selectmen and
Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee
Joint Special Meeting Minutes
Stonington Police Station, Stonington, CT
March 6, 2017**

The Stonington Board of Selectmen and the Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee held a joint special meeting on this date, March 6, 2017, at the Stonington Police Department at 7:00 p.m. Present were Rob Simmons, Chairman, First Selectman; Kate Rotella, Selectwoman; Mike O'Neill, Vice Chairman; Steve White, Mike Crowley, Nick Kepple, Tom Switz, Steve Planchon, Scott Bates, Alan Strunk, Kathryn Burchenal, Breck Perkins, Sandy Tissiere, Recording Secretary as well as Jason Vincent, Stonington Director of Planning; Barbara McKrell, Stonington Director of Public Works and members of the public. Late arrival: Bryan Bentz: 7:12 p.m.

Members absent: Mike Spellman, Selectman; and Frank Todisco

1) Call to order

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

2) Pledge of Allegiance

3) Comments from the Public

Herb Holmstead, a neighbor of the property, said he went past the property and noticed the fence had been cut down to four feet. One of the selling points to purchase the property was the view of the water, he is suggesting the fence be cut down another six inches so the water could be seen from the street.

4) Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Tom Switz and seconded by Kate Rotella to approve the minutes from February 7, 2017. All were in favor and the motion carried.

5) Correspondence

Chairman Simmons presented the following:

- A letter from Tim Sullivan, Deputy Commissioner, DECD awarding the project a grant in the amount of \$200,000. This letter will be discussed later in the meeting.
- A phone message from Coogan and Gildersleeve asking the committee keep them in mind when the boathouse is ready and needs appliances.
- SNS Electric offering to donate labor/electric services. Chairman Simmons will correspond with them and thank them for their offer.

Mr. Plachon asked "If a committee member receives correspondence, how do they relay the information"? Chairman Simmons replied all correspondence could be forwarded to his office to be added into the record.

6) New Business

• Discussion – Request for Qualification [RFQ] for a Project Manager

Jason Vincent, Stonington Director of Planning, addressed the committee explaining his department has created an RFQ as opposed to an RFP. The difference is by advertising for an RFQ, there is a possibility firms will apply that can provide all required components of the project. The difference between an RFQ and RFP is the budget projection is delivered in a separate sealed envelope enabling the committee to decide on qualifications rather than lowest price.

Mr. Vincent shared the changes made to the Standard Instructions to Proposers. There was a question if there was a ranking system included in the RFQ, Mr. Vincent answered there is selection/evaluation criteria for the applicants.

Mr. Vincent explained the process of the bid process, first the RFQ is advertised, and then when all bids are in, a sub-committee should be formed to review the bids to present to the committee.

Chairman Simmons ask the committee if there were questions regarding the RFQ.

Mr. Crowley: Has environmental studies been done? Mr. Vincent: Yes, phase 1 & 2 have been done.

Mr. Switz: How many bids should we expect? Mr. Vincent: We should get quite a few as this is an exciting project, this is why I've suggested forming a sub-committee to review them.

Mr. O'Neill: Are we going to include the recent GFI to let them know what has been done? Mr. Vincent: We will share what we have.

Mr. Bentz: We have discussed demolishing the structure but we might be able to use it for meetings, etc.? Mr. O'Neill: We might need a separate meeting to discuss that. Chairman Simmons said the current discussion is working around a pre-demolition phase, a decision for demolition hasn't been made yet. There will have to be an analysis of a number of things to determine to save the building or not.

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Mr. Perkins: Regarding the RFQ, if there is one person watching the pot, there is room for self-interest. Chairman Simmons: That is good advice to keep in mind. Jason Vincent and Barbara McKrell spoke about the need for someone to do oversight. The RFQ is looking for a firm that has environmental, landscape design and other services.

Mr. Crowley: Are you confident this will work? Mr. Vincent: Yes, the RFQ gives the committee the opportunity to choose the right firm for the project.

Mr. Kepple commented on the importance of the committee to understand what is going on. We are fast tracking and we need some help as some of the committee members are more fluent in this process than others. If we don't bring on someone on to manage it, it will put a burden on the town.

Mr. Planchon: Is this the picture of what they will be working off of? Mr. Vincent: That drawing may give a misconception, it is an idea of the feasibility of what we are hoping to achieve. Mr. O'Neill: No one has determined this will be the layout. The primary thing to find is a spot for the boathouse. The drawing was a concept of what can be as there is also the consideration of managing parking and maximizing the views of the river.

Mr. Planchon: Will the A2 and T2 surveys be included on the website? Mr. Vincent: Yes.

A motion was made by Mr. Bates and seconded by Mr. Crowley to accept the RFQ with comments from the committee. All were in favor and the motion carried.

- Discussion – DECD's grant of \$200,000 for environmental assessment

Chairman Simmons spoke of the letter received from Tim Sullivan, Deputy Commissioner, DECD granting an award for the amount of \$200,000. Mr. Simmons commended Mr. Vincent and other town hall employees for their work in submitting the application. Mr. Vincent shared with the committee how the grant was procured and spoke of the draft of financial assistance proposal that requires the signature of First Selectman Rob Simmons. There is a small fee to close the grant of about \$8,000 but it is worth the cost to receive \$200,000. Mr. Vincent noted typographical errors on page 2 where Stonington was misspelled and Stonington was referred to "Town of Brookfield" which need correction.

A motion was made by Mr. Switz and seconded by Mr. Kepple to accept the DECD draft assistance agreement. All were in favor and the motion carried.

7) Old Business

- Discussion – Department of Public Works regarding action taken to date to secure and clean up property to include removal of pool

Barbara McKrell shared photographs of the site and a mock-up of the sign. Ms. McKrell answered the created list of items needed to be addressed at the last meeting.

- Install chain and lock at property entrance. *Three posts and chain have been installed across the driveway.*
- Secure existing fencing and replace missing sections. *Missing fencing has been replaced and all fencing has been secured.*
- Reduce height of fencing. *The height of the fencing has been cut back to 4 foot and the frontage of the property has been cleaned.*
- Remove pool and surrounding wooden deck. *The deck has been demolished and removed.*
- Secure doors on all buildings with new locksets. *The doors have all been secured with new lock sets and a new door has been installed on the boathouse.*
- Disconnect utilities as required. *The utilities have been disconnected and the house winterized. An anti-tracking pad has been installed and extends from Route 27 to the base of the hill. The DPW is working on planning of seeding.*

Ms. McKrell said the only thing left was to post signs. The committee discussed the sign presented. Chairman Simmons ask the committee to be mindful this is going to be the people's park. Mr. Simmons also told the committee the Stonington garden club has asked permission to view the property for future planning of planting. Ms. McKrell spoke of the house on the property having small rooms that would not be conducive to use as meeting rooms. Ms. McKrell emphasized that she and Mr. Curioso would be available to meet with the committee to walk the property. Ms. McKrell noted if the committee chooses to demolish the house, it could be done in-house, they

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have the capability. The installation of motion sensor lights where the boats are stored was recommended to discourage people going back there. Mr. Crowley asked what if people want to see what they bought. Ms. McKrell answered they could call Public Works to ask for a site visit. There will be another open house. Ms. McKrell invited the committee to the site but only four people could enter the house at a time. Chairman Simmons told the committee to call Public Works and it could be set up for them to tour the property. Mr. White asked if the sign should say Town of Stonington. Ms. McKrell said they would put the town seal on the sign. Mr. O'Neill asked if the property could be used for parking for the next regatta. Chairman Simmons said to submit a request to the town. A motion was made by Mr. Kepple and seconded by Mr. O'Neill to accept the signage submitted with the addition of the town seal. All were in favor and the motion carried.

8) Comments from the Public

None

9) Comments from the Committee

Mr. Switz stated we would need to know the size of the boathouse and the setback requirements from the river before we can begin the planning process. Mr. Vincent answered that current zoning laws don't apply to this project but the zone itself might have some requirements.

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Mr. Bentz asked if there was a rough schedule to show the plan to the public. Mr. Simmons answered the minutes would be posted, and all documentation will be posted on the website.

Mr. Kepple said I hope we all agree that we don't know everything, we need more expertise, we need input from the public. People are curious but this is an evolving situation. Our job is to create what the community would like to have there. To have something practical and sensible.

Mr. Simmons recognized Ms. Burchenal for comment. Ms. Burchenal spoke of the CT DEEP GreenCircle Sustainability Award Program. If it wasn't something that was applicable, the grant application could be used as a checklist or serve as a guideline.

Mr. White asked for clarification of the budget and what is left to spend. Chairman Simmons said he would have Jim Sullivan, Stonington Director of Finance, prepare a spreadsheet to track expenditures.

Chairman Simmons recognized Mr. Perkins for comment. Mr. Perkins spoke of the schedule showing a 13 month design process and construction of 8 months so it could be a 21 month period to get this going. Mr. Perkins said most RFQ's or RFP's have a baseline value attached to it. The committee discussed if a value was shared, it could affect the bids.

Chairman Simmons recognized Alan Strunk for comment. Mr. Strunk asked how much money is there in the budget. Chairman Simmons answered this a movable number as we just received \$200,000 bonus money and may apply for other grants.

Mr. Planchon asked where contractors go if they have questions. Mr. Vincent answered they contact him.

10) Comments from the Selectmen

No comments

11) Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sandra Tissiere

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Recording Secretary