

**Town of Stonington  
Board of Selectmen and  
Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee  
Joint Special Meeting Minutes  
Stonington Police Station, Stonington, CT  
April 3, 2017**

The Stonington Board of Selectmen and the Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee held a joint special meeting on this date, April 3, 2017, at the Stonington Police Department at 7:00 p.m. Present were Rob Simmons, Chairman, First Selectman; Kate Rotella, Selectwoman; Mike Spellman, Selectman; Mike O'Neill, Vice Chairman; Steve White, Mike Crowley, Tom Switz, Steve Planchon, Alan Strunk, Kathryn Burchenal, Breck Perkins, Jim Kelley, Sandy Tissièrè, Recording Secretary as well as Captain Todd Olson, Stonington Police Department; Jason Vincent, Stonington Director of Planning; Barbara McKrell, Stonington Director of Public Works; Jim Sullivan, Stonington Finance Director and members of the public.  
Members absent: Frank Todisco, Bryan Bentz, Nick Kepple, and Scott Bates

**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**

None

**4) Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Switz asked for the correction of his comment in Item #9 Comments from the Committee to read: "*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*".

A motion was made by Kate Rotella and seconded by Mike Crowley to approve the minutes from March 6, 2017 as amended. All were in favor and the motion carried.

**5) Correspondence**

Chairman Simmons presented the following:

- A letter from the Mystic Garden Club was presented for discussion.
  1. The Mystic Garden Club expressed their involvement with the Conversation Committee in the Coogan Farm Giving Garden project and they are excited about the Mystic River Park project and want to offer their support. Amy Bush, Mystic Garden Club member, shared with the committee they would be very interested in being involved with the planting of low maintenance and native plants.
  2. Ryan Fargo, Sterling Superior Services, Inc. sent an email expressing interest to provide services to the project.
  3. The Mystic Harbor Management Commission sent a letter asking the committee to consider installing a small boat landing dock to the property. The committee discussed the pros and cons of this proposition and decided it could be discussed when the project is further along in the process. Breck Perkins commented, in reviewing the letter and attachment, someone has gone to the effort to draw up some plans, but they need to understand what has been put forth to date isn't the final plans and hasn't gone through any approval process so it is open to interpretation. Chairman Simmons noted as the property does about with the ice cream stand property, it could be feasible for a landing site be installed there.

**6) New Business**

• **Discussion – Budget Spreadsheet**

Jim Sullivan shared with the committee a preliminary budget created during the acquisition process. Mr. Sullivan said the budget has been formatted to town budget form; details will be determined when there is a project manager in place. Revenue is the Brownsfield Grant that has been awarded. Year to date cost is the purchase of the property itself. Chairman Simmons asked about \$85,000.00 being set aside for remediation costs. Mr. Sullivan answered the monies had been set aside for that purpose.

A motion was made by Tom Switz and seconded by Mike Crowley to approve the budget spreadsheet. All were in favor and the motion carried.

• **Discussion – CIRMA Risk Management Status**

Jim Sullivan informed the committee that once the property was purchased, it went under the umbrella of CIRMA and is 100% covered. Mr. Sullivan discussed the two parties using the property, the Friends of Stonington Crew and Latitude 41 and the need to establish lease agreements with them and review their certificates of insurance to coordinate all insurances. Chairman Simmons spoke of the MOU with the Friends of Stonington Crew that the Board of Selectman have approved to develop a long term relationship, he asked if there was a lease from the previous owner. Mike O'Neill said there is a lease from the previous owner. Chairman Simmons said the lease

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should be updated so they will be covered. Jim Sullivan questioned Mike O'Neill on who owns the boats. Mr. O'Neill answered the boats are owned by the town and are insured by the town; when equipment is bought, it is signed over to the town. Mike O'Neill will provide a current list of all the equipment.

- Discussion – RFQ Status

Jason Vincent shared with the committee the RFQ was issued on March 24, 2017 with a submission deadline of April 27, 2017. The next step is to establish a committee to conduct interviews. Interview guidelines are being created based on DECD guidelines and must be approved by the state. Mr. Vincent shared we are also communicating with Don Friday, Project Manager, of DECD. The closing documents associated with the agreement have been forwarded to DECD where it will be processed. Mr. Vincent explained the two parts of RFQ, the first part being to characterize the full extent of the environmental issues on the property so we can develop a remedial action plan and the second part is to develop a master plan for site development. Another part is to have good communication with the community so they can offer ideas for the property as well. The bulk of the RFQ is standard language that is required but what we were trying to do was to describe what the objectives were overall. Once we find a firm, we will bring it back to the committee for discussion. We outlined a timeframe that is rigorous as explained on page 9 of the RFQ, there is a negotiation of contract from May 10 – June 7. That is a short window to negotiate. Mr. Vincent said they have a target date of May 8 for the interviews. The interview process will not be completed by the next meeting so the consideration would be to cancel the regular meeting and reschedule it as a joint special meeting later in the month. Breck Perkins asked if there is a tracking mechanism of who's downloading the RFQ. Mr. Vincent answered, because we posted it in a couple of venues, we aren't requiring people to sign up, we haven't been tracking. Mr. Perkins asked is there a mandatory site inspection. Mr. Vincent answered no.

- Discussion – Formation of RFQ Interview Team

Chairman Simmons explained, as a guideline, the interview team should not be more than six members. Mr. Simmons said it is important to have people with experience in these matters, possibly committee members, members of the public and town hall employees. The mechanism would be ran out of the town hall. Chairman Simmons asked for volunteers. Chairman Simmons and members Alan Strunk, Breck Perkins and Mike O'Neill volunteered. Mike Crowley suggested town hall staff with knowledge also be asked for assistance. Mr. Vincent stated he has asked town hall staff to be available. Chairman Simmons also acknowledged Barbara McKrell and Jason Vincent would be involved in one way or another.

The following motion was made by Tom Switz and seconded by Mike Crowley to start the committee with four members adding two staff members as necessary. Chairman Simmons stated the interview committee would be Rob Simmons, Alan Strunk, Breck Perkins and Mike O'Neill. All was in agreement and the motion carried.

Chairman Simmons shared his notes on suggested working groups with the committee.

- Discussion – Police Protection of the Mystic River Boathouse Park

Captain Olson told the committee the property is on the list of frequent checks. He asked the committee if there was going to be a big activity to let the police department know. Captain Olson suggested the committee establish rules for the property. Chairman Simmons asked if there was curfew. Captain Olson said there isn't a curfew but there is a noise ordinance. One concern with properties like this is that when people find out the building might be torn down, they will start taking artifacts from the property. Chairman Simmons asked if a security camera should be installed. Captain Olson said that would be good if the project could afford it. Breck Perkins mentioned the park behind the YMCA is a town park and I imagine there are rules for when you can go there or not, so maybe these rules can be adapted. The rules of various parks in town were discussed. Captain Olson suggested to post when the park closes. Mike Crowley stated that before making rules, the types of activities that will be happening there first should be determined.

- Discussion Update of crew team current uses of the property by the crew team

Mike O'Neill said the shed is used for racing boats and boats that need repair. The rest of the boats are stored in Old Mystic in the winter. Mr. O'Neill shared the challenges they have faced over the years regarding security of their equipment. Mr. O'Neill also mentioned using the property during the regatta.

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Barbara McKrell shared pictures of what public works has done to secure the building. The windows and door have been replaced. There is a motion sensor light to deter people. The building has been upgraded with new electrical and fixtures. The only thing left to do is to work on vegetation so no soil goes into the river. Chairman Simmons asked about the costs of these upgrades. Ms. McKrell answered it cost approximately \$1,600.00 for materials and \$3,500 for a contractor, the money came out of the operational budget. Rob Simmons said that at some time, they would reallocate that money from the boathouse budget.

- Discussion – Status of the property currently shared with Latitude 41

Steve White told the committee that Latitude 41 is owned by Mystic Seaport, we have had operated this building since 1984, and the foodservice is outsourced. In 1983, John Rossie who owned the property next door, gave Mystic Seaport easement over a 36 foot slot of land from the road to the river. Mr. White and Mike O'Neill have had conversations regarding the easement and park parking lot being incorporated into each other. Mr. White said we have had our attorneys look at it and the easement does convey with the property to the new owner. Mr. White said this is a relationship we hope to continue to take advantage of and eventually capitalize on to make something that works well as a park and ultimately a boathouse and service to the restaurant. Mr. O'Neill spoke about there is an opportunity to improve the situation but we need to get the architect involved in the design to improve the situation to make it work better. There is also a state right of way water pipe that runs under the ground across Route 27. Chairman Simmons and Mr. White discussed who would be responsible for liability of the easement. Chairman Simmons said he will notify the town attorney of what has been discovered regarding this easement so far and have the town attorney contact the Mystic Seaport attorney to figure this out.

7) **Old Business**

- Discussion – BF ASM Grant Award

Jason Vincent told the committee the grant has been sent to Hartford and are awaiting the award of monies. Chairman Simmons asked Mr. Vincent is there an opportunity for us to apply for an additional grant for the remediation. Mr. Vincent answered absolutely, the current is an assessment grant that will help us develop a remediation plan and a master plan for the site which will be aligned with the remedial action plan and both of those plans will help us source other funds. Breck Perkins said, when we were first starting out, we solicited Senator Maynard and he had mentioned, through his aides, there were two or three major federal grants available so I think a visit to Congressman Courtney's office or another federal official in state government might would be helpful for some money we might tap. Mr. Perkins will share an email he has regarding this and will forward it to Chairman Simmons.

8) **Comments from the Public**

none

9) **Comments from the Committee**

Steve Planchon shared an email from the Friends of Mark Pescatello wanting to donate a water fountain/water bottle filling station. This will be included in the next meeting's correspondence.

10) **Comments from the Selectmen**

None

11) **Adjourn**

Mr. Crowley motioned to adjourn and as was no further business to come before this committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08pm

Respectfully submitted

*Sandra Tissièrè*

Sandra Tissièrè  
Recording Secretary