

**Town of Stonington  
Board of Selectmen and  
Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee  
Joint Special Meeting Minutes  
Stonington Human Services, Stonington, CT  
May 8, 2017**

The Stonington Board of Selectmen and the Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee held a joint special meeting on this date, May 8, 2017, at Stonington Human Services at 7:00 p.m.

Present were Rob Simmons, Chairman, First Selectman; Mike O'Neill, Vice Chairman; Mike Crowley, Steve Planchon, Bryan Bentz, Nick Kepple, Scott Bates, Alan Strunk, Kathryn Burchenal, Jim Kelley, Sandy Tissiere, Recording Secretary as well as Jason Vincent, Stonington Director of Planning

Members absent: Kate Rotella, Selectwoman; Mike Spellman, Selectman; Steve White, Frank Todisco, Tom Switz, and Breck Perkins

**1) Call to order**

Chairman Simmons called the meeting to order at 7:07p.m.

**2) Pledge of Allegiance**

**3) Comments from the Public**

None

**4) Approval of Minutes**

The following motion was made by Mike Crowley and seconded by Scott Bates to approve the minutes of April 3, 2017 as presented.

All were in favor and the motion carried.

**5) Correspondence**

Chairman Simmons presented the following:

- **Email – Proposed donation to MRBP by Friends of Mark Pescatello**

At the April 3, 2017 meeting, Steve Planchon shared an email with the committee from the Friends of Mark Pescatello offering to donate a water fountain/ filling station to the park. Chairman Simmons said the information will be kept on file for the future. Mr. Simmons asked Steve Planchon to respond, thanking them for their offer. Mike Crowley asked what type of water fountain/filling station were they thinking about as it would need to be something that couldn't be destroyed very easily. The committee spoke of other town projects that have fixtures that are vandal proof and what might be appropriate for the park.

**6) Old Business**

- **Discussion – RFQ Status**

Chairman Simmons shared with the committee a huge amount of progress has been accomplished this month. Mr. Simmons turned the meeting over to Jason Vincent. Mr. Vincent said the RFQ had been issued in March and nine proposals were received. The interview committee interviewed five firms and culled the list down to two firms as finalists. Mr. Vincent said the firms that applied had impressive qualifications and two were from the Boston and New York markets.

Mr. Vincent told the committee the two finalists came in under budget but the interview committee would like to see if the budgets could be revisited. The committee asked when you say under budget, is there a reasonable contingency in both bids? Mr. Vincent answered both firms put in for the add alt so they could be taken into consideration to continue working with the committee to do some of the project manager part and, if that part is pulled out, the amount of the budget could be reduced. Mr. Vincent also said bid item 4 could be paid with town funds as that was what we were intending to do. Mr. Vincent stated the project is in good shape to move forward with strong public participation in the design process.

**7) New Business**

**Discussion – RFQ Interview Results**

Chairman Simmons spoke of the type of firms that were interested and how the interview committee determined which firms would be interviewed. Mr. Simmons spoke of the projects that some of the bidders had done. Mr. Simmons stated it was a challenging decision to choose the finalists. The two finalists were the best in presentation of what they offered. Chairman Simmons opened the floor for questions from the committee. Mike Crowley asked

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if both firms were equal. Chairman Simmons answered they are different. What they have in common is they both love the site and are creative in their approach. Mike O'Neill shared these are both competent firms who are very knowledgeable about this type of project. Mr. O'Neill said both firms could do the project but we have to decide on the best fit for what we are trying to accomplish.

Scott Bates commended the interview committee and their amazing progress. Mr. Bates said if it is tie, there are two things to consider for determination of who to choose. One would be the amount of work each company has backed up and the second would be the location of the company. Mr. Bates asked if the interview committee was seeking to ask the committee to choose a firm tonight. Chairman Simmons answered the interview committee is asking permission to go the next step which is a final set of interrogatories to the two chosen firms.

Alan Strunk shared information about one of the firms and their experience with the committee. Mr. Strunk told the committee these two firms were niche firms having specialized in parks and smaller programs.

The committee discussed the pros and cons of the bidders. The committee spoke to the aspects of the project. Rob Simmons spoke of how when the firms were interviewed, it was emphasized this project is two parts, a park committee and a boathouse committee. Mr. Simmons said it was explained to the firms the park committee are the hiring committee for the park project and have the responsibility to not spend town funds for the boathouse but work in collaboration and communication with the boathouse committee and the public.

Mike O'Neill said it was refreshing to say that on the environmental side the firms did not seem overly concerned with the abatement of any materials on the property.

Mike Crowley asked if the recommended finalists know what we want and the town wants and if they don't see any big hardships. Chairman Simmons answered both firms showed enthusiasm and the willingness to interact with the community and the town. Both firms said they will hold sessions with the community and utilize Facebook and other social media. The committee discussed the type of appearance they want for the park. It is important to have a park that reflects our community.

Scott Bates spoke of projects already done in town saying he thought the park should fit with these other projects.

Kate Burchenal asked how the firm will interact with the Boathouse Committee, how will everything work together? Mike O'Neill said the Boathouse Committee was basically going through the same process for the boathouse. Mr. O'Neill said the committee is close to choosing the firm who will manage and design the development of the boathouse. Mr. O'Neill explained the Boathouse Committee will go through the same RFP process the Park Committee did to choose a firm. This firm will work in close collaboration with the Park Committee's firm to ensure the park serves the dual purpose of being a public park and providing the crew team a boathouse.

The committee discussed the property's shared border with Latitudes Restaurant which serves as a delivery area for the restaurant. It is being suggested the boathouse be located adjacent to this area so the service area could serve both entities. In addition, with the boathouse located higher up on the property and the park below it, the boat house would be visually attractive when driving up Greemanville Avenue.

Nick Kepple said he is comfortable deferring to the Interview Committee on the task of considering the project, which needs multiple talents, when narrowing it down to two who have a multiplicity of abilities. Mr. Kepple noted it will be an interesting and challenging process to choose the firm whose abilities best matches the needs of the project. Mr. Kepple stated he trusts the interview committee will make the right recommendation for the project.

Alan Strunk made the point, we were discussing parks and boathouses today but what but what we were looking for first was parks. The committee discussed the various capabilities of the finalists and how these capabilities would benefit the project.

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The following motion was made by Nick Kepple and seconded by Steve Planchon for the Interview Committee proceed with negotiations with the two finalists as determined by the Committee on May 8, 2017; and report back a recommendation to the Committee.

Bryan Bentz ask Chairman Simmons what the Interview Committee expected to learn they did not already know. Chairman Simmons and Jason Vincent answered it would provide the opportunity for both firms to provide detailed answers for more specific questions.

All were in favor and the motion carried.

Chairman Simmons complimented Jason Vincent on the work he did on the RFQ; and noted the firms who submitted had impressive qualifications.

• Discussion – Friends of Stonington Crew Gala

The Friends of Stonington held a fund raising gala. Chairman Simmons attended the Friends of Stonington Crew Gala as the guest speaker. Mr. Simmons shared the schematic drawing of the proposed boathouse.

Mike O'Neill explained the architectural aspects of the design development drawings of the boathouse. Mr. O'Neill shared the details of the challenges of the site.

Bryan Bentz recommended a rooftop deck be taken into consideration to watch the races. Mike O'Neill said one thing they will try to incorporate would be an ADA deck that wraps around to the back of the building to access the water view.

Mike Crowley raised the point there would need to be a lot of money raised by the Boathouse Committee and if funding falls behind, the park project should go forward. The committee concurred the park project would go forward with an area designated for the boathouse. Mike O'Neill shared the gala was successful and raised about \$16,000.

8) **Comments from the Public**

None


9) **Comments from the Committee**

None

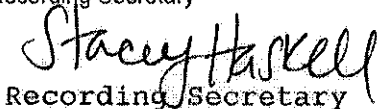
10) **Adjourn**

As there was no further business to come before this committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted



Sandra Tissiere  
Recording Secretary

  
Recording Secretary