

Town of Stonington
Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
Stonington Police Station, Pawcatuck, CT
December 3, 2018

The Stonington Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee held a regular meeting on this date, Monday, December 3, 2018, at the Stonington Police Department at 7:00 p.m.

Present were Rob Simmons, Chairman; Mike O'Neill, Vice Chairman; Tom Switz, Steve Planchon, Mike Crowley, Jim Kelley, Tim O'Brien, Scott Bates, Breck Perkins, Sandy Tisiere, Recording Secretary as well as Jason Vincent, Director of Planning and Zoning, Town of Stonington; Chad Frost, Principal, Kent + Frost, interested citizens, the press and Stonington High School students

Members absent: Nick Kepple, Alan Strunk and Kathryn Burchenal

1. Call to order

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

2. Pledge Allegiance

Scott Bates led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Comments from the Public

Paul Sartor, Mystic, said I know it is one of your agenda items, Forward Master Plan to Planning & Zoning, and after the last few committee meetings and the information session on Saturday, I, as a resident, support that you move it along.

4. Approval of minutes

The minutes from November 5, 2018 were presented for approval. Sandy Tisiere reported an email was received from Don Procko saying David Carreau was misidentified as Rod Cook (Item #6 Old Business, Discussion – Dedicated Dinghy Dock) so the minutes were changed to reflect this change. The minutes will need approval as amended.

A motion was made by Tom Switz and seconded by Scott Bates to approve the November 5, 2018 minutes as amended. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

5. Correspondence

There was not any correspondence presented.

6. Old Business

Discussion: Park Time Line and Anticipated Cost

Rob Simmons yielded the floor to Chad Frost. Chad Frost said the schedule has not been updated but he will get it done and emailed in the next couple of days. Mr. Frost reported, regarding anticipated costs, there are meetings coming up that will allow us to narrow in on those numbers and I will have them for the next meeting. Mr. Frost said there is a meeting on Wednesday, December 5, 2018, between himself, a State Historic Preservation Office representative, the DEP, the people from Brownfield, and the administrator for the grant from the DECD. The meeting will convene on the property to tour the site and discuss what is going on at the state level and clarify what requirements DECD are going to put on us as we go forward so we know what permits to get and what additional studies we may or may not have to do. There was a discussion about the change in the Connecticut government and how it would affect the project. Chad Frost says, at this point, the agencies he deals with are continuing their day-to-day job in regards to the project.

Discussion: Route 27 Parking

Chairman Simmons drafted a letter to Ray Trebisacci, Chairman of the Board of Police Commissioners, Town of Stonington, regarding the master plan refute and the issues of parallel parking. Chairman Simmons said Jason Vincent helped draft the letter and ask he speak to the letter. Jason Vincent spoke of the request for on street parking on Route 27 which is a state highway so the decision making is done by the State Department of Transportation. The state likes to see the support of the local traffic authority which is the Stonington Board of Police Commissioners. We are seeking support from the Board of Police Commissioners to be able to engage DOT in that conversation. The outcome of the letter could be a meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners and the DOT to discuss traffic concerns and considerations. Scott Bates suggested a

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traffic study be done. Tim O'Brien suggested, in the top paragraph of the letter, the points be reordered having "meets the community needs for public access" first, the building second and parking third.

Chairman Simmons suggested a motion for this item be tabled to be discussed later in the meeting. A motion was made by Scott Bates and seconded by Tom Switz to table this discussion until later in the meeting. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Discussion: Request for Renaming of the Park to Stonington Boathouse Park

Rob Simmons spoke of the renaming of the park to the Stonington Boathouse Park and asked for comments from a member of audience. Chuck Stevens, Mystic River Park Commission, said in their letter to the Mystic River Park Implementation Committee, it was not requested the park be renamed the Stonington Boathouse Park, it was asked the park be renamed to something that reflected the uniqueness of the park and as there is already a Mystic River Park to avoid confusion of the two parks. Mr. Sartor said, as a resident not a member of the Mystic River Park Commission, he had suggested the name of the Stonington Boathouse Park at the last committee meeting. Scott Bates suggested, when the time is appropriate, there be a naming contest which might engage more people in the project. Chairman Simmons spoke of the merging of the two middle schools where there was naming contest by the students so a consideration for renaming the park might be an online contest involving the community. Mike Crowley opined the park is still in Mystic, and it would be remiss not to include Mystic in its name, and it is a boathouse and it is a park. It has been discussed the park belongs to the Town of Stonington so that should be included as well, the Stonington Mystic River Boathouse Park.

7. New Business

Discussion: Structures on Property

Chairman Simmons asked Chad Frost what is the status of the structures on the property. Chad Frost said the application had been submitted to the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) giving as much information as possible on what is to be done with the buildings. The next step is for SHPO to visit the buildings and discuss the options with Mr. Frost who will present them to the committee. The committee discussed the questionable significant historic value of the structures in regards to the house being remodeled and the barn being added onto several times. Chad Frost explained that older buildings can lose historic significance due to the changes made to the structures over the years. Mr. White asked who lived in the building during the active years of the mill, what was its purpose. Mr. Vincent answered a family named Loveless owned it but they had no connection to the mill directly. Mr. White asked if the building were to stay and serve a purpose for the park, would it need more than 50% of the building modified, and if 50% of the building was modified, would FEMA regulations come into play. Mr. Vincent said that Stonington changed the rules on that saying if a building is in historic struggle and recognized by the state or federal government, it can be exempt from substantial improvement limitations. Mr. Perkins said if the building was to be used onsite, the amount of work that would need to be done code wise would make it beyond its substantial value and there would be nothing left of its historic value. Mr. Frost said the discussion with SHPO is in the beginning stages. Chairman Simmons asked Steve White, as the Mystic Seaport had wanted to acquire that property, if there had been any historical reviews done on the house. Mr. White said he would look into it and share any information he found with Mr. Frost.

Discussion: Environmental Site Assessment and Remediation

Chairman Simmons said the Fuss and O'Neill draft assessment is the first part of the two-part project, the second part being the remediation plan. Chairman Simmons asked Mr. Frost to discuss the status of the remediation planning and will the meeting on Wednesday be part of getting this started. Mr. Frost said the meeting on Wednesday will be the start of getting the remediation plan started. The next piece is the Remediation Action Plan and to finalize that, we need to enter the property into a voluntary remediation program for cleanup which the property isn't in yet. This is how we started the discussion with DEP and DECD by asking them for assistance in getting into the appropriate program. At the meeting on Wednesday, Fuss and O'Neill will be there as well to discuss which voluntary program to enroll in that best meets the needs of the property. Mr. Frost discussed the process of remediation of the property and how it is worked into the master plan so instead of a two-step approval process it will be one step. Mr. Vincent said this is not a typical process for DEP and DECD having the master plan be part of the remediation process as the future use of the property was the driving force for the remediation strategy.

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Discussion: Forward Master Plan to Planning & Zoning

Chairman Simmons asked Jason Vincent to comment on possible action of the master plan. Jason Vincent said the Planning and Zoning application deadline is December 14, and if the committee is interested in forwarding the master plan, we will prepare the application documents for Chairman Simmons' signature. This will put it up for a public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission sometime in February 2019 based on the current applications that have been submitted and hearings that have been scheduled for the upcoming calendar year. Chairman Simmons said it was his understanding that when you send a master plan forward, it is a master plan and not a final detailed design but a next phase. Mr. Vincent said they will change the terminology but use the same words. A master plan to the Planning and Zoning Commission is a visionary document of what we plan the park to be and part of the comprehensive planning toolbox. What the commission is going to do, if they adopt the master plan that is submitted, will rezone the property to the parameters that are on the drawing and that becomes the zoning regulations. Mr. Vincent said tonight is solely getting the master plan submitted as depicted with a future needs site plan for the boathouse and a potential interim use strategy.

A motion was made by Mike Crowley and seconded by Mr. White to move the master plan to Planning and Zoning.

Discussion: Mr. Perkins asked by submitting the master plan, does this solidify the location of the building in the master plan. Mr. Vincent answered yes it does.

Mr. O'Neill asked if they came up with a new design for the boathouse between now and the February deadline, would they be able to review that as well. Is there a deadline that we have to get that information into the town to make that meeting? Mr. Vincent said there are a series of rules that figure out the process for seeing those designs before putting them before Planning and Zoning.

The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

The draft letter to the Chairman of the Board of Police Commissioners was revisited. As the letter had been discussed with changes noted, it was now moved to a vote.

A motion was made by Mike O'Neill and seconded by Steve Planchon to approve the letter to be sent to the Chairman of the Stonington Board of Police Commissioners.

The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

8. Comments from the Public

Herb Holmstedt, Mystic, commented if the boathouse wasn't going to be there, all we would need is three parking spaces, and now that we are having a boathouse there we need 28 spaces. We are going to go ahead as if we are going to have a boathouse there even if we don't know when that is going to be and if the boathouse isn't going to be there, maybe we could put the parking spaces somewhere else. It would be great to have the boathouse planned now but we know it depends on raising funds so it is a big question mark. Chairman Simmons thanked Mr. Holmstedt for his comment saying there are knowns and unknowns, it is complicated but we have a vision and we are trying to move the vision forward. Mr. Frost and Mr. O'Neill said there will be phasing approaches taken to both the park and boathouse.

Mr. Sartor said costs were mentioned but he is looking at price. It can be interpreted as what it is going to cost the town after what we could possibly get for some type of reimbursement from the state but I'm not interested in that right now. You have an area of land you anticipate putting a parking lot on; you anticipate installing docks and walkways and we know what it costs to dig up dirt and put dirt in, there are unit costs and cubic yard costs and foot costs for putting in docks depending what the materials are. I just don't see any reasonable reason why you don't have those costs yet. I understand the reasoning and logic, but there should be different estimates of costs available regardless of what the reimbursable amount is going to be, as Mr. Tom Stanford said at the last meeting "Is it a \$500,000 plan or a \$100,000,000 plan". Maybe it is a million-dollar plan or a two-million-dollar plan, I don't know but I believe the public will be able to handle what the truth that this is what it costs minus remediation and the cost of the building so we know what we are looking at. I think this something we should know by now.

9. Comments from the Committee

Scott Bates said it was heartening to see the amount of public attendance at the community meeting and to see them so engaged.

Rob Simmons commented saying one of the portions of the contract we have with Kent + Frost is community engagement specifically with the park and Saturday was our fourth community forum and the second one that included the boathouse

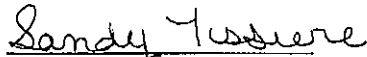
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on the same agenda. The impression I got was pretty close universal satisfaction with the park plan although I will agree there are some unknowns that need to be clarified. Perhaps one reason why they are not absolutely clear at this time is because some of those cost rely on variables involving the State of Connecticut that are unknowns that are in development. This informational meeting included the boathouse and it was made clear by the community they do like the façade of the boathouse and Mr. O'Neill spoke to the fact the boathouse was being built by donations and this is a driving factor in the design of the boathouse. Mr. Simmons continued by saying this committee is made up of volunteers who are busy people but not too busy to bring their talent and ability to bear on a very difficult task, I think we have made great progress and I was very gratified at the public meeting the community is satisfied with the direction we are going.

10. Adjourn

As there was no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted



Sandy Tissièrè
Recording Secretary