

September 27, 2017

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 and Selectwoman Kate Rotella. Selectman Mike Spellman arrived at 7:13 p.m. Also present were members of the public and press.

(1) Call to Order

Mr. Simmons called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

(2) Pledge of Allegiance

(3) Comments from the Public

None

(4) Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Mrs. Rotella, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to approve the September 13, 2017 Board of Selectmen regular meeting minutes.

(5) Correspondence

Mr. Simmons took in correspondence from Mr. Daniel McFadden in the form of an application for membership on the Economic Development Commission.

(6) Reappointment/Acknowledgement

Economic Development Commission

A motion was made by Mrs. Rotella, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Bill Hobbs to the Economic Development Commission as an alternate member.

A motion was made by Mrs. Rotella, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to accept the resignation of Mr. Blunt White from the Economic Development Commission with regret. The Board thanked him for his service of over a decade to the Commission.

(7) Old Business

Discussion – Citation Hearing Officer

A motion was made by Mrs. Rotella, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Shaun Mastroianni as the Citation Hearing Officer.

In discussion, Mr. Mastroianni thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve and stated he is looking forward to giving residents the opportunity to be heard while going through the blight process.

Mr. Simmons stated that Mr. Mastroianni will serve as a single hearing officer, who will set the hearings and meetings on his own but will be supported by the Planning and Zoning Department and will receive assistance from the Town Attorney as needed. Mrs. Rotella thanked Mr. Mastroianni for stepping up and stated his role will be an important part of the process.

With no further discussion, the motion carried.

The Board recessed at 7:12 p.m.

The Board reconvened at 7:13 p.m.

Discussion – Painting of Westerly/Pawcatuck Border Line Gateway Project

Ms. Lisa Konicki, Executive Director of the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce, gave a brief presentation on the proposed gateway project which will bring together Westerly and Pawcatuck where the two towns meet on the bridge. Ms. Konicki stated that a simple idea would be to paint a line that shows the state border but that on a greater scale an archway could be constructed over the bridge. Ms. Konicki stated

that the project could take as long as seven years to complete and that the cost would be in the range of \$500,000 which she hoped could be divided into thirds between the Town of Stonington, Town of Westerly and Chamber of Commerce. She added that she has had two architects create drawings which are not ready to be released at this time.

Mr. Spellman stated that the Pawcatuck River can no longer be looked at as a physical barrier between two states but as an economic opportunity. Mr. Spellman added that although Pawcatuck is an underperforming area, it is attracting millennials to the area. He continued, that making Pawcatuck high performing is what is needed to move the Town forward.

Mr. Simmons stated that the river is an asset and branding is important. Mr. Simmons stated that \$500,000 is very expensive especially with the State of CT not having a budget. Mr. Simmons added that it starts with a vision and thought painting the lines first would be an inexpensive way to get the project moving forward.

Mrs. Rotella stated that she thinks it is a great idea, but is not ready to take action without further information. Mrs. Rotella agreed that painting the line is a good idea.

Mr. Simmons state that the Board is excited by the prospect and would like to continue to collaborate with the Chamber as the project progresses.

(8) New Business

Emergency Management Performance Grant Resolution

A motion was made by Mrs. Rotella, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to adopt the resolution.

Discussion – K-12 Finance Subcommittee Members

Mr. Simmons stated that Mr. Blunt White applied to become a member of the K-12 Finance Committee but would need to be first appointed to the K-12 Building Committee. Mr. Simmons added that Mr. White had completed an application and would be appointed at the next meeting.

A motion was made by Mrs. Rotella, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to table to appointment until the next meeting.

(9) Comments from the Public

None

(10) Comments from the Selectmen

Mrs. Rotella stated that the Bricks & Murals event was very nice. She added that it is great to see all of the high school students in attendance at this evenings meeting and asked that they keep coming back.

Mr. Spellman stated that Downtown Pawcatuck has a kayak launch in Donahue Park area which a lot of communities do not have and added that it was very inexpensive to construct. Mr. Spellman continued that the launch and gateway projects are the type of visions needed to get Pawcatuck to become high performing on the grand list.

Mr. Simmons thanked Mr. Spellman for all of his hard work as a member of the Board of Selectmen especially in the area of helping to build up Pawcatuck Village.

Mr. Simmons stated that Amtrak recently called attention to grade crossing safety at the Palmer Street Crossing and although this is a terrific idea he noted that they utilized one of the safest crossing in town to

discuss with resident's safety issues. Mr. Simmons added that Elihu Island and Walkers Dock crossings are at grade but have no quad gates or vehicle detectors which means they have no safety systems imbedded. He continued that Amtrak was quoted stating "the enforcement work and education will further Amtrak's mission to eliminate preventable tragedies." Mr. Simmons stated Elihu Island and Walkers Dock should be considered by Amtrak as a preventable tragedy. He continued to note that the Town over the last two years has gone to the FRA in Boston, written letters to the delegation in Washington, written to the Commission of Transportation in Hartford, had a press conference on crossing safety with Senator Blumenthal and written to both Amtrak CEO's to get assistance in fixing the unsafe crossings to no avail. Mr. Simmons stated that Amtrak was willing to spend 18 billion dollars on a bypass but will not spend \$900,000 to secure the two unsafe crossings in Stonington which is shameful. Currently, the Town is working with SCCOG to see if they can provide a grant to cover the costs of which will be around \$900,000 to upgrade Elihu Island and Walkers Dock.

(11) Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Stacey Haskell

Stacey Haskell
Recording Secretary