

Town of Stonington  
Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Stonington Police Department, Pawcatuck, CT  
June 4, 2018

The Mystic River Boathouse Implementation Committee held a regular meeting on this date, June 4, 2018 at the Stonington Police Department at 7:00 p.m.

Present were Rob Simmons, Chairman; Mike O'Neill, Vice Charman; Steve Planchon, Mike Crowley, Tom Switz, Steve White, Breck Perkins, Nick Kepple, Jim Kelley, Katherine Burchenal and Alan Strunk as well as Jason Vincent, Stonington Director of Planning; Chad Frost, Principal, Kent + Frost and members of the public

Members absent were Scott Bates, Tim O'Brien and Frank Todisco

**1. Call to order**

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

**2. Pledge Allegiance**

Kathryn Burchenal led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Comments from the Public**

There were no comments from the public.

**4. Approval of minutes.**

A motion was made by Tom Switz and seconded by Mike O'Neill to approve the minutes from May 7, 2018 as presented. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**5. Correspondence**

No correspondence was presented.

**6. Old Business**

No old business was presented.

**7. New Business**

Discussion: Concept Design

Chad Frost shared a presentation of the Conceptual Master Plan. Mr. Frost started his presentation by going through the process of development speaking of the community workshop in September to enable the community to share their thoughts on what was important to them. This workshop resulted in determining the community's top priorities: 1. Public water access, 2. Pedestrian connectivity, 3. Shoreline restoration, 4. Public boat Launch, 5. Bicycles facilities and 6. Sustainable design. Mr. Frost presented pictures narrating environmental testing process showing the property has various contaminants from previous use and will need encapsulation for remediation. Mr. Frost presented pictures of the shoreline explaining one side has a problem with glass washing up and the other has construction debris, to remediate these areas, the idea is to use natural materials to coincide with the environment and deter use by the public providing controlled access to the water. Mr. Frost continued saying parking on the property should be enough for recreational use and a solution for additional parking could be explored such as some sort of agreement for parking at the Mystic Little League Field.

Mr. Frost shared the site history starting with the mill across the street as it was directly connected to of park site. The mill was built in the late 1800's; it was when the US Government put a tariff on silk so the Germans came to America and built the mill bringing with them their own experts in the manufacturing of silk. Mr. Frost explained how, as the mill continued to grow, the park site grew as well as it was used for many operations of the mill. Mr. Frost discussed the growth of the property discussing when the house and the garage were built. Mr. Frost explained how the concept of the plan developed taking into consideration the configuration of the site and wind and water current factors.

The Conceptual Plan was revealed. Mr. Frost said he feels the park should show a direct connection to the mill. The plan shows the boathouse close to the street facing and lining up with the mill to create a visual gateway as people travel down Route 27 toward Mystic. The boardwalk starts at street level and extends to the shoreline and runs around three sides. The boardwalk would have interpretive signage of the history of the site. Mr. Frost explained the configuration of both the crew and public boat launches. For the shoreline, there will be oyster castles and marsh creation on both sides to create a living shoreline and restrict public

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access for safety. The parking area loops around providing room for boat trailers to unload and abuts the right of way for Latitude 41 enabling easier access for delivery to the restaurant.

The following is questions and comments regarding the presentation:

Mike Crowley: How many parking spaces will there be? Mr. Frost: 21 spaces including parallel spaces at street side.

Mike Crowley: How wide is the apron for the parking area on the street? Mr. Frost: The apron is 11 feet wide but will be determined where the building is placed. Most on-street parking have an 8 foot apron but this this one provides room for door swing toward traffic and a safer place for bicycles to go by.

Tom Switz: Are the docks floating or fixed? Mr. Frost showed on the drawing which docks were floating or fixed.

Chairman Simmons commented on the parking lot with the right of the way for the Seaport and asked Steve White his opinion on it. Steve White answered that he agreed it was a benefit for shared access but the challenge could be when trucks and trailers needed to use it at the same time. However, we shouldn't be competing with each other for ingress or egress at peak times per either activity so it seems to be a very versatile solution. Chairman Simmons commented he thought the location of the parking area was brilliant as it provided enough room for both the park and the seaport and is kind of hidden from view of traffic coming down Route 27. Mr. O'Neill commented most kids are dropped off or arrive on the bus so it is nice to have room to come in and out. Steve White commented the dock design is much improved. The question was asked if the floating docks were removed in the winter time. Mr. Frost answered the docks are built in sections and could be floated to one area and removed with a machine or truck. Mr. Crowley asked if this design was hurricane proof. Mr. Frost answered floating docks would not come out in hurricanes but in the winter they would definitely come out. Continuing on the subject of hurricanes and storms, Mr. Frost spoke of the elevation of the docks being at 6 feet and the building at 9 feet to protect from flooding if there are surges. The question was asked about maintenance for the sight. Mr. Frost answered the two areas that will need to be maintained are the lawn area and the pollinator garden (which will be an annual thing). The goal of the shoreline is for it to be self-sufficient. Kathryn Burchenal commented she liked the solution of having people really feel like they on the water with the boardwalk yet providing them safety from the edge of the water with the natural shoreline. Steve White asked about people on yachts bringing in dinghies to dock so they access the area. Mr. Frost suggested there may be cleats on the end of the pier or on the public dock for this purpose. Jim Kelley asked what where the plans for the abutment on the North End of the property. Mr. Frost answered they will not be taking it down, it will be cleaned up. Mr. Kepple expressed he thought the committee would be more involved in the evolution of the plan. He continued he felt he had a different idea of how the rowing function would be served at the site and similarly the parking is significantly different. From a process standpoint, the public has been included in the plan but not the committee. Mr. Frost explained how the process for the conceptual design evolved being based on considerations of the site layout, its history and suggestions from committee meetings. The committee discussed these are concept drawings that still need discussion and detail to bring them to a finished plan; this plan is a starting point. Mr. Kepple suggested the park could be used as educational dimension as well. Mr. Kepple said that the history of the park and the living shorelines could be learning experiences for school children and others. Chairman Simmons apologized to Mr. Kepple if he felt the committee had been excluded in the process of the conceptual design. Chairman Simmons asked Mr. Frost to provide a copy of the plan to the committee members so they have the opportunity to review them and make suggestions for changes.

Discussion: Mystic Little League

Mr. Frost has not had to opportunity to interact with the Mystic Little League at this time.

Discussion: Use of Boathouse Park for Parking

The Friends of Stonington Crew requested having a fundraiser by using the park site for additional parking for the Mystic Seaport Wooden Boat show. Chairman Simmons shared the request with the police department and Board of Police Commissioners and they felt the various safety risks were too many to approve this request.

A motion was made by Nick Kepple and seconded by Mike Crowley to respectfully reject the request of the Friends of Stonington Crew to use the Mystic River Boathouse Park property for parking for the Mystic Seaport Wooden Boat Show as a fundraiser. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Discussion: UCONN CIRCA

Kimberly Bradley, Project Specialist, UCONN CIRCA explained how she was engaged to support the Mystic River Boathouse Park project through a grant to develop living shoreline recommendations for the Mystic River Boathouse Park project. Ms. Bradley worked with Mr. Frost to develop this recommendation report and it has been shared with the committee. Ms. Bradley said she interacts with DEEP and they are interested to see what develops from these recommendations. Ms. Bradley continued that

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looking at the conceptual plan, Mr. Frost and his team selected the most appropriate plants for the site that will support and enhance what is already happening there. Chairman Simmons asked about Page 2 and the top of page 3 of the report, where it says "natural and artificial materials inter planted with native plants and shrubs was something that was discussed" and that certainly came out in the presentation tonight, then it says "this design can be used in conjunction with a conceptual wooden or artificial piers to allow view access to rowing events" so there isn't anything in your proposal that would be opposed to artificial or wooden pier as such as we have in the outline. Ms. Bradley answered no, the purpose of the park was its use by the crew and public to access the water has always been understood and the recommendations were made based on this information.

Chairman Simmons said the design of the shoreline is very intriguing and expensive, that maybe there would grants from the DEEP that Mr. Vincent could pursue, perhaps using the educational value of the site. Ms. Bradley said she would be willing to provide support in the search for grants to fund the educational use aspects of the site. Mr. Kepple said speaking of grants it should be noted the Community Foundation received a grant to fund communities specifically directed toward environmental activities and might be another option to look at. Chad Frost thanked Kim Bradley for all her help on providing the information and tools needed to create the living shoreline for the site. It is noted there is a recommendation a letter be written to UCONN expressing the committee's appreciation of the assistance provided by Kim Bradley and CIRCA in their assistance of making a significant difference in the project.

Discussion: Rossi Pentway

Mr. Vincent said one of the challenges of the Rossi Pentway is it belongs to two property owners. The pentway is owned by two owners south of the pentway who do not use it for access but needed it for frontage to meet zoning requirements. There will need to be research regarding this situation to find a resolution.

Discussion: DEEP Applications

Chairman Simmons recommended committee members search for any available state grant money to assist in the project such as something involving education as mentioned earlier in the meeting. Kathryn Burchenal mentioned the Long Island Futures fund as a consideration.

**8. Comments from the Public**

Mr. Herb Holmstedt asked if the park will be open year round. Mr. Frost answered yes it would be. Mr. Holmstedt continued by asking where the snow would be plowed. Mr. Frost said as there was not a division in the middle in the parking area, the snow could be plowed into that space.


**9. Comments from the Committee**

Mike O'Neill commended Chad Frost and his team on the presentation on the conceptual plan.

**10. Adjourn**

Mike Crowley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. As there was no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Sandra Tissiere