

Town of Stonington  
Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Stonington Police Department, Pawcatuck, CT  
July 2, 2018

The Mystic River Boathouse Implementation Committee held a regular meeting on this date, July 2, 2018 at the Stonington Police Department at 7:00 p.m.

Present were Rob Simmons, Chairman, Mike O'Neill, Vice Chairman; Mike Crowley, Steve Planchon, Jim Kelley, Alan Strunk, Steve White, Scott Bates, Kathryn Burchenal, Sandy Tissiere, Recording Secretary as well as Jason Vincent, Director of Planning, Town of Stonington, Chad Frost, Principal, Kent + Frost, Richard Larkin, Fundraising Campaign Manager, Stonington Community Rowing Center and Hart Perry Boathouse and interested citizens  
Late Arrival: Nick Kepple 7:04 pm

Members absent: Frank Todisco, Breck Perkins, Tom Switz and Tim O'Brien

1. **Call to order**  
Chairman Simmons called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Pledge Allegiance**  
Chairman Rob Simmons introduced Zach Spiers who is shadowing him. Zach Spiers led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **Comments from the Public**  
No comments from the public.
4. **Approval of minutes.**  
A motion was made by Mike O'Neill and seconded by Mike Crowley to approve the minutes from the Regular meeting on June 4, 2018 as presented.  
The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.
5. **Correspondence**  
The correspondence presented was an email from Don Procko, Harbor Master for the Mystic River, requesting the Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee consider the need for a dedicated dinghy dock at the park. Chairman Simmons has contacted Mr. Procko acknowledging his concern and explained a dinghy dock has been a part of the ongoing discussion. Mr. Crowley said there will be more public requests or suggestions for use of the park and suggested these items be filed together. The second piece of the correspondence was a letter from Betty Smith, President of the Mystic Rotary Club regarding a donation of \$10,000 to provide park benches for the park. Chairman Simmons replied thanking the Rotary for their generous donation saying the benches would be a terrific addition.
6. **Old Business**  
Discussion - Project Update  
Chairman Simmons started the discussion telling the committee there needs to be a decision made on the conceptual design because part of the challenge of creating the park and boathouse are the regulatory requirements of the State DOT, the State DEEP and the DECD if we wish to apply for grant money to assist with the project. Chairman Simmons turned the floor over to Chad Frost.

Mr. Frost told the committee the conceptual design has not changed since presented. Mr. Frost said he is looking for feedback from the committee on the topics of the design of the park, the location of the boathouse, the living shoreline, parking and the parallel spaces. Mr. Frost stressed this is a conceptual plan and now is the time for changes and revisions explaining the plan will go through many processes determined by many factors before a master plan is created.

The following is the discussion by the committee: Steve Planchon said he liked the design of the park but he thought coming down Route 27 from I-95, the view would be the boardwalk going into the site and would like to see it continued out the other side. Mr. Crowley asked how much fill would be needed because of flooding on the property. Mr. Frost said there will be two feet of fill needed for environmental capping but parts of the park will need up to three feet of fill. Mr. Crowley asked about how the park would handle a hurricane. Mr. Frost said the boardwalk would be designed to resist the uplift of wind. Mr. Bates reiterated this is the conceptual plan, the first step of the project, agreeing with Mr. Planchon the bones look good and this is a good start and suggested moving the plan forward. Chairman Simmons asked Steve White his opinion as the Mystic Seaport is the neighbor of the property. Mr. White spoke of his concern of the parallel parking and asked how it will be controlled or managed. Chad Frost explained once the master plan is developed, it will go through processes with planning and zoning and various other channels that will decide how the parallel parking spaces can be managed. The group discussed the parallel parking spaces and the pros and cons of it being on Route 27. Kathryn Burchenal opined how she loves the design and how it pays homage to the history of the site. Jim Kelley said he thinks this park will add incredible value to the site and asked if the crew dock could be increased in size and when the crew teams weren't using it, could it be used as a dinghy dock as well. Chad Frost answered the public boat dock could be used as a dinghy dock and

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his suggestion would be to speak to both harbor masters about their expectations for a dinghy dock. Mr. Frost suggested the crew boat dock and public boat dock be kept separate. The group discussed the need and use of both of the docks and the accommodations they could serve. Mr. Kepple voiced his opinion saying he thought the conceptual plan was ambitious, saying it was a great idea for the park to house the boathouse and offer kayaking, educational programs and a dinghy dock, but where is everyone going to park. Mr. Kepple said he had not anticipated the substance that was going to be added, his thought was of a park that was much simpler accommodating the boathouse and some public access. The group discussed the presented conceptual plan was just the start of what the park could be and changes would be made in consideration of various entities such as zoning and planning, government regulations, costs and various other mitigating factors before a master plan evolved. There was discussion about the initial concept of the park was not only for the boathouse but also a park for the community and should offer a variety of uses acknowledging parking could be an issue. Steve White, President of the Mystic Seaport Museum, said the Seaport would be a good neighbor but can't commit to anything in writing to provide parking. Mr. White spoke of Coogan Farm, also on Route 27, who shares the parking sometimes, and with the boathouse park, activities for everyone using the parking lots would not necessarily be at the same time so parking could be worked out. Mr. White said, for now, the Seaport will offer parking as much as feasible, but he could not speak for the future continuing he would pledge good conscience but can't pledge permanence. Chairman Simmons said that from the beginning this project was going to be complicated, if we are going to dream, dream big and see how it progresses.

A motion was made by Mike Crowley and seconded by Steve Planchon to move the conceptual plan forward.

**Discussion:** Mr. Holmstedt asked about trailers being allowed to park and if the public dock is going to be a mooring spot for dinghies, what about the motors they use. The group answered the dinghies would operate under the same conditions as the crew boats and there isn't room or ramps for trailers to back to the water to unload boats. Mr. Holmstedt asked if the parking spaces would accommodate SUV's. Mr. Frost answered the parking spaces were normal sized spots and would accommodate them. Mr. Frost addressed his conception for the plan was based on information gathered from the public meeting and the committee meetings; the number of parking spaces was based on information given and based on the max use of the boathouse. The group discussed the daily use of the park and boathouse and how parking could be managed at the high usage times such as evenings, weekends and events. Mr. Kepple said he still thought the plan was more than what he expected, however, given the discussion about parking, he agrees the plan could be moved forward but it is necessary to do so with caution and to manage the expectations of the park's use. The park usage will need to be monitored by tracking how the activities meld together over time to determine if the park is meeting the needs of usage and be adjusted accordingly as necessary. An important message would be to set the expectations of use when the conceptual plan is released. Chairman Simmons brought the conversation back to the motion and the vote to be made. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Discussion - Rossi Pentway

Mr. Vincent updated the committee saying there have been conversations with both owners of the pentway. Mr. Vincent said they have developed a possible plan for a solution but need to continue some fact finding regarding any barriers.

Discussion Park Benches

The discussion was about the contribution of \$10,000 from the Mystic Rotary Club to place benches in the park. The contribution was sent to the boathouse committee who forwarded it to the park committee. Chairman Simmons suggested the acquisition and disposition of the benches be a mutually agreeable initiative.

A motion was made by Mike O'Neill and seconded by Scott Bates to use the proceeds from the Mystic Rotary Club to acquire two park benches to be communally worked on by the boathouse committee and the park committee.

**Discussion:** Nick Kepple asked if the boathouse committee had voted on this agreement.

Rick Larkin said it had been discussed that park benches could not be put on public land with permission from the town. Mike O'Neill said the boathouse committee will put it to a vote at their next meeting.

The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried. Chairman Simmons said the motion will be conveyed to the Boathouse Committee for vote at their next meeting.

**7. New Business**

Request - Dedicated Dinghy Dock

Chairman Simmons said there will be more discussion on this subject as the conceptual plan moves forward. Nick Kepple said this is an example of more expectations being asked of the property suggesting they be cautioned reasonable efforts will be made to explore/accommodate their request. The harbor masters will be contacted to discuss their expectations. The group discussed the answer to the need of a dedicated dinghy dock is under consideration as the park is still in the conceptual plan phase.

A motion was made by Steve White and seconded by Mike O'Neill to address the issue of a dedicated dinghy dock by conveying to the harbor masters the idea is on the agenda but will need further consideration.

The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

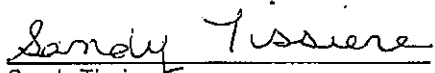
Town of Stonington  
Mystic River Boathouse Park Implementation Committee  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
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8. **Comments from the Public**  
No comments from the public.

9. **Comments from the Committee**  
Chairman Simmons said the town is fortunate to have the people who serve on this committee. This committee comes here to work through a complicated process which begins as a vision, then becomes a concept, then becomes a plan and finally a master plan. This work is a difficult process and complicated. Looming over us is the boathouse committee raising money which is never easy and the better we do our job the easier it is for them. As we move forward and communicate with the community what we are trying to accomplish and share with conceptual designs and then the greater details it will be easier for the boathouse committee.

10. **Adjourn**  
There was no further the business to discuss so the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

  
Sandy Tissiere  
Recording Secretary