

THESE MINTUES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 13, 2024
Chester Town Hall

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Lignar called the meeting to order at 7:28 p.m.

ATTENDEES

First Selectwoman Ligar, Selectwoman Bandzes, Selectman Radicchi, Margie Warner, Attorney Rimmer, Tammy Fletcher, Dick Leighton, Building Official/Fire Marshal, Virginia Carmany (ZOOM), approximately 8 audience members.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Margie Warner reported on the water quality issues in the vicinity of the Kenyon property. She submitted letters and documentation from the DEEP stating that the State was discontinuing the maintenance of the water filters. She stated there is a Potable Water Grant that the Town could apply for that would provide funds to maintain and replace these expensive water filters. Ms. Warner will forward information to Mr. Radicchi who will review the documents. The BOS will discuss this further at a future meeting.

A resident requested that the Board contact the State DOT and request that rumble strips be removed from locations in close proximity to homes.

Attorney Rimmer, representing residents of School House Lane, again spoke in opposition to the proposed Park & Rec Boardwalk project.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Pat Bandzes made a motion to approve the minutes of the 1/23/24 BOS meeting as presented. Paul Radicchi seconded the motion. The motion passed with Cindy Lignar abstaining from the vote.

Paul Radicchi made a motion to approve the minutes of the 1/25/24 BOS meeting as presented. Pat Bandzes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS/COMMISSIONS

Pat Bandzes made a motion to appoint Francine Cornaglia to the Retirement Board with a term to expire 12/16/26. Paul Radicchi seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Paul Radicchi made a motion to appoint Carlie Dailey to the River COG Regional Planning Committee for a 2-year term to expire 12/4/25. Pat Bandzes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PARK & REC BOARDWALK CONCEPT PROJECT

Cindy Lignar reported that the Park & Rec Boardwalk project has been in discussion for many years and there is both support and opposition to the project. Park & Rec is requesting the BOS's permission to request an estimate from Jacobson and to apply for a DEEP Trails Grant that would fund 80% of the cost of the project. Cindy recommended that the BOS consider approving the conceptual plan and sending the final decision to a Town Meeting for the residents to approve or disapprove.

Aaron Page, Park & Rec Director provided a brief overview of the project that includes a footpath/boardwalk to connect NQP to the Town Center. He also provided the history of the project and reported that this project was placed in both the 2008 POCD and 2019 POCD (Plan of Conservation and Development). In addition, funding is currently budgeted (in Capital) for engineering.

Pat Bandzes made a motion to authorize the Park & Rec board to obtain an estimate from the Town Engineer and to pursue a DEEP Recreational Trails Grant for the NQP Concept Project. The motion was not seconded.

Paul Radicchi reiterated that he will not support the project. His concerns included:

- Town funds would still be required to construct and maintain a boardwalk.
- There already exists a sidewalk and a trail along the creek for hiking, etc.
- Wetland concerns.
- Additional funds that will be necessary to address serious needs at R4 (mold, fields).

Tammy Fletcher, Laurel St., expressed concern about funding another study. She too was concerned about the funding that will be required to address mold, fields and other issues at R4.

Aaron Page outlined the parameters of the Trails Grant. If awarded, the State would fund 80% of the project and the Town would need to fund the remainder 20%.

Virginia Carmany reported on the process for funding; i.e. BOS approval, BOF approval and Town Meeting approval (or Referendum). She continued that the area is a wetland, and a tremendous amount of work will be necessary, including construction of bridges. She expressed the importance of prioritizing projects funded via tax dollars.

Pat Bandzes withdrew the motion.

The BOS may re-visit this discussion at a future meeting.

EDMUND MEEHAN – Project Manager N. Main St. Reconstruction Project

A copy of a contract in the amount of \$6,800 for the Project Manager for the N. Main Street Reconstruction Project was included in the BOS packet. Ed Meehan has offered to assist the First Selectwoman on this project that is funded via a State Grant. Mr. Meehan's credentials were included in the BOS packet.

Pat Bandzes made a motion to appoint Ed Meehan as the Project Manager for the N. Main Street

Reconstruction Project in the amount of \$6,800.00. Cindy Lignar seconded the motion. The motion passed with Paul Radicchi abstaining from the vote.

BRUCE SYPHER – Public Works Dept.

As previously discussed, Public Works is requesting funding for an additional 400 hours for Bruce Sypher to facilitate emergency projects (dams, snack shack repairs, road repair and drainage) throughout the town. A copy of a letter, developed by Cam Evangelisti, was included in the BOS packet.

The BOF has discussed this request and the consensus of the BOF was to add the 400 hours and fund the request via Contingency.

Paul Radicchi made a motion to approve the request of an additional 400 hours for Bruce Sypher's services as presented. Pat Bandzes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC WORKS APPLICATION – New Director of Public Works/Tree Warden – Review New Job Description Approve New Position Approve Applicant

A copy of a Director of Public Works/Tree Warden job description was included in the BOS packet.

Cindy Lignar reported that the Union has been apprised of this job description and the position has been posted. Cam Evangelisti has applied for the position and is well qualified; a list of Mr. Evangelisti's credentials was shared with the BOS. Cam is currently the Acting Foreman of Public Works.

Dick Leighton outlined the process that was used to bring Cam on when the prior foreman went out on medical leave. Dick was familiar with Cam's extensive background and was also available to address questions/comments posed by BOS members. Dick reported that the previous BOS had discussed this Director/Tree Warden position.

Paul Radicchi requested salary and other pay scale information prior to voting on this position/job description.

The job description may be edited, and the BOS will discuss further at a future BOS meeting.

SNACK SHACK LEASE

Cindy Lignar reported that several parties have expressed an interest in leasing the Snack Shack. The deadline for submissions is 2/16/24.

59 WINTHROP – Funds Recommendation for Allocation to Capital Fund

Cindy Lignar reported that the BOF has recommended that the proceeds from the sale of the Winthrop Road property be deposited in Capital. No BOS action is necessary at this time.

JOHN PETERS – Coffee Roasting 20 Water Street

Cindy Lignar reported that she was approached by John Peters who expressed interest in the 20

Water Street property. The Board briefly discussed the challenges at the location including water quality, flood zone, and septic.

Mr. Peters will provide a business plan (coffee roasting operation) for BOS consideration.

Pat Bandzes reported that the EDC has expressed an interest in this property for potential facilities (public bathrooms, water station, charging station) that would support the downtown. Dick Leighton reported on the elevation requirements at the property due to the flood zone. Dick is currently working with the E-Team to obtain a modification. Before leasing the property, Pat recommended that the BOS consider opportunities for townwide use of the property.

CELL TOWER UPDATE

Pat Bandzes reported that the prior BOS was pursuing a cell tower on town property that would expand cell service throughout the Town. Subsequently, it was learned that others are installing towers in Haddam Neck and Tylerville. Pat has reached out to another cell company and will provide them with a list of town owned property and also private property for their review.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Paul Radicchi reported that he attended a recent P&Z meeting where they discussed a potential new industry (stone cutting) at the Chester Industrial Park. P&Z took no action taken.

Pat Bandzes reported that Chesterfields is on the market as the prior opportunity did not come to fruition. The EDC continues to conduct business outreach to local businesses. Businesses report on the difficulty in finding and retaining employees, housing shortages and transportation issues.

Pat Bandzes reported that the EDC has a relationship with Masonicare and they have expressed an interest in senior programming in town.

Cindy Lignar reported that Ed Meehan has assisted in identifying grant opportunities. In addition, the budget process has started and joint BOS/BOF workshops will begin on Thursday, 2/15.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Virginia Carmany thanked the BOS for their work on behalf of the Town. She requested that the public be informed when the BOS is considering increasing town staff.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Assessor Attorney Change

Paul Radicchi made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:50 p.m. to discuss the Assessor Attorney change. Pat Bandzes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Regular Session resumed.

Paul Radicchi made a motion to approve the Town of Chester to enter into an agreement with attorneys Conway, Londregan, Sheehan & Monaco regarding the tax appeal case with Masonicare. Pat Bandzes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made and duly seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk