

CHESTER BOARD OF SELECTWOMEN  
REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2017  
CHESTER TOWN HALL  
203 MIDDLESEX AVENUE CHESTER, CT

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Gister called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. In attendance included Carolyn Linn, Charlene Janecek, and Lauren Gister, and approximately 10 citizens.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Charlene Janecek motioned to accept the May 10, 2017 minutes. Carolyn Linn seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Caryn Davis presented a letter regarding the library/North Quarter Park (NQP) development information session and the project in general, stating she did not believe the project was fiscally responsible. Helene Ferrari agreed, and suggested using another, pre-existing building in town. Gene Bartholomew commented that he did not see the library being utilized in the future.

Caryn Davis continued that the uncertainty with the plans may hinder the Committee's ability to collect pledges from local businesses to help raise money for the project. Steve Tiezzi, Library and NQP Development Committee, explained that there would be no actual money exchanged or donated, and that it was simply an effort to get support for the project, should it move forward.

A lengthy discussion followed, in which many members of the audience expressed their concerns for the project. Citizens of the town suggested alternate projects, including separating the projects and moving forward with the NQP portion only, putting the library into an already existing building, and stopping the project entirely, stating it is a 'want, not a need'. Charles Mueller, Library and NQP Development Committee, suggested sending the proposed project to a Referendum to allow the Town the opportunity to vote on the project.

Lauren Gister thanked the Audience members for their input and concern.

NEW BUSINESS

LIBRARY PROPOSAL/NQP

The Selectwomen discussed the next steps for the Library/NQP project. Carolyn Linn questions why renovating and expanding the current library were ruled out in the past. She suggested that perhaps obstacles present in the past have since become resolved. The Selectwomen will review the history of the project to determine if a more fiscally viable option for the Library/NQP project exists.

Lauren Gister reported that the Library/NQP Development Committee has completed their task. In hindsight, a budget for the work may have been appropriate at the beginning of the study.

While there is concern that the Town may lose the \$1M site specific grant should the project not proceed in a timely manner, investigating other options may save more in the end.

The Selectwomen discuss the Good building as a possible library site. The BOS determined that the Good Building is not a viable option due to timing, parking issues and costs associated with transforming the building into a library (ADA requirements and load issues).

The BOS briefly discussed merging with the Deep River Library, as an informal suggestion was made by Deep River; however, it is unclear what benefits there would be to Chester since Chester residents have full access to the library in Deep River already.

Virginia Carmany suggested moving some of the library's functions to the Town Hall building, perhaps adding more computers and a reading room, as well as housing periodicals, so the community could utilize the services while the project continued. Carolyn Linn suggested investigating the post office building and the Chester Gallery (currently up for sale), as possible options for the library.

Lauren Gister expressed her opinion that starting from scratch after years of exploration, many public hearings, more than \$100,000 of taxpayer dollars spent and thousands of volunteer hours have been spent to get a detailed library schematic and North Quarter Park design, but will develop a historical timeline with past considerations and ideas for the benefit of the BOS discussion. She expressed her personal opinion that having an intergenerational and flexible library and public space in the park would be a huge benefit for Chester, but only if the BOS and BOF can find a fiscally responsible way to do it, especially with the current financial climate. Charlene Janecek concurred.

#### STREETLIGHT PROJECT SCHEDULED UPDATE

Lauren Gister reported that Tanko is auditing every light, including decorative lights and lights located in parking lots. They will then record pole ownership, height, wattage, color, type of arm, etc. There will be several opportunities for public comment during the design period for the conversion of existing lights to LED. It is anticipated that actual installation will take place in September or early October. The lengthiest portion of the project will be ordering the fixtures and awaiting their arrival, but that after they arrive, the project should be finished within a week.

Lauren reported that she is working with the Main Street Committee to make the three decorative lights by the Main Street Bridge operable during the gap in time before the next phase of the Main Street project begins.

### TRI SERIES UPDATE

Lauren Gister updated the Board on the triathlon. The organizers of the event set their dates prior to receiving Town approval. As a result, the May 25<sup>th</sup> event has been cancelled.

The organization has grown exponentially over the past years; and safety has become a major concern. The Town has tightened the requirements for the race substantially. It now must be limited to a maximum of 90 participants (down from approximately 130), a fire boat and ambulance must be present at the site, and there will be no parking allowed on the street. The First Selectwoman, Fire Marshal, Fire Chief and State Trooper will meet with the organizers in September to determine the future of the Tri Series event in Chester.

### TOURISM COMMITTEE

Carolyn Linn updated the Board on the recent Merchants Association meeting. Local business owners are interested in the State's tourism websites and Chester's ability to access/update same. The information currently presented on the CTvisit.com website is out of date. The Merchant's Association has expressed interest in having access to the State tourism website for Chester. Lauren Gister will investigate sharing website editing capabilities with a potential committee chair or other volunteer.

### HOUSING AUTHORITY/COMMITTEES

The Board discussed the status of the Chester Housing Authority. They discussed previous plans for the Housing Authority, as well as another similar organization, Chester Housing Inc., which would focus on obtaining grants. If Chester does not have enough affordable housing, a developer could come in and create it with some ability to bypass local zoning regulations. The Board discussed new statutory vehicles set by the State which allow for Incentive Housing Zones which can help Chester maintain control over proposed development. Lauren plans to form an Exploratory Committee over the summer to determine the best method to provide a variety of diverse housing options and protect our residents from runaway development.

### HADDAM-CHESTER WATER LINE

Due to long standing contamination of the local water supply in Tylerville (Haddam), the State has decided to install a public water main from Denlar Drive in Chester through Tylerville to the Saybrook at Haddam. This is a continuation of the water line that Chester put in several years ago due to arsenic in the water on Denlar Drive. Based on information received to date, there will not be an opportunity for residents to hook up to the public water supply unless there is a health related reason to do so (such as well failure, etc). A joint Chester-Haddam public hearing is planned on June 21<sup>st</sup> at the Haddam Fire House and will hopefully provide answers to some remaining questions, such as timeframe for construction and whether Chester will have the opportunity or requirement for hydrants along the line.

### CEDAR LAKE/WATERSHED COMMITTEE

Lauren Gister made a motion to rename the Cedar Lake Advisory Committee the Cedar Lake/Watershed Committee. Carolyn Linn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### SELECTWOMAN'S REPORTS

Lauren Gister reported that the interview process for constables will begin next week. The Selectwomen discussed questions for the interviews.

Lauren Gister also updated the Board on the status of the Prospect Street culvert repair project. The Army Corps of Engineers has concerns regarding the impact on the wetlands, and have imposed requirements that will cause an increase in project cost and time. Chester will have to amend documents and discuss school bus routes before starting the project because the project will not be completed by the start of school. The Town will also be required to donate to the National Audubon Society, CT Chapter as part of these requirements.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

### ADJOURNMENT

Carolyn Linn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:01 p.m. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Jo Helchowski  
Clerk