

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING  
Wednesday, June 12, 2019  
Chester Town Hall

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Gister called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. In attendance included: First Selectwoman Gister, Selectwoman Janecek, Selectman Grzybowski, Ed Meehan, Virginia Carmany, and approximately 8 members of the public.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Mr. Denny Tovey, Chairman of the Library Board of Trustees, reported that there are State grants available for libraries (50% reimbursement and the Town's portion would be funded via the Trustee Account). He suggested that the BOS consider applying for a grant for work to be done at the existing library. The grant application is due at the end of August with an "intent to apply" deadline of 6/30/19. The BOS was invited to attend the 6/17/19 Library Board of Trustee Meeting for further discussion.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Charlene Janecek made a motion to appoint Thomas Brelsford, D, to the Harbor Management Committee with a term to expire 10/3/23. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Note: Mr. Brelsford is a retired State Econ Police Sergeant and Chairman of the Cedar Lake Watershed Commission.

VOTE TO SEND MAIN STREET PROJECT FORWARD TO FINAL DESIGN

The most updated plans (A and B) for the Main Street Project were available for the BOS and the public.

Lauren reported that the Main Street Committee is recommending that the BOS move forward with Plan A. Plan A recommends that the design of the "plaza" area include the use of inlaid granite and concrete materials. During a Town event, no one would be permitted to park in this "plaza" area.

James Grzybowski made a motion to approve the design as recommended by the Main Street Committee (Plan A). Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. Extensive discussion followed.

Lauren outlined the protocol for the approval of a plan and reported that it is the responsibility of the BOS to approve and submit a plan to the engineer for final design. All designs must be approved by the State and ultimately the final design will be used for bid documents on the project. The Main Street Project is State funded.

Comments from the Public

Caryn Paridis asked why granite was recommended by the Main Street Committee. Lauren responded that the Committee recommended the use of granite for aesthetic purposes and to make the area seem like a community gathering place.

Chuck Mueller, member of the Main Street Committee, further clarified that Plan A is included in the design of the Master Plan that was approved in 2013. Additional costs associated with the use of granite would be approximately \$43,000.

Ron Amara questioned the necessity of using granite and benefits of same. He commented that the use of granite “seems like a waste of money”. He supported Plan B.

Suzie Woodward asked if the State would pay for the upgrade (use of granite)? Lauren responded that the grant awarded was based on a design. While the Master Plan was approved in 2013, neither Plan A nor Plan B as presented this evening was exactly included in the Master Plan. The Town must take design and the bid documents to the State for final approval. At that time, the State will determine what they will and will not fund. Any bid received for the project will also require State approval. If Plan A is submitted to the State and the State decides not to pay for the upgrade (use of granite), we would then have to go back to the State with another plan thus costing the Town additional time.

Concerns regarding the use of granite include: chipping, plowing, staining and overall maintenance. Also, the use of granite could extend the length of the project and the length of time some parking spots will be unavailable.

Suzie Woodward reported that from a merchant’s perspective, anything that adds time to the project is a serious issue. She continued that the use of granite vs. concrete makes no difference to people and if it adds tax dollars or time to the project, it is ridiculous.

Ed Meehan, Main Street Committee member, provided background on the LOTCIP grant money being used to fund the Main Street Project. The Main Street Project is a 100% streetscape project and may not be approved by the State as an appropriate use of LOTCIP money. He continued that normally streetscapes have not been approved. As a Main Street Committee member, he recommended Plan B.

Additional comments by Mr. Meehan included:

- Plan A does not belong in a town center. The purpose of the area is for parking and should be designed for parking, not a plaza.
- Design of A with the granite and concrete strips is confusing. Drivers will have a difficult time deciding where to park.
- Plan A does nothing for traffic control.
- Plan A is not practical.
- If we want a plaza area, we close the street down.
- The additional cost of \$40,000 while not being paid by the town taxes, it is still tax dollars.
  - Ed recommended that the \$40,000 be used for tangible items that would allow for traffic control during construction. He stressed the importance of getting the project done in a timely manner.

Michael Joplin, Chairman of the Main Street Committee, reported that both Plan A and Plan B offer the use of bollards to keep the cars on the asphalt not on the cobblestone. He reported that the use of granite would not extend the construction period; however there would be a loss of several parking spots for approximately 2 weeks during the project. The additional cost of granite would be offset by the costs associated with the use of asphalt (approximately \$10,000).

The use of granite would make the area more pleasant when it is being used for the many gatherings held in the town center. He continued that the Town should not make judgments on the basis of practicality alone. Chester is a beautiful town and the use of the granite will enhance the beauty of the Village.

Chuck Mueller reported on the traffic calming effect provided by Plan A as follows: the idea of a visible definition of a travel lane and pedestrian lane is traffic calming; when you narrow a lane and extend a pedestrian area, it slows traffic. Plan A will give the perception of a narrow vehicular zone.

Mike Peck feels that cars are always seen in the plaza area and does not see traffic calming as a concern. He commented that the difference in the two plans is aesthetic only.

Suzie Woodward commented that if you ask anyone on the street, they want to see more parking.

Chuck Mueller responded that there is no difference in the number of spots per plan.

Suzie Woodward reported that the Merchants would agree with the comments made by Ed Meehan.

Jeremy Zieman reported that the Master Plan included a plaza area. Plan A is an opportunity to promote congregational space and to encourage people to come to Chester for the historic properties and pedestrian use.

Suzie Woodward commented "Is Main Street a venue or a place to have downtown merchants survive?"

Ron Amara commented that the additional 2 weeks of "down time" if Plan A is pursued would be extremely detrimental to the merchants.

The BOS discussed the current number of parking spots, proposed number of spots and the space available for truck deliveries, turn around and related matters.

Virginia Carmany favored Plan B and cited costs as a factor.

#### BOS comments

James Grzybowski reported that he spoke to a total of 31 residents and of that 31, only 7 favored Plan A. Residents reported that the area is closed a total of 16 times per year for events and cars are parked in the area the remainder of time. He commended the Main Street Committee for their work on the Plan. James recommended Plan B.

Charlene Janeczek is a Selectwoman and member of the Main Street Committee (note that she did not vote when the Main Street Committee recommended Plan A to the BOS). Charlene reported that she is against extending the plaza and recommended Plan B. She reported that Option A will be confusing and cars will be parked in the "plaza area" 99% of the time. The granite proposed in Plan A will get chipped, stain, etc.

Lauren Gister disagreed that Plan A would provide traffic calming measures. She expressed concern that if the area does not look like a road and individuals walk behind cars, accidents could occur. She preferred the area look like the road that it is. She expressed additional concern with the potential

maintenance issues (plows), chipping and staining of granite. She also expressed concern about the potential of extending the timeline of the project. She reported that Plan B is a better option.

Vote on the motion: Unanimously “nay”. The motion did not pass.

James Grzybowski made a motion to recommend Plan B. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion was withdrawn.

The BOS and members of the Main Street Committee in attendance discussed the removal of the Belgian block “strips” in the sidewalk. The BOS was under the impression that ½ of the 25 “strips” would be removed but the plan shows that only 9 were removed. The BOS also questioned the costs savings, if any, associated with the removal of the “strips”. Chuck Mueller reported that costs savings on the removal of the “strips” would be inconsequential in a project costing over \$1 million.

Michael Joplin outlined the “history” of the “strips”. Originally, there were 18 cobblestone strips. Chuck Mueller requested that at least several of the strips be removed and he suggested using granite block around trees. The Committee discussed at a meeting and Brian deleted 9 “strips” and put cobblestones around the trees. Michael suggested that perhaps more “strips” could be removed.

Chuck Mueller reported that what is shown is what was recommended by the consultant and the designers. He commented “I would not remove any more or I would remove them all.”

The BOS made no further comments relative to the number of “strips”.

James Grzybowski made a motion to approve Plan B and move forward with the final design as presented. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The BOS thanked the Main Street Committee for their work on the project.

Lauren reported on the anticipated timeline of the project as follows:

- Designers are aiming for a September 15<sup>th</sup> date (or earlier) to have the design and bid docs ready to be submitted to the COG and DOT for approval.
- The goal is to have the downtown water main replaced and a temporary resurfacing (done by the Water Co.) by this Fall.
- The goal is to go out to bid in November/December with bids due to DOT for approval by 1/15/20.
- Anticipated construction start date of 3/15/20.

Michael Joplin reported that he is attempting to “push” all of the dates above up by one month, not including the construction start date. It is expected that the heavy construction portion of the project will take approximately 3 months to complete.

Items that still need clarification include:

- Traffic flow concerns – the intent is to keep street open as much as possible.

- A plan to work with the property owners – Lauren has discussed with the Town Attorney – the Selectmen have begun meeting with property owners and merchants and will continue to do so.
- Electric situation (not enough power to some downtown buildings) – engineers are working on a resolution,
- A plan for the Chester Wall must be in the plan. Items to be addressed include: power washing, re-pointing.
- Staging areas for contractors need to be determined.
- Fire hydrant (at the flagpole)– Intend to have the Water Co. trench and pipe a hydrant so it is ready to be put in as part of the project.
- The “void” areas under the sidewalk must be addressed.
- Lights located at Maple Street and Main Street need to be addressed.

ANNUAL INSURANCE SERVICES AGREEMENT

Lauren reported that the contract with Smith Brothers is expiring. Smith Brothers are the Town’s insurance agent working with CIRMA for business and property insurance. A copy of the contract was available for BOS review. The fees have not changed and Smith Brothers receives a commission of \$6,500 per year for their services due on 7/1/19.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to authorize First Selectwoman Gister to sign the contract with Smith Brothers as presented. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CLARIFICATION OF FILLING VACANCIES ON P&Z COMMISSION

Lauren provided clarification relative to the appointment of individuals to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

After considerable research and contact with the State Election Commission and Town Attorney, it was determined that the 1977 Chester Ordinance is applicable in appointing individuals to P&Z. The Ordinance states that any vacancy on P&Z that is caused by factors other than the expiration of the term of office; shall be filled by the BOS for a period to run until the next town election. Previous confusion was caused by two competing statutes. One was applicable to stand alone Planning Commissions, which states that vacancies are filled by the Commission. The other, which applies to Chester, was passed to deal with combined Planning and Zoning Commissions, as Chester has, which says that the municipality decides. Since Chester has a specific ordinance dealing with this issue, it would be controlling in this instance.

COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

As reported at the 5/22/19 BOS meeting, the Complete Count Program is part of a 2020 Census initiative through the Lt. Governor’s office to request that faith based and other community organizations (i.e. Rotary Club, Lions Club, etc.) encourage their populations to participate in the census. The importance of accurate census data relative to the receipt of Federal funding was stressed.

A copy of the updated Resolution was included in the BOS packet. The BOS discussed several “wordsmithing” changes to the document.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to accept the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the adoption of the citizenship question in Census 2020 may lead to inaccurate data about minorities, immigrants, and all residents of Chester, adversely affecting the prosperity and well-being of the Town of Chester.

WHEREAS, Census Bureau representatives have reported unprecedented fear among respondents to other surveys, with respondents being reluctant to participate fully and provide accurate information.

WHEREAS, Chester receives federal funds allocated on the basis of population size and demographics thereby making the collection and accuracy of such metrics critically important to the Town's ability to provide accurate information.

THEREFORE, the Town of Chester resolves to form a "Complete Count Task Force" composed of individuals and organizations from diverse sectors to work collaboratively on a campaign to mobilize all of Chester's residents to be counted in Census 2020;

THEREFORE, The Town of Chester resolves that the "Complete Count Task Force" include individuals and organizations from Chester Town Government including relevant departments, Boards and Commissions, the Board of Selectmen and members of the community and faith-based organizations, the media, education, business, labor, philanthropic institutions, and other individuals or organizations that work with or are familiar with hard-to-count residents;

THEREFORE, the Town of Chester resolves that the members of the "Complete Count Task Force" shall represent the full geographic, gender, racial, ethnic and age diversity of Chester;

THEREFORE, the Town Council resolves that the "Complete Count Task Force" be, and hereby is, to be comprised of such members as may be nominated from time-to-time by the First Selectman; and approved by the Board of Selectmen.

THEREFORE, the Town of Chester resolves that the "Complete Count Task Force" prepare, and deliver to the Board of Selectmen by November 2019, a report which sets forth Chester's plan to mobilize its residents to participate in Census 2020.

James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### FINANCIAL POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL

A copy of the draft Financial Policy & Procedures Manual has been distributed to and discussed by the BOS.

Charlene reported, and the BOS agreed, that the guidelines in the manual should be used for future projects going forward and should not be applied retroactively to projects that are currently underway.

Lauren will forward minor "wordsmithing" corrections to Virginia Carmany for incorporation into the document.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to accept the Financial Policy and Procedures Manual as discussed contingent upon the application of the new guidelines in the manual for future projects going forward and not for projects that are currently approved and/or underway. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Lauren Gister made a motion to add to the agenda a discussion of Neighborhood Assistance Act grant proposal submitted by the Goodspeed at Chester. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

As reported previously, the Goodspeed at Chester has requested the Town's sponsorship of their Neighborhood Assistance Act Grant application. The Goodspeed is proposing energy conservation projects as outlined in their submission (included in the BOS packet). No financial commitment from the Town is necessary as part of this application.

The application is due to the State on July 1, 2019. To accommodate the timeline Lauren suggested holding the required Public Hearing and Town Meeting on the proposal on 6/26/19 (A Regular BOS meeting is already scheduled on 6/26/19).

Lauren Gister made a motion to hold a Public Hearing and Town Meeting on 6/26/19 relative to the Goodspeed at Chester's NAA-01 grant application. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### SELECTMAN'S REPORT

James Grzybowski reported that the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Solar Project at Chester Elementary School is scheduled June 13, 2019 @ 2 p.m.

Lauren reported on the following items:

- She is currently working with Jacobson on an Emergency Action Plan for the Jennings Pond Dam. Also, the owners of the dam privately owned by the Historical Society are also working with Jacobson on a plan.
- On Monday, June 17, 2019, Lauren is reviewing with Inland Wetlands, Public Works and DEEP the streams that Natural Resources Conservation Services has approved for funding as a result of the September floods. Depending on permits required (DEEP, Army Corps), an extension for construction may be necessary.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The BOS minutes from the 5/29/19 BOS meeting were tabled.

Lauren Gister made a motion to approve the minutes of the 5/22/19 BOS meeting as amended. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Correction: Page 1 – correct spelling MINUTES in the heading section of page 1.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Charlene Janecek made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski  
Clerk