

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, September 9, 2020
ZOOM Meeting

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 Englert, Terry Englert, Margo Burn, RiverCOG, Tom Brelsford, Ted Taigen, several audience members and Elizabeth Reinhart, Press.

APPOINTMENTS – OFFICIALS, BOARDS & COMMISSIONS –

Charlene Janecek made a motion to re-appoint Gordon Van Ness to the Harbor Management Commission as a full member with a term to expire 10/3/25. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

LTR SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

A copy of the report developed by the Social Services, Spirituality, and Emotional Wellness Action Team (sub-committee of the Chester Long Term Recovery Task Force) was included in the BOS packet.

The Sub Committee recommends that the Town’s Emergency Fund be renamed to the CARES Fund (BOS had no concerns about a name change). Rosie Binninger manages and distributes funds in the Emergency Fund. The fund is used to provide assistance to residents to address a variety of needs including school supplies, childcare, food, rent, utilities, etc. Appropriate documentation is necessary via an “intake form” prior to funds being distributed to individuals. The Committee recommends that said “intake form” be updated to facilitate data collection/development of a database. Information in a database (telephone number, etc.) would be confidential and only accessible to appropriate individuals; i.e. First Selectman, Emergency Management, Fire Chief, in the event of an emergency.

The Committee also recommends that a formal policy be developed to outline guidelines and define limits on the uses of the fund.

The Committee recommends that Chester be organized into HUBS or ZONES and that volunteers be recruited to form a Chester Mutual Aid Collaborative to provide mutual aid to assist residents with a variety of items including technology via a vis forms required to apply for aid, wellness telephone calls, and transportation. The BOS discussed this recommendation extensively and had concerns with liability in having volunteers potentially drive people in their personal vehicles and that sustaining and managing a volunteer program for the long term would be extremely difficult. BOS questions regarding the program will be forwarded to the Chair.

The BOS supported the Committee’s recommendation that the Resource List, already established, continue to be updated and distributed as appropriate.

Health and Safety recommendations, as stated in the report, i.e. contact tracing, signage, etc. is being facilitate by the Health District. The Committee’s recommendation that the Town purchase PPE for non-

town entities was discussed. The Town does have a supply of PPE; however, PPE is now widely accessible for the public to purchase.

As previously discussed, Park & Rec is currently holding socially distanced activities on the Meeting House Green. Cedar Lake is no longer staffed with lifeguards and the social distancing markings have been removed. The beach area and snack shack remain open.

Lauren will follow-up with the Chairman relative to their recommendation regarding expanding access to waterfront areas.

The BOS commended all of the members of the Social Services, Spirituality and Emotional Wellness Action Team for the due diligence on behalf of the Town.

KEEPING HYDRILLA OUT OF CEDAR LAKE – Ordinance Proposal and Discussion

A copy of a draft Ordinance Concerning the Use of Cedar Lake, Cedar Lake Beaches and Parking Areas was included in the BOS packet and discussed. As previously reported, the Cedar Lake Watershed Committee has proposed an Ordinance for permitted uses on Cedar Lake. The proposal was presented to the BOS in the Spring but put “on hold” due to the pandemic. In an effort to stop the spread of invasive species, the proposed Ordinance would not permit motor boats on the lake.

The BO S had an extensive discussion with members of the Cedar Lake Watershed Committee and Margo Burn, RiverCOG, relative to invasive species; in particular Hydrilla. Hydrilla is extremely expensive and difficult to manage (herbicides are the only way to eradicate, manually pulling it only spreads it further) once it has established itself in a waterway; therefore, the Committee’s recommends that motor boats and trailers (a leading contributor to the spread of Hydrilla) be prohibited on Cedar Lake. Ms. Burn provided an extensive update and history on Hydrilla. This species has invaded surrounding waterways in Connecticut.

Due to the pandemic, it is difficult to hold public hearings on items of importance to the Town. The Governor’s Executive Orders allow the BOS to pass ordinances; however, the BOS discussed authorizing an interim Ordinance until a proper Public Hearing and Town Meeting can be scheduled in a safe environment. An interim Ordinance would have a clear termination date (December 2021). The Town Attorney is currently researching the possibility of an interim Ordinance. If passed, information relative to the Ordinance can be included in the upcoming “boater’s guide” publication. An interim Ordinance, if established by the BOS will be widely communicated to all interested individuals.

Tom Brelsford reported that the State owns the boat ramp and is generally supportive of local ordinances; however, the Town can block the lake via boulders and place signage as appropriate.

Board members were encouraged to forward any questions/concerns relative to an interim Ordinance to Lauren and she will discuss same with the Town Attorney.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 26, 2020 BOS meeting. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Lauren reported on the following:

- As discussed at the last BOS meeting, Lauren is working on the policy regarding use of the Town Hall parking lot on Election Day.
- Governor Lamont has extended Executive Orders.
- Outdoor dining zoning exemptions have been extended until November.
- Additional guidance regarding the protocols for Town Meetings is being developed by the Governor's office.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS - None.

ADJOURNMENT

Charlene Janecek made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk