

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, July 28, 2021
ZOOM Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Gister called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. In attendance included First Selectwoman Gister, Selectwoman Janecek, Selectman Englert, Terri Englert and Elizabeth Reinhardt, Press.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None.

PERMIT FEE SCHEDULE

As previously reported, the Building Official/Fire Marshal, Dick Leighton, submitted proposed changes to the Building and Fire Marshal permit fee schedule.

The Town Attorney reviewed these drafts and had no comments. The BOS raised concern that fees associated with re-submitted Building plans seemed excessive and that residents should be offered one “free pass” for revised plans. Additional fees were appropriate if plans needed to be submitted several times. The BOS agreed that a 30% fee (determined by the base fee) was appropriate for re-submitted plans (after one “free pass”).

The fee schedule for the Fire Marshal’s office included blasting permits, burn permits, firework permits, underground tanks, etc.; predominantly associated with commercial businesses/properties (based on sq. footage). Routine Fire Marshal fees associated with private home projects are set at \$50.

Lauren will follow-up with the Town Attorney relative to the BOS authority to change/set fees.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the new fee schedule for the Building Department and Fire Marshal’s Department as discussed above {30% Building Permit fee (determined by the base fee) was appropriate for re-submitted plans (after one “free pass”), final” fee schedule will be discussed at a future BOS meeting}. Tom Englert seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Tom Englert expressed concern relative to voting on a “draft” document.

Charlene Janecek withdrew the motion.

FEMA HAZARD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE GRANTS

At the 7/14/21 BOS meeting, the Town’s Hazardous Mitigation Plan was approved. Approval of this plan is instrumental when applying for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants. Due to the recent nationwide natural disasters (floods, fires, etc.), it is anticipated that FEMA grants will soon be made available to municipalities. Note that these grants are 75%/25%. The Town would be responsible for 25% of any project as well as engineering and “soft” costs.

Lauren suggested that the Town may wish to pursue a FEMA grant to repair/raise Dock Road. Jacobson, in the past, did begin planning for said project. The possibility of using STEAP funds or ARPA funds to facilitate a project on Dock Rd. was briefly discussed.

A list of other projects that may be appropriate will be developed; i.e., bank stabilization and the intersection of Deep Hollow and Liberty St.

Lauren will pursue further with Jacobson.

RESIDENT TROOPER CONTRACT RENEWAL

A copy of the Resident Trooper Contract was included in the BOS packet. The contract includes language relative to the Police Accountability Act. The provision relative to dash and body cameras and storage of footage from same is currently being reviewed. As previously discussed, it is cost effective to participate in the State's RST Program as opposed to Chester having its own police force.

Tom Englert made a motion to authorize First Selectwoman Gister to sign the Resident State Trooper contract, 7/1/21 through 6/30/23, as presented. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

WASTE/GARBAGE REMOVAL - Send to Public Hearing

The proposed Waste/Garbage Removal Ordinance, as reviewed/revised by the Town Attorney, was "screen shared". The BOS agreed with the Town Attorney's recommendation that a written warning is NOT required prior to the issuance of a fine.

Lauren Gister made a motion to approve the Draft Ordinance regarding Storage and Collection of Waste Containers and forward to a Public Hearing in preparation for a Town Meeting on the Ordinance. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CEDAR LAKE ORDINANCE – Send to Public Hearing

A copy of the draft Cedar Lake Ordinance was "screen shared". The Town Attorney has reviewed the draft document and recommended that the Ordinance include specificity relative to exemptions to the Ordinance. The BOS agreed that instead of offering exemptions to the Ordinance (that would need approval by the First Selectman's office), the Ordinance would include allowing police, fire, emergency boats and safety boats (crew team, Camp Hazen, hydro raking boat) on Cedar Lake.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the Draft Ordinance regarding the use of Cedar Lake as discussed above and forward to a Public Hearing. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The BOS determined that one Public Hearing relative to Cedar Lake was appropriate.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tom Englert made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 14, 2021 BOS meeting, as amended. Lauren Gister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Note: Proper spelling – Shubert Koong, not Koon as reported.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Charlene Janecek reported that she met with Luke Whitehouse. He has reviewed the Skyview property file (note that the Town took ownership of the property due to tax delinquency) with Dave Campbell, Jacobson, and will develop a proposal for BOS consideration. It is anticipated that he will recommend a combined Phase I and Phase II Environmental Study of the property to determine the extent of potential contamination. There have been individuals expressing interest in the property depending on contamination levels. Also, Brownfield grants may be available for clean-up of the property.

The central air conditioning in upstairs areas (Assessor, Tax Office) of the Town Hall is no longer operational and window units have been installed. The central air conditioning will be replaced in the Fall.

The BOS had continued extensive discussion relative to restaurant table placement throughout the downtown areas. Note that the Governor's Executive Orders have extended permission for the use of outdoor dining. BOS members expressed serious concern relative to the safety of individuals walking in the street due to table placements on the sidewalks as well as handicap access and safety. One establishment presented a plan to the ZEO that was approved; however, they did not adhere to that plan when placing their tables on the sidewalk.

Lauren reported that table placement is a daily discussion with the ZEO, Fire Marshal, police etc. and she has discussed with the Town Attorney and Zoning Attorney additional options the Town can pursue to ensure public safety. Per P&Z minutes, this issue has been a topic of discussion at P&Z meetings for months. Lauren will draft a letter to P&Z requesting that they revise the Zoning Regulations to include enforcement mechanisms relative to table placement on the sidewalks. Tom Englert will present this letter to P&Z at the next meeting.

Lauren reported that 4 trees (same type) planted via the Main Street project have died or are dying. They are under warranty by the contractor for one year. One of the trees was not part of the Main Street project and is the responsibility of the Town. Belgium Block will be installed when the trees are removed. The majority of the retainage has been returned to the Main Street contractor, with the exception of funds for the trees.

Lauren reported that a contractor for Town building cleaning services is being pursued. One contractor is no longer available and a second contractor cannot begin until September. In addition, resumes were received for a part-time Land Use Admin and an Assessor's Clerk. Qualified candidates were interested in full-time work; however, one of the individuals has already accepted a job in East Haddam. The remaining qualified candidate is also interested in a part-time position in Deep River. Lauren is currently discussing options with First Selectman MacDonald, Deep River, relative to a potential sharing of staff and costs of benefits.

BOS members intend to attend the BOF meeting scheduled on 7/29/21. At this Special meeting, the BOF will discuss legal issues and the use of the Town Attorney vs. a BOF attorney relative to the appointment of BOF members (alt.). The BOS discussed briefly the potential of updating the Town's Financial Accounting Manual verbiage relative to protocol for the use of an attorney (excluding regulatory board attorney).

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Tom Englert made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk