

Borough of Stonington
Board of Warden and Burgesses
Regular Monthly Meeting September 16, 2024
MEETING MINUTES

Warden Michael Schefers called the monthly meeting of the Borough of Stonington Board of Warden and Burgesses to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at Borough Hall. Present, in addition to Warden Schefers were Burgesses Kevin Rogers, Kevin Bowdler, Amy and Amanda Barnes, and Clerk-Treasurer Lisa Coleman. Approximately 12 members of the public were present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion by Warden Schefers, seconded by Burgess Bowdler the minutes of the monthly meeting of August 19, 2024 with the correction of the first name to Sarael under Public Comment, were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

RECEIVED:

PGHS application for parking during the Fish Fry.
Stonington Free Library thank-you letter.

REPORT OF CLERK-TREASURER

Announcement that the Borough elections will be held on May 5, 2025.

REVIEW OF BILLS/YTD FINANCIAL REPORT; ARPA UPDATE

Bills for the period August 17, 2024 through September 12, 2024 totaled \$70,185.87. Large bills of note are Stonington Ambulance Donation, Firematic bills, and the Borough audit cost. Both the support truck for the Fire Department and the dump truck for the Highway Department are on order. I&E for July 2024 through September 12, 2024 shows total income to date of \$1,234,150.57; and net income to date of \$652,567.53. Balance of ARPA funds is \$77,917.17.

WARDEN'S REPORT

Met with First Selectman Danielle Chesbrough on shared local items of interest.
Attended SEAT Board Meeting (No August SCCOG — meeting.)
Attended August First Selectman monthly staff meeting.
Attended SCCOG CT Emergency Planning Briefing

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Streets & Sidewalks (Schefers)

Conducted monthly brush pickup.
Continued Park maintenance.
Continued Street Sweeping

Repaving and Repair to Cliff Street. South Tinker's Hill was crowned. The way it is currently paved is causing sidewalk and street flooding. The curb needs to be heightened.

Reviewed Cannon Square Paving Project. Businesses near the square will need to notify 18 wheelers and customers to park elsewhere during the paving.

Burgess Nicholas reminded us that parking on yellow painted curbs is not allowed.

Fire & Emergency Management (Nicholas/Hoadley)

SBFD responded to 9 Alarms in August 2024, they were as follows:

- 1) 8-3-24 11:14am Structure Fire 26 Diving St. (power lines to residence of fire)
- 2) 8-10-24 10:00am Fire Alarm Activation 9 McGrath Ct. (faulty detector)
- 3) 8-10-24 5:06pm MVA Flanders Rd. @ Shawondassee Dr. (one injury)
- 4) 8-11-24 12:47pm Fire Alarm Activation 117 Water St. (workers)
- 5) 8-11-24 7:08pm Fire Alarm Activation 194 Water St. Dog Watch (unknown)
- 6) 8-15-24 10:00am Odor of gas 129 Flanders Rd. (nothing found)
- 7) 8-16-24 8:26am Train vs Pickup truck Walkers Dock RR Crossing (no injuries)
- 8) 8-27-24 7:11am Fire Alarm Activation 10 Quana Duck Cove Ct. (faulty alarm)
- 9) 8-30-24 8:45am Fire Alarm Activation 23 Gold St. Unit #1 (faulty detector)

August Police Incident Report (Nicholas)

None

Next month the speed bumps (cushions) presentation will be made to the Stonington Police Dept.

Parks, Trees & Rights of Way (Barnes)

I am meeting in the next couple of weeks with residents near the Front Street Circle to finalize plans for planting in that area.

My meeting with Brian Wendler from Hollycroft has been postponed several times for various reasons. I am hoping to meet with Mr. Wendler very soon to review the items on display in the park. I have reminded him that Hollycroft is responsible for trimming and weed whacking in the areas surrounding each item.

I was in touch with Mr. Higginson of Cliff Street to inform him that he should email me if he would like to inquire in the future about use of LaGrua Park. It came to our attention that trucks and equipment had been parked (sometimes for extended periods of time) on the Park, and as we know, use of the Borough's public parks requires permission from the Board or from me, specifically. Mr. Higginson responded that he'd received an email from Jeff Callahan granting permission to use the park. I explained that permission was not open ended, and he let us know that the work should be complete within 3 weeks of his email (8/19). I've reached out to him for an update on the expected date of completion. He is aware that he will need permission for any future use of the park.

I met with Kirby Williams and Elizabeth Johnstone in August to discuss their ideas for the improvement and expansion of the rain garden at Wayland's Wharf. Kirby and Elizabeth will hold off until all of the engineering work is complete at Wayland's, and then they will share their plans with the Board.

I met with Megan Kaczinski in August to go over plans for planting this fall as well as some pruning. A large willow branch fell at Wimpfheimer Park in August, and that was cleaned up expeditiously by Bartlett. I have asked Bartlett to prune trees in front of 6 Broad Street as well as a tree on Temple Street. We discussed the placement of a tree (or possibly two) on Broad Street; we looked at the area in front of the house on the southeast corner of Church and Main Street but became concerned that the planting of two trees there might block the view of the stop sign next to the Church Street intersection. We are talking about the possibility of planting two fastigate trees in hopes that they would not obstruct the view of the stop sign.

I discussed a five-year tree plan with Megan, and she suggested that we update our inventory and make it a digitized inventory, which would include information like approximate age, condition, type, etc. of each tree - and basically any additional information we would like to include. This could help implement such a plan. This would probably cost several thousand dollars, but we could do it incrementally (by area) if it's something we would like to pursue. I could also have a conversation with Brad Painter about this to see if he has additional suggestions. I did not ask Megan to join us by Zoom for this meeting, because I missed last month's meeting, and I think we should have this follow-up

conversation first. I can invite her and/or Brad to join us in October if we decide that's how we'd like to proceed.

Rights of Way will be walked by me, Amy Nicholas and Lisa Coleman.

Kevin Bowdler asked that the residents of Front St pay for the plantings. The subject of access by firetrucks and commercial vehicles around the circle came up. Perhaps it could be smaller, have less plantings, or remove it.

Kevin Bowdler asked that the Ukraine statue be brought to Doug Rice's attention. We will give him a deadline of Nov 1st to remove it.

Public Buildings (Rogers)

Fire House and Borough Hall –

Cooling system

Met with my first company, 72 Degrees Billy Avery and Chris Curran on Thursday, August 22nd. We toured both the firehouse and Borough Hall. Two concepts are going to be estimated.

While there we noticed 3 windows that are broken and will need to be repaired.

The Chief also pointed out that when a repair was made to water pipes on the second floor near the elevator, but the sheetrock was never repaired. I asked Chris if we could put in a "hatch door" system so we would not have to cut the sheetrock again, saving the Boro money in the end.

Curran Construction is scheduling repairing the painted floor in the Fire House. We are pushing to get it completed before the Presidential election. I should have the estimates by Monday evening's meeting.

Utilities & Sanitation (Bowdler)

Sanitation – I have issued 5 citations and 1 fine (which is being disputed) for yellow bags being placed on the curb the night before collection and not in a closed bin. Many of the issues occur in multi-family homes where it is not clear which tenant might be at fault. I have mailed a copy to the landlords address with the hope of resolving the issue. We met with Frank Crandall who informed us that he has not seen evidence of animals getting into the yellow bags overnight. That is good news.

Trash at the point – We have received complaints about trash at the point. I have posted signs on the Pota Loo's that say 'Help keep Stonington beautiful. Please take your trash with you.' There is a no parking sign inside the beach fence but cannot be read from the street. Should ask the SVIA and Sue to reposition the sign so it can be read? Should the messaging be different? I asked AI for recommendations on trash at the point and it advised that no matter how many signs you have to encourage no littering, these areas do need to have a trash bin which would need to be emptied by Sue and Emerson. Estimated cost is \$3,000. Thoughts? We could also ask the SVIA if we could put up a fake camera on the side of the pavilion with a sign that says, 'Don't litter - \$100 fine'. Thoughts?

Porta-Loos at the Playground – The fence has been installed. The next step is to do the landscaping.

Utilities – Street lighting

I spoke to Eversource about running electric cables under the sidewalks and what would be involved in installing a meter. I was told that the best approach is to work with our electrician who is familiar with creating the service request for having a new meter installed on a street. We have a meter on Cannon

Square, but I do not know how big an electrical box we would need to support streetlamps on Water Street and Main Street. Are we concerned about large electrical boxes popping up on the sidewalks to power the lights? I have put a call in to Evering Electric who have done work for the Borough, but no-one has returned my call. I contacted the head of New London Public Works to ask if they might be disposing of their streetlamps which have been replaced with new modern looking lights on Bank Street. No response to date.

EV Charging – No proposal has been received from EV United and I met with them over a month ago.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Jean Fiore of Cannon Square says some trucks have been parking between the entrance/exit of the Commons. She asks that trucks turn their trucks off. She suggests that matts be put on the wooden dock to make it safer from people slipping when it becomes slippery. She feels no bin is needed at the Point. She suggested cobblestones on Front St. rather than round flower plantings. The bell at the firehouse is faced in the wrong direction.

Resident June Arnold (Michael and Ann, who is this man, I don't believe I have the correct name) of 3 Broad St. if plants are put on Front St., they need to be rabbit proof. And he thanked the board for saving the trees on Broad St.

Resident Nina Cook of 2 and 4 Pearl Street said please do not install EV charging stations, rather use the money for repairing/paving streets. She asked if there was a study to establish that we need EV charging stations.

Resident Jennifer Olsen of 9 Northwest St . thank the Board for putting the planters at the porta-potties. Also, she asked that Public Comment be added later.

Resident Brett Duncan of 1 Church St. suggested solar powered trash cans.

Resident Jesse Diggs of 8 School St. regarding Wayland's Wharf, if you do things there that encourage swimming speak with the Harbor Master. Just put a sign at the Point. Mosaic tile at the circle. Regarding potholes, there is a big one across from Mathew's park. Warden said that is the Town's Road and he will contact the Town.

Chief Hoadley asked that the small removable curbs be put back at the Point. The Warden will address with Sue for next Summer.

Resident Joanna Masi of 3 Broad St. said that EV chargers are superfluous.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Comfort Station Update

See Public Buildings Report

Proposed revision to SBO-05 concerning Recreational Vehicles and Motor Homes parking and Commercial vehicle parking

There is another draft, and it will be voted on at October meeting.

EV Charging Station Update

Tabled.

Storm resilience and mitigation; Wayland's Wharf and Omega

Kevin Brasseur and Atlantic Marine have been contacted to make seawall recommendations for Wayland's Wharf. Omega St end has been cleaned up and curbing has been put in (with assistance by the Town of Stonington).

NEW BUSINESS

PGHS application Parking During Fish Fry

On a motion by Burgess Bowdler, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, the application from the Portuguese Holy Ghost Society to allow for the use of two parking spaces in front of PHGS on the west side of Main Street on Fridays 10/4/24 through 11/22/24 from 11 am – 6:30m pm to allow for pick-up of take outs and older folks to be dropped off during the Fish Fry, contingent on receiving proof of insurance, was approved.

Proposed SBO-A1 Ordinance Appropriation

On a motion by Warden Schefers, seconded by Burgess Rogers, the proposed restroom Ordinance SBO-A1, appropriating the sum of \$58,000 from the undesignated General Fund to Public Restroom Funds, was approved.

Cliff Street Tree Removal

Vote will be held at October meeting

OTHER BUSINESS and Discussion

Regarding Public Comment, Warden Schefers suggests that we talk about Public Comment. The Board have discussed this issue many times and when the vote comes up it usually has been talked about before AND if it is a major issue there will be adequate time to make Public Comment.

There have been numerous complaints about the sidewalk overhang on Main Street. There will be a citation if nothing is done to eradicate it.

Wire fencing by residents is a problem on Borough property.

There has been some progress on P&Z members. There are names of people to be approached by Burgess Bowdler for ZBA.

Burgess Rogers brought up the issue of installing speed cameras. The chief of police will be contacted regarding the cost and the legal issues.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Bowdler, adjournment of the meeting at 8:46 pm, was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa M. Coleman
October 1, 2024