

**Borough of Stonington
Board of Warden and Burgesses
Regular Monthly Meeting – June 15, 2020**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Warden Jeff Callahan called the regular meeting of the Borough of Stonington Board of Warden and Burgesses to order, by way of Zoom conferencing video at 7:02 p.m. Present were Burgesses Amy Nicholas, Kevin Rogers, Amanda Barnes, Bergin O'Malley, Karen von Ruffer-Hills, and Shaun Mastroianni. Tiffany Cook, serving as Clerk-Treasurer, joined late.

Before turning to the agenda, Warden Jeff Callahan read a statement on behalf of the Board:

A MONTH AGO, OUR COUNTRY AND OUR STATE AND OUR COMMUNITY WERE CONSUMED BY CONCERN OVER A NEW DISEASE CALLED COVID 19. TODAY WE ARE STILL DEALING WITH COVID 19, AND IN ADDITION WE ARE CONFRONTING A MUCH OLDER DISEASE THAT HAS INFECTED THIS COUNTRY FOR CENTURIES. THE DISEASE IS CALLED RACISM. MANY DIFFERENT GROUPS ---NATIVE AMERICANS, AFRICAN AMERICANS, HISPANICS, ASIAN-AMERICANS... HAVE SUFFERED FOR THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN. THE NATION ITSELF ALMOST WAS LOST BECAUSE OF IT.

IT IS CLEAR TO ME THAT NO SINGLE ACT OR POLICY CAN END RACISM. WE FOUGHT THE BLOODIEST WAR IN OUR HISTORY TO END IT, YET IT IS STILL WITH US. IT CAN ONLY END WHEN EVERY INDIVIDUAL AND EVERY COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDS THAT RACISM IS AS DEADLY AS COVID OR ANY OTHER DISEASE. IF WE DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT AND ACT ACCORDINGLY, IT WILL DESTROY US. THIS BOARD STANDS WITH THOSE WHO OPPOSE RACISM AND WILL WORK WITH ANY INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP THAT OFFERS REALISTIC IDEAS TO DEFEAT RACISM.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion by Burgess Amy Nicholas and seconded by Burgess Rodgers, the minutes of May's monthly meeting held by way of Zoom conferencing, were unanimously approved.

3. REPORT OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Received \$129.68 in tax payments from the Town.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

No requests to use property. No meetings. Several emails from PHGS regarding the Feast of the Holy Ghost. Gloria Wyatt sent a thank you for the flowers for her husband's death. Karen von Ruffer wrote resigning position as burgess since she is relocating to NYC.

5. REPORT OF CLERK-TREASURER -- None

6. REVIEW OF BILLS/YTD FINANCIAL REPORT

. Bills totaled \$24,276 for period May 18 through June 11.

Income & Expense Report though June 11, 2020: Net income is \$127,796.

As we are near the end of the fiscal year, we will have several end of year (i.e., June 30) reports, leading up to the annual audit in August/September

7. WARDEN'S REPORT

1. Participated in weekly Zoom COVID-19 updates with SCCOG and local health districts
2. Assisted restaurant owners on Water Street with preparations to reopen
3. Arranged for granite curbing around Wad Square to be power washed by volunteer Bob Suppich
4. Tracked Governor's executive orders (50 and counting)
5. Weekly disinfecting of fire house and Borough Hall continues; both remain closed to public
6. Contacted Amtrak again about keys to Water Street crossing gates; still working on it
7. Asked Borough Atty about eliminating alternate members of commissions. He doesn't favor it.

BOROUGH CLOCK – Reset clock and lights timer after power outage on May 23

8. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

a. STREET & SIDEWALKS COMMISSIONER REPORT

1. Jetted out storm drain from Northwest Street to outfall near Harbor Edge
2. Aquarion continued Summit/Elm water main replacement project
3. Installed mutt mitt dispenser at Stonington Commons
4. Monthly brush pickup
5. Repaired street signs
6. Issued 1 dumpster permits
7. Removed weeds and swept street gutters

b. FIRE COMMISSIONER, KEVIN RODGERS

- 1) 5-1-20 6:33pm Wire down IFO 52 Main St. (cable tv wire)
- 2) 5-10-20 2:07pm Water rescue Sandy Point (jet ski accident & windsurfer accident at approximately the same time in high wind conditions, multiple agencies responded)
- 3) 5-13-20 8:24pm Medical Assist with SAC 32 Water St. Unit #15 (lift assist)
- 4) 5-24-20 9:34pm Fire Alarm Activation Velvet mill (water flow)
- 5) 5-27-20 6:21pm Medical Assist with SAC 22 Pearl St. (cardiac arrest)
- 6) 5-28-20 9:21pm CO Alarm Activation 17 Bayview Ave. (defective CO unit)
- 7) 5-30-20 10:17am Fire Alarm Activation 32 Water St. SHYC (workers)

Chief Hoadley reported it was a quiet month. The SBFDD has done drive-by birthday parties and they have been popular. In his Fire Marshall capacity, he has slowly been getting inspections done. Hoping to be caught up by July.

c. Parks, Trees, Rights-of-Way: Burgess Barnes

Been in touch with Bartlett to look at trees on Elm street. Concerned about the holiday tree and will follow up with SVIA to make sure it's taken care of properly.

Warden Callahan has had crew remove the ivy that was enveloping trees on Broad street.

Burgess Rodgers asked about a tree behind the COMO tennis court--.Looks like COMO property or Amtrak. It is not on Borough property.

d. Public Buildings –

Added some landscaping at the Fire House.

Took pictures of masonry work that's coming apart on the doors and will get quote to repair. Chief to send Dave Hlggenbotom contact info.

e. Public Information –

Noted gratitude for Callahan's opening comment.

f. Police

During the month of May 2020 there were 78 incidents in the police report for the Borough including 39 Business Checks/Check Buildings, 13 Medical Assists, 4 Burglar Alarms all of which were false, 3 Motor Vehicle Complaints, 3 911 Hang-ups/Misdials, 3 Fire related calls, 2 Assist Citizens, 2 Nuisance reports, 2 Suspicious Activities and 2 Motor Vehicles Abandoned. There was one incident each of Found Item, Criminal Mischief, Parking Complaint, Trespass and Accident in a Private Lot.

Chief Stewart does not support the use of Golf Carts in the Borough. The regulations are very strict including no use on state roads or roads with speed limits in excess of 25 miles per hour. Use is only permitted during daylight

g. Utilities & Sanitation

Resigning. Need to spend more time in NYC for business. It has been a pleasure being part of the team.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Don Marnell, 35 Bayview Avenue. Noted he will miss Karen and grateful for her service. Here for a few reasons: 1) P & Z: How to return to in-person meetings in Boro Hall. It's hard to do P&Z over zoom--if we get into a second wave. Would like the option of having a zoom meeting. 2) BLM march: facebook discussion about BLM March June 21 starting at town docks to Cannon Square. (Warden Callahan noted he met with Selectman Danielle Cheeseborough and the 21st is off, but might be held on the 28th). 3) Wimpfheimer Park: Understood it was a temporary display. Hollycroft Foundation/ SVIA need to review appropriateness of this art. Liability issue: wondered if the Borough is protected from liability. attracting people to the Borough to attract people to the Borough as part of the sculpture trail.

Barnes: Supposed to have 7 pieces that would rotate and some would be for sale.

Don M: are we changing the use of the space? is it an A24 issue? Were the people living around the park consulted? An active recreational park that now we get to dodge things. Changing the use. We have few places for active recreation

Mastrianni: take Don's comments and make it an agenda item for our next meeting.

Barnes: The intention of the park was to have the sculptures on the side so that people could continue playing in the center park of the park.

Maranell: Communication with the neighbors: this is a change of use.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Status of COVID-19 in region and State reopening plans (Phase II) : Tonight's report from the governor: 6 hospitalizations in New London County, down from over 40 at peak. On Wednesday we enter phase 2, restaurants can have 50% of normal capacity indoors. Noah's are doing well and they'll offer seats inside.

Take a look at how many tables restaurants can have. Such a huge expense. Suggested that we are pro-business, but blocking Water Street would be extremely difficult for the fire trucks. Don't mind a side street. Blocking Water street would be dangerous. Could block part of Church Street possibly for Noah's to have extra tables.

Shaun: Dogwatch is now quieter for the neighbors since there is no outside bar.

Shaun and Kevin will follow up with the restaurants after Wednesday. Closing off Water Street is quite extreme. Perhaps once a month and a lot to think through.

b. Discuss issues raised in Jessica Morrissey email of April 22 (toxins, golf carts, RR crossing) Golf carts are not permissible. Amanda will follow up on toxins at a later meeting. Jeff has contacted Amtrak again. They are still working on an MOA with Borough/Town.

Municipal meetings: could meetings be held outside under a tent? Need internet connection. Possibly a pop-up tent. We will carry over any remaining unfinished business to next month.

Chief Hoadley: Fire pits: Need Town Ordinance. Warden spoke with First Selectman, and she agrees. She asked if Borough Fire Chief could take the lead. Chief Hoadley will work with the other fire chiefs to come up with language for the town as a whole.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Consider requests to use Borough property (C) (V): None

b. Discuss plans for reopening Borough Hall and fire house and for conducting future meetings

Opening to public:

Zoning Officer is comfortable for having public come to the office on Thursday nights to discuss zoning matters. Will stick to by-appointment only for another month.

Re Borough Hall: we have not received guidance from the State. Town hall has sanitizer and plastic shields. Some staff have health issues. Shaun: Wants to keep Borough Hall closed for now.

Fire House:

Chief Hoadley is comfortable with starting to have company meetings downstairs in the bay and could create safe distancing meeting. Would hold off on public meetings there, but feels can meet safely with his own team.

Summary: Keep Borough Hall closed to public at least through July and Zoning Office by appointment only. Continue Zoom meetings in July. The Chief will have his trainings and meetings at fire house starting July

Next month Warden and Burgesses will be via zoom.

c. Discuss July Fourth Parade, Blessing of the Fleet, Holy Ghost Feast plans.

Historical Society will not have the traditional 4h July Parade. There will be a reading of the Declaration of Independence and it will be recorded. Will have frontline people be the readers: someone from Big Y, someone from Post Office. Rob Simmons and the legion will be there. The location will not be disclosed because we do not want crowds.

Blessing of the Fleet: Michael Crowley says there will be a small procession from St Mary Church to the dock and a brief ceremony.

Fred Souza, representing PHGS (by Zoom): Holy Ghost board is meeting on Sunday morning. Bands etc. contacts have been canceled. Every PHGS organization he talked to in RI, MA and CA and Azores have all canceled their feasts that usually happened June 6th.

Fred asked if the Borough will allow a procession. Warden Callahan said that it is up to the PHGS to decide if they want to have the event and whether they want the event to include a procession. Once that decision is made, they can apply to the Borough for permission to hold the procession. The Board of Warden & Burgesses is not going to make a decision on the procession before receiving an application, particularly since the event is over two months in the future.

d. Appoint new sanitation commissioner (V). Warden Callahan moved and Burgess Rogers seconded appointing Burgess Nicholas as sanitation commissioner for the remainder of Burgess von Ruffer's term. Unanimously approved. Warden Callahan will take responsibility for utilities. Warden Callahan presented (virtually) a small memento to Sanitation Commissioner, von Ruffer.

12. OTHER BUSINESS AND DISCUSSION ---

Warden Callahan reread his statement so that it was on the record

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Amy Nicholas and seconded by Kevin Rodgers; meeting was adjourned at 8:39pm/

Respectfully Submitted,
Bergin O'Malley
June 16, 2020