

MINUTES
OPC SPECIALMEETING
OCTOBER 22, 2015

First Selectman Jayme Stevenson called the meeting to order in Room 206 of Town Hall at 8:34 a.m.

Present were First Selectman Jayme Stevenson; Board of Education Chairman Betsy Hagerty-Ross; Board of Finance Chairman Elizabeth Mao, State Representative Terrie Wood, Planning & Zoning Chairman Susan Cameron and RTM Moderator Sarah Seelye. Also in attendance were Board of Education Vice-Chairman Michael Harman, Town Administrator Kate Buch, Vice Chairman of the RTM Rules Committee Lois Schneider and Selectman Susan Marks.

First Selectman

Mrs. Stevenson asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the OPC meeting on September 17, 2015. Liz Mao so moved, seconded by Betsy Hagerty-Ross. The minutes were approved by a vote of 4-0. Mrs. Cameron abstained.

Mrs. Stevenson mentioned that the second phase of interviews for a new Dr. of Finance will take place next week and that the Town's grant application for the property at 41 Hecker Ave. has been approved. The Darien Land Trust is interested in supporting the purchase of this property and the Dr. of Parks & Recreation Pam Gery is excited to explore the opportunities this property provides.

Presently, there are over 850 streetlights in town owned by Eversource. Darien is at the forefront of owning our own streetlights, enabling the Town to provide a better quality of light at a cost savings to residents. On a final note, Mrs. Stevenson announced that Darien has received a Clean Energy Community award from Eversource which recognizes communities for reductions in energy usage. Eversource will issue \$10,000 to Darien to be spent on additional energy saving initiatives.

Board of Education

Mrs. Hagerty-Ross reported that Dr. Brenner has met with all the PTOs. The Board and Dr. Brenner are reviewing cost expenditures which now exceed the budget by two million dollars. The deficit is due to unforeseen costs in special education. Space at MMS and DHS is being closely monitored. Presently, Dr. Brenner is observing and gaining an understanding of the flow of the schools before recommending any changes.

Board of Finance

Mrs. Mao stated that the Board of Finance recently approved a Special Appropriation for the drainage project at Intervale, the funds for an EMS study and recommended the Police Union agreement to the RTM for final approval.

Planning & Zoning

Ms. Cameron announced a Public Hearing will be held on February 9, 2016 regarding the Town Plan of Conservation & Development. She encourages people to take an active role in discussions about the Town Plan. Information about the Town Plan may be found on the Town's website. Additionally, old zoning regulations are being reviewed and appropriate changes will be made as needed.

State Representative

Mrs. Wood began a discussion on the State budget deficit and programs being adversely affected by a decrease in funding. As she mentioned at the previous OPC meeting, there are issues throughout the State due to the closing of State Social Service offices. Residents and our Human Services department staff with questions have no support- not even a contact phone number. Mrs. Stevenson offered to follow-up with the other members of WestCOG to gather information and help coordinate a response.

RTM Moderator

The Rules and TGS&A committees of the RTM are working hard on gathering information from several sources regarding a Blight Ordinance. On the RTM agenda for October 26, 2015: the acceptance of the Police Union agreement, the acceptance of a gift (vehicle) for At Home in Darien, the Special Appropriation for the Intervale drainage project and the Transfer of Care, Custody and Control of the property at 35 Leroy Ave. to the BOE. The last item was unanimously rejected by PZ&H which led the members of OPC to discuss concerns that the PZ&H vote disrespects due process since the RTM already voted to approve this project at its onset.

Mrs. Stevenson called for a motion to adjourn; Mrs. Hagerty-Ross so moved, seconded by Sarah Seelye and approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda O'Leary
Recording Secretary