

**Planning, Zoning and Housing Committee (PZ&H)
of the
Darien Representative Town Meeting (RTM)**

Draft Minutes

Date: October 27, 2014

Place: Darien Town Hall, Room 206

Members Present: Carolyn Bayne, Lucy Fiore, Shedd Glassmeyer, Courtney Haidinger, Ted Hawkins, Joanne Hennessy, James Howe, Spencer McIlmurray, Seth Morton, John van der Kieft, Rob Young

Members Absent: Liz Bacon, Jose Cepeda, John McLean

This was a Special Meeting of the Planning, Zoning and Housing Committee.

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm. Joanne Hennessy, PZ&H Chair, reviewed the agenda.

The single item on the agenda was to discuss and vote on a proposed amendment to RTM Resolution 14-19, scheduled to be voted on by the full RTM later that evening, which would authorize the acquisition of the property known as 21 Hoyt Street. The proposed amendment required that if authorized by the RTM to purchase, the existing structure at 21 Hoyt Street be demolished.

The chairman explained that the amendment grew out concerns expressed to her by several people, including parents in the Holmes School district, who feared that construction vehicles accessing the property for any renovations to the existing structure might endanger school children. Other concerns expressed related to a permanent increase in BoE administrative overhead, and questions about who would maintain the property. The potential to access other town property located behind this parcel was also mentioned, although a question was raised as to whether possible easements for drainage and other utilities might preclude that possibility. In summary, if the RTM wanted to make the purchase of the property contingent upon razing the existing structure, it was suggested that this would be the only opportunity to do so.

Many committee members supported the idea to raze the existing structure, citing the known cost of demolishing the structure vs. the unknown cost to renovate, desire to hold down BoE administrative costs by not allowing them another building, and desire to safeguard the Holmes School population by eliminating the need for construction vehicles to access the property now and, later, staff vehicles. On this last point, First Selectman Jayme Stevenson noted from the audience that once the town acquires the property it would have jurisdiction over the traffic flow of any vehicles entering or exiting the property, construction or otherwise, and

therefore safety would not be an issue if the existing structure were renovated. It was also noted that whether the building is razed or renovated, overhead will be required for some period of time, as the building cannot be razed while school is in session. It was suggested that the earliest it might be razed is during the April spring break, or, more likely, summer vacation.

A few members expressed that the amendment to require the building be razed might be premature, given that the Milone & MacBroom facilities study is currently underway, and that the decision of what to do with the existing structure should rest with the BoS and the BoE based on the findings of this study.

A motion was made by Spencer McIlmurray (seconded by Shedd Glassmeyer) that RTM Resolution 14-19 be amended to provide as a condition of the purchase that the structures on said property be demolished in the reasonably near future, and that in the interim said structure not be used by the BoE or any town board, commission or agency. The motion passed with 8 members voting YES, 3 members voting NO, and no abstentions.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Bayne, PZ&H Clerk