

## OPC Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2023 / Room 206

Attendance: First Selectman, Monica McNally; Board of Finance Chairman, Jim Palen; Planning and Zoning Chairman, Stephen Olvany; RTM Moderator, Seth Morton; and Board of Education Vice-Chairman, Jill McCammon. Also in Attendance: Town Administrator Kate Buch and State Representative Tracy Marra.

Mrs. McNally called the meeting to order at 8:35 am.

Ms. McNally called for a motion to approve of the OPC Minutes of March 8, 2023. Mr. Olvany noted the V20 development was referred to as The Heights in the March OPC minutes and has since changed its name to Noroton Crossing. Mr. Morton moved, Mr. Palen seconded and the motion passed. Jill McCammon and Mr. Olvany abstained.

**First Selectman** Ms. McNally provided updates on:

- Ms. McNally helped with a recent clean-up effort at Selleck's Woods. Earth Day is April 22<sup>nd</sup> and she reminded residents to be safe while working on any Earth Day projects.
- The Town will hold a special Arbor Day event and distribute 400 native trees/shrubs to residents. A press release will contain details once they are finalized.
- The Youth Commission, in partnership with Person-to-Person, will hold a food drive at Koons parking lot across from Tilley Pond Park on Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to noon.
- Applications for the Great Island Advisory Committee are now being accepted. The Committee's Charge, an FAQ, and the application may be found on the Town website. The HHR Building Committee is looking for two members.

**State Representative** Tracy Marra provided updates on:

- Ms. Marra noted that she and State Representative Tom O'Dea will hold an information session in the auditorium of Town Hall on April 26<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 pm- 8:00 pm. They will share information about the 2023 legislative session and answer questions from constituents. They will highlight bills on Housing, Planning & Development and ones that impact trees – including a bill to require the DOT to have a net zero loss of trees.

**Board of Finance** Mr. Palen provided updates on:

- On April 6<sup>th</sup> the Board of Finance passed the budgets (Town and BOE) setting the mil rate at an increase of 2.3%. The budget is scheduled to be on the RTM's May 8<sup>th</sup> agenda for final approval.
- Mr. Palen commented that the Town's revaluation is underway and will come into effect in October of 2023, which will impact the July 1, 2024 and Jan. 1, 2025 tax payments.
- Bonding for Great Island, small capital projects, and part of the HHR construction projects took place on April 6<sup>th</sup>. Over 20 institutions had interest in bonding which resulted in securing \$40 million of long term bonding at 3.6%, and \$70 million of short term debt at 2.7%.
- Mr. Palen has suggested that over the summer, the Town and BOE meet to consider ways to reduce the cost of health care, both individually and together, and should consider being self-insured.

**Planning & Zoning** Mr. Olvany provided updates on:

- The Planning & Zoning Commission opted out of a 2021 State Accessory Dwelling Regulation and is working on creating a regulation specific to Darien. A public hearing will be held once the second draft is ready.
- Mr. Olvany reviewed the progress at Darien Commons, including the leasing of apartments and opening of retail spaces. At this time, five new students have moved into apartments and six relocated from other parts of town. The building at 40 Heights Road will replace windows and change the façade to match the new development. A new traffic study may be needed and it should include walkability.
- An application for 46 units per acre at 7 Sedgewick is before the Commission. This is the highest density per acre application ever received. The applicant is seeking two tech zoning changes. The project must be consistent with the Town Plan of Conservation and Development and go before ARB.

**RTM** Mr. Morton reviewed items before the RTM:

- The RTM voted to appoint Mark Adiletta as its representative to the Great Island Advisory Committee.
- The RTM will vote on the Board of Finance budget on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Board of Education** Mrs. McCammon provided updates on:

- Regarding the budget, the Board of Education (BOE) will :
  - Initiate conversations in early June so that policy and program decisions are made outside the budget process
  - Will look for ways to manage budget questions to reduce redundancy and improve efficiency
  - Manage dialogues with Town bodies (especially the BOF and the RTM)
  - Improve five year forecasting
- The Board is seeking a new Assistant Director of Curriculum, and hopes to have the position filled by mid May.
- Updates on the ORBC and the HHRBC were provided.

Ms. McNally called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Morton moved. Mr. Palen seconded and all voted in favor.

Mrs. McNally adjourned the meeting at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda O'Leary