

OPC Meeting Minutes

October 11, 2023 / Room 206

Attendance: First Selectman, Monica McNally; Planning and Zoning Chairman, Stephen Olvany; RTM Moderator, Seth Morton; and Board of Education Chairman, Duke Dineen. Also in Attendance: State Representative Tracy Marra.

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

Ms. McNally called for a motion to approve of the OPC Minutes of September 13, 2023. Mr. Olvany moved, Mr. Morton seconded and all voted in favor.

First Selectman Ms. McNally updates:

- The Ox Ridge Elementary School ribbon cutting ceremony was held on Saturday, October 7th. Construction was completed on time, and likely under budget. Ms. McNally thanked the members of the building committee.
- DOT is preparing for a bridge replacement (bridge slide) on I-95 in Westport over two upcoming weekends. Road closures are expected to severely impact traffic. More information may be found on the DOT website.
- The Great Island bus grounds tours are rescheduled for Saturday, October 28th.
- Landscaping at Highland Farm has been replenished with 15 Bayberry shrubs, 4 Holly trees, and 11 Red Cedar trees. Next Spring, the area of the Noroton Heights train station will be replanted with a variety of trees and shrubs- 76 new plantings in total. Ed Gentile was thanked for his continued efforts with DOT and Eversource to secure the plantings.

Planning & Zoning Mr. Olvany updates:

- The Commission has approved the first workforce housing application in Darien. The Noroton Fire Department has purchased 1921 Post Road, which will house three volunteer firemen. The approval required a zoning change on the site, to municipal use.
- Residential houses under construction on Long Neck Point Road are almost completed.
- Phase 1 of the Corbin project is complete, with 38 apartments rented and all retail space leased. Phase 2 is beginning.
- Darien Commons has 122 apts. (including 16 affordable units) and 93% are leased. The apartments added a total of 5 children to the school population. Moltos and Gregory's should be opening soon.
- The Vaccaro (Palmer's) development is underway. The development will include 65 apartments, an 11,500 square foot Goddard School, and 29,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space.
- Geoff Ball is stepping down from the Commission. Mr. Olvany expressed appreciation for his service.
- 40 Heights Road will be getting new windows, and a new façade
- The old Subway site is currently being remediated for environmental issues. Once remediation is complete the property may go back on the market.

Board of Education Mr. Dineen updates:

- Mr. Dineen also mentioned the Ox Ridge Elementary School ribbon cutting and expressed appreciation for the work of the building committee. Some finances still need to be worked on, along with applications for State reimbursement funds.
- Robin Nelson has replaced Tracy Wurm on the BOE.
- A 3 year agreement has been reached with Administration after five meetings – no arbitration was needed. The agreement may be ready for RTM approval in January. The Care, Maintenance, and Operation of the Ox Ridge Elementary School may be transferred to the BOE at the same meeting.
- The BOE is working on its budget meeting schedule and next year’s school calendar.
- A group of parents have asked for consideration of a later start time for DHS. New Canaan and Wilton have adopted a later start time. Among the many things to be considered are: the impact on other school start times, contracts for teachers and staff, after school activities, and bus scheduling.

RTM Mr. Morton reviewed items before the RTM:

- The Oct. 16th RTM meeting was canceled due to a lack of business.
- November meeting will focus on electing district Chairs and Vice-Chairs and electing members to the Rules Committee. The Public Works Union Contract will likely be the only business item addressed at the annual organizational meeting of the RTM.
- Revisions to Appendix B, committee responsibilities, are being determined to more accurately reflect committee business. Ms. McNally asked if the final revisions would be complete before committee members are assigned this November.

State Representative Tracy Marra updates:

- A Special Session held on September 26th led to the passing of legislation moving the CT Primary to early April. Clarification to an Epi Pen regulation, and approval of an Election Monitor for Bridgeport passed.
- Ms. Marra expressed empathy for the people of Israel. Members of the community with relatives in Israel have reached out to her for help with flights for family members and she is able to point them in the right direction to get assistance.
- Ms. Marra works with “Filling in the Blanks” to provide food to children in need on weekends and over holiday breaks from school. The group is collecting the board game Sorry to distribute with food in December. A collection box will be in the lobby of Town Hall until October 27th.

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

Mrs. McNally adjourned the meeting at 9:26 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda O’Leary