

## Stonington Borough Comfort Station Taskforce Special Meeting

Thursday November 9th, 2023, 7 pm

Borough Hall – 26 Church St Stonington

### Meeting Minutes

1. Call to order 7pm. Present: Tim, Al, Sarael, Karen, Ellen, Amanda, Kevin, Jesse, Janet, Jean, Michael, Julia and about 12 members of the public.
2. Review minutes of November 2nd meeting; A motion to approve the minutes was seconded by Jean
3. Update on action items from November 2nd meeting

Two key actions: One group (Group A: Kevin, Al, Karen, Chuck, and Julia) looked at the Boro Bodega and Borough Hall; another group (Ellen, Jesse, and Tim) looked at portable options.

Group A met with Andrew Field first to look at Boro Bodega. Julia commented that it would be difficult to make the bathroom(s) wheelchair accessible and received confirmation from the building official that it is not possible to build “public restrooms” without making them wheelchair accessible unless they are within 500 feet of another accessible public restroom.

Kevin commented that the building has a stone foundation, which would have to be cut, potentially making the building more vulnerable to flood. Al mentioned that the design of the building is symmetrical, and this feature would be lost with this construction.

Group A then looked at Borough Hall. They looked at the existing restroom, which is wheelchair accessible. The door leading from the vestibule into the back hallway is not accessible. There was a discussion about removing the door to open up that area and adding a glass door on the front of the building; these changes would improve visibility, light, and safety. Julia mentioned that the sewer connection seems to be in the front of the building, which inspired thought about an additional non-accessible bathroom right beneath the stairway. The group agreed that the scale is tipping toward Borough Hall. Kevin mentioned that cameras could be placed at the exterior front of the building and inside. Locks could be changed and added in various locations. The technology already exists in the elevator to lock it at certain times of the day.

Michael added that Sue Cordeiro has no objections to this update as long as the equipment space is protected. Kevin spoke with Ann Fiore whose only concern is that she doesn't want visitors to come up and ask her about tourist information.

Group B looked at playground portable options, including the space near the existing porta potty. One has 2 ADA bathrooms that is 12'x6'. It is a white box that can be sided, and many features can be added to make it look like a little cottage. This is labeled as the High End Porta loo option in the attached cost estimates. This is not on a trailer. The second option is a low-end, single unit - HCA; this was a more expensive option. The third option reviewed was the addition of a nice fence and planting to the existing porta potty - and perhaps addition of an additional unit. The Town owns the land where the playground and dog park are. This means

the town will have to approve any structures there. It currently pays for the porta potty at the playground, and therefore may be willing to work with the Borough on funding.

4. Discuss cost estimates for shortlisted properties. (see attached)

The committee reviewed the cost expenditure spreadsheets which include information regarding

- capital expenditure costs
- annual costs

Cost estimates span over a 10-year period.

5. Public Comment:

**Nancy Donahue**, 144 water street: porta potty is being cleaned now twice per week. It was last cleaned on Tuesday, and it's a mess. Nancy asked if the current porta potty has insurance; it does not, because it's rented by the Town. What does Mystic River Park have in terms of bathrooms? Kevin responded that they have men's and women's bathrooms which are attached to an existing building; there are three stalls in the women's room and two stalls/two urinals in the men's room. It is heavily used.

**Jennifer Olson**: Jennifer read a letter from **Peter Russo** of Harbor Edge condominiums (letter attached), and **Leslie Bartholomew & Paul Lesnewski** of 33 Northwest Street (letter attached). Jennifer's comments: **Jennifer** is concerned re unattended children at the playground being so close to a bathroom. She is opposed to having a bathroom near a playground; it is not safe, and she believes it's going to be a problem.

**Bruce McKinnon**: 15 Gold St. Bruce agrees with Jennifer that a bathroom at or near a playground is a bad idea. The Borough Hall option seems to be the best. He asked about SVIA-owned properties and suggested the Merrill House.

**Kate McKinnon** 15 Gold St commented that porta potties are not attractive, something else would be more aesthetically pleasing.

6. Discuss drafting recommendation report to Warden and Burgess

- Kevin made a motion to remove the low-end portable option from the list of recommendations; the motion was seconded by Amanda and approved.
- Kevin made a motion to remove the Boro Bodega from the list of recommendations; the motion was seconded by Janet and approved.
- Kevin made a motion to remove the high end portable rental option; the motion was seconded by Jean and approved

The remaining options include the following:

- Borough Hall - one bathroom or two
- High end portable - buy and try locations
- Existing with fence - expand and make more attractive

A report needs to be prepared by the committee. Draft Copy required for distribution Tuesday.

- Karen and Al will write a summary of conclusions
- Jesse will update numbers for portable options
- Kevin will update the cost spreadsheet
- Tim will do a site plan of the Town Dock area with options for porta loos.

7. Committee agreed to the next meeting to be Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm, Borough Hall
8. Adjournment: 8:58