

Stonington Borough Comfort Station Taskforce

Special Meeting

Thursday October 5th, 2023

7 pm

Fire House – Water St Entrance

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 7pm
2. Taskforce members present were Kevin Bowdler, Burgess; Amanda Barnes, Burgess, Jesse Diggs, Annette Bienkowski (ex-officio), Sarael Sargent, Al Razzano, Jean Fiore, Chuck Harding, Julia Leeming (ex-officio), Janet McClendon, Karen Von Ruffer Hills, Tim Olsen. Four members of the public.

Kevin announced that there had been an issue at Borough Hall this week when the building was left unlocked; when the administrative assistant returned, there was a group of people in the building, who had been told to use the bathroom there. Kevin asked everyone to please refrain from suggesting potential restroom locations as current options.

2. Review minutes from 9/28/23:
 - Chuck asked if the minutes could be corrected to reflect that the United Church location was a negative, not a positive. The location was negative, because it impacted more than ten local residences and is located on a narrow street with parking on both sides.
 - Chuck noted that Wad Square was listed as a tbd instead of a no.
 - Tim requested that the minutes reflect that the upgraded porta potties should be nice looking.
3. Discussion re updates to location analyses:
 - Library: Jean asked if the library could open their bathroom(s) for special events.
 - NESS: not very close to merchants
 - Lighthouse: Karen updated the analysis to include the disadvantages. She asked Liz Wood to present the proposal to the Board for a formal denial.
 - St. Mary's: Jean explained that once enters through the main entrance to the church, goes right or left, and then down the stairs. The bathrooms are right below the main entrance. Tim added that a disadvantage for this location is the distance from Water Street.
 - Playground: Tim added that a ground level structure that's flood-proof with less visible impact would be preferable. Julia noted that plumbing and electrical is not possible flood-proofed (permanent) structure in a flood zone, but that a variance could be applied for. Tim asked for the removal of or change in Item 16 in the analysis. While Jesse disagreed, the committee voted to eliminate #16. Tim asked if the committee would be sensitive to maintaining the views in this location. Ellen will look into a more ideal location near the playground and a smaller unit.
 - Bodega: no adjustments; ideal location
 - Wadawanuck Square: Sarael commented that there *are* neighbors, so this should be listed as a disadvantage. Sarael also noted that it is the most expensive option. Jesse: not a good location

because of distance from center of village – (similar to PO St. Mary’s). Its visibility when driving into town should not be considered an advantage. Chuck: a stand-alone building is more prone to vandalism, vagrancy, and drug use. Al: we need to be good stewards of Wadawanuck Square. Babcock donated the property for a library and park. Wadawanuck Square was updated as a no in a 6 to 4 vote.

- Town Dock extension: SNEFLA is not in favor of this location.
- Dog Park: definitely below BFE; better to consider existing bathrooms next door.
- Sewer Treatment Plant: Amanda is looking at existing bathrooms with Dan Smith and Danielle Chesebrough.
- United Church: Chuck: the board is not interested in opening the church’s bathroom to the public. Jean: one reason the location at Wad Square was chosen was because it faced the PO and St. Mary’s; this is different, because it’s surrounded by homes.
- PHGS: update is that Tom Arruda would like to discuss the option. After discussion re location inside bar and lack of ADA compliance, the committee decided that PHGS is a no.
- Fire house no change.
- Merrill house: tbd
- Matthews Park: tbd
- East Lawn: tbd

3. Public Comment: none

4. Current list of potential locations as of 10/5/2023:

St. Mary’s Church: Yes

LaGrua Center: Yes

The Point (parking area): Yes

Playground: Yes

Borough Hall: Yes

Boro Bodega: Yes

Firehouse: Yes

Sewer Treatment Plant: TBD

Merrill House: TBD

Matthews Park: TBD

The Point (East Lawn): TBD

PHGS: No

United Church: No

Town Dock Buildings: No

Dog Park: No

Wadawanuck Square: No

NESS: No

Library: No

Wimpfheimer Park: No

Stonington Lighthouse: No

Dodge Paddock: No

Waylands Warf: No

Post Office: No

Calvary Church: No

LaGrua Park: No

5. Discuss rubric for grading each location.

- Added a requirement for zoning variance;
- Tim – change “value of surrounding residences” to “number of surrounding residences”.
- Chuck: statute for intensification of use for change in use talks about impact of value of surrounding residences.

- Kevin suggested looking at Stonington GIS to find list of houses within 100 feet for each location.
- Tim: change “ability to diminish flood zone impact” to #1 is VE, #3 is AE, #5 is neither VE nor AE. If something is moveable, it should be a #5. Two separate gradings for movable v flood zone impact.
- 1 – BAD, 2 – NEUTRAL, 3 – POSITIVE or moveable;
- Tim suggested a change to “attractive location for residents” to look at aesthetic impact and visual impact.
- Change first items to one: “ease and cost of construction”
- Safety: personal/location
- Remove litigation

Chuck and Kevin will come up with a new rubric to distribute.

Everyone will fill out the rubric for each location prior to next week’s meeting.

Annette asked everyone to please consider a location that makes sense for the businesses.

Jesse commented that tables can be deceiving and suggested looking at things logically.

Amy asked if funding is criteria. It’s too hard to look at this yet.

6. Adjourn