

Stonington Borough Comfort Station Taskforce

Special Meeting Minutes

Thursday October 26th, 2023, 7 pm

1. The meeting was called to order at 7 pm
2. In attendance: Amanda Barnes, Sarael Sargent, Ellen Wightman, Tim Olson, Allegra Griffiths, Karen von Ruffer Hills, Al Razzano, Chuck Hartmann, Jesse Digs, Jean Fiore
3. No changes or edits were requested to the minutes of October 11th meeting
4. Review the summary of taskforce members prioritization of the seven locations still on the list: The committee reviewed the ranking spreadsheet, on which Borough Hall and Boro Bodega have the highest ratings, with Borough Hall ranked at #1. At the bottom are St. Mary's and the Point portable option.
5. Public Comment:
Frederick Nicholas (1 Main Street) requested data on need/use.
Sarael found a counter that can be used for data collection.
6. Reduce the shortlist by two or ideally, three:
The committee voted to eliminate St. Mary's and the Fire House with the caveat that either can be considered in the future if other possibilities are ruled out.
7. To do for next meeting and date: November 2nd, 7pm, at the fire station.
 - Al will talk with Perry at A-Z re commercial building access (Borough Hall).
 - Sarael will talk with Julia Leeming about design options/necessity for Borough Hall
 - Amanda will invite Andrew Field to next meeting to discuss Boro Bodega
The committee made a list of questions for Andrew:
 - ❖ Will/can there be two restrooms or only one?
 - ❖ What will/can the hours be? (8-6?)
 - ❖ Is there space for a potential baby changing station, urinal in addition to toilets/sink? Is wheelchair accessibility possible?
 - ❖ Expense/cost: what does Andrew want from the Borough? A long-term lease? Rent?
 - ❖ General demands regarding cleanliness?
 - ❖ What is the timeframe?
 - ❖ Insurance information
 - There are committee members who believe a portable option shouldn't be the only option, while other committee members believe that upgraded portable options could be an acceptable alternative should the Bodega or Borough Hall become unattainable alternatives.
 - The committee recommends to the Board of Warden and Burgesses an immediate upgrade (nicer unit and planting, etc.) to the playground/dog park portables, as well as an upgrade to the point unit making it wheelchair accessible.
 - Next week we will discuss specifically our recommendations regarding the portable toilet(s) at the playground/dog park area.
8. Adjourn: 8:31

To the Stonington public bathroom exploratory committee:

This comment is submitted by Steve and Nina Cook. We own 2 properties, 2 & 4 Pearl St., which are also bordered by Gold and Northwest streets.

We attended a meeting a few weeks ago and it was our impression that putting portable bathrooms near the playground had been taken off the table, although the possibility of putting them "under the tree"

near the dog park was still a low level possibility. It has come to our attention that this is not necessarily the case and portable bathrooms near the playground are still under consideration, an option we adamantly oppose.

The Borough Hall already has the space and the plumbing; plus it is centrally located. The costs to maintain it will be much less than the rental and maintenance of the portable bathrooms and IT ALREADY EXISTS!!!

Furthermore, we spoke to the Library staff about the public use of their restrooms and they had no objection to people using either one. The Library has a handicapped accessible ground floor bathroom with a door, that can be locked, to separate it from the Library proper. This could allow people to use the Library bathroom, after hours.

Although this was barely discussed, public restrooms located near the playground, depending on their design and structure could attract unruly teenagers, unsavory characters, sexual predators and homeless people. We live in a bubble in Stonington but should not think that we are immune to such things.

The use of a pre-existing structure, should be the priority. It will save the Borough money and will not deface our community.

PLEASE do not ruin our quaint village!

Sincerely,

Steve and Nina Cook