

Town of Greenwich

Board of Selectmen Meeting

February 9, 2023

10 a.m.

Cone Room and via Zoom webinar

APPROVED MINUTES

1. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 10:12 a.m.

a. Attendance

- a. First Selectman Fred Camillo - present
- b. Selectwoman Lauren Rabin – present
- c. Selectperson Janet Stone McGuigan – present

First Selectman Camillo asked for a moment of silence in memory of town resident Winston Robinson and for the victims of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria.

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular meeting of January 23, 2023

Upon a motion by Ms. Rabin and a second by Ms. Stone McGuigan, the minutes were approved unanimously.

- b. Special meeting of January 23, 2023

Upon a motion by Ms. Rabin and a second by Ms. Stone McGuigan, the minutes were approved unanimously.

- c. Special meeting of January 25, 2023

Upon a motion by Ms. Rabin and a second by Ms. Stone McGuigan, the minutes were approved unanimously.

3. First Selectman's Updates

First Selectman Camillo began by saying he'd sworn in two new firefighters on Monday and wished them very well in their future careers serving the Town as they began training. He then said he had attended an art exhibit on Sunday by David Licata at the

Senior Center and encouraged people to go. He spoke about a presentation the week prior at Town Hall by resident and historian Missy Wolfe on colonial Greenwich. He said it was very interesting to hear about what Greenwich was like then and how it was known as the frontier between Connecticut and the rest of the eastern seaboard which was held by the British. Greenwich was known as the frontier, he said, because part of it was split between those loyal to Great Britain and those seeking independence. He said people were losing lives and neighbors were fighting neighbors. Noting he was a townie and a former history teacher, Camillo said that Wolfe “even schooled me” on town history and the town seal as she noted Gen. Israel Putnam never made it to Stamford on the day of his famous ride, calling it “not a good day for Greenwich with the town left in tatters.” Camillo added that Wolfe is still working on her research on colonial Greenwich and wants to take it up to 1776. Camillo then reported on testimony he gave on bills before the state legislature, mentioning House Bills 6590 and 6593, which he said would erode local control and that one would allow other municipalities and housing authorities to come to Greenwich with condemnation powers. He said that was why he opposed the bills and that it is “incumbent upon us to take care of these things ourselves before the state comes in.” Camillo ended his updated by offering his condolences to Chief of Police James Heavey after the passing of his father and encouraged others to offer their condolences as well.

4. Selectwomen’s Updates

Selectwoman Rabin said the Selectmen’s Nominations Advisory Committee was still looking for candidates for the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency and if anyone was interested they would “love to get you into the process.” She reported the Central Middle School Building Committee, which she is a part of, had selected a construction manager at risk at its meeting that morning. Rabin also reported she had been reappointed to the board of directors for the Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA).

Selectperson Stone McGuigan, thanked Camillo for honoring Winston Robinson’s memory and said she’d had the pleasure of serving with him on the board of the non-profit Barbara’s House. She said he would absolutely be missed. Stone McGuigan noted that Feb. 2 had been Groundhog Day and it had also been the day the Sustainability Committee, which she co-chairs. Stone McGuigan said unlike the Groundhog Day movie the committee was “not stuck in a repeating loop” and was in fact moving forward and expanding its community engagement by launching a newsletter and putting together a speaker series. She said in April, in conjunction with the Town’s annual Earth Day proclamation, the committee would be giving out a sustainability award to members of the community who embody the spirit of sustainability. Stone McGuigan said that night she would be at the opening for the new exhibit at the Flinn Gallery in Greenwich Library called Glow. Stone McGuigan then said that on Feb. 14 Barbara’s House would have a bake sale in Town Hall with kids selling treats to raise money for the kids to do a fun

activity or go on a fun excursion. She said the bake sale was “an exercise in democracy” because the kids set the prices and then voted on what activity or excursion they liked, adding the kids were being helped in their baking by local chef Juan Benitez.

5. Old Business

No old business was heard.

6. New business

- a. First read of Municipal Improvement application for Delavan Avenue at Chestnut/Veterans Way.

Deputy Commissioner of Public Works Jim Michel presented the first read of the application for municipal improvement from the Planning and Zoning Commission on intersection improvements. He said the project came to the Town from the Byram Neighborhood Association over their concerns for safety in Byram. He said there was a presentation from the BNA to the Board of Selectmen in July 2021 and the Town had been working with them ever since. Michel said money had been budgeted in the FY 23 budget and it was being utilized for the project. He said the intersection had been one of the “main locations of concern” due to Delavan being a “main arterial” between Interstate 95 and Port Chester because a “significant amount of traffic goes through that road.” He said it was also a major pedestrian route for students going to New Lebanon School and to downtown Byram and the library. He said there had been a number of crashes over the years and as part of the improvement the Town wanted to shorten the crossing distance by about 50 percent on Delavan and adding flashing signs activated by pedestrians when they are walking through to the intersection. Michel reported DPW had been asked many times if it could just put a stop sign there but there were regulations that had to be followed and the volume of traffic in both directions had to be close to each other. He said the volume of traffic on Delevan was significantly larger than the one on two side streets and “does not justify or warrant” placement of stop signs. Michel said the project had gone through the Byram Neighborhood Association and this was the option that had moved forward.

Camillo said he appreciated all the work that had gone into it and what the BNA had done. Camillo asked if there was room for a bike lane but Michel said they did not have the available space in the road for them. Michel said no parking spaces have been eliminated even in place where green space is being added. Camillo praised the adding of green space so it was not just a “concrete boulevard.” He praised the project as “really good.”

Rabin noted that her mother used to live in the area and she knows that people parking there makes the whole intersection “challenging.” She said she wasn’t sure if this was something DPW was able to address but the 18-wheel trucks going through the area makes it such a tight fit. She says this happens even though there are signs for no through trucks at the intersection of Delevan and Frontage as well as from the Port Chester side. Rabin said she did not understand why the trucks were able to still go through.

Members of the public were recognized at this point both in-person and via Zoom. New Lebanon School Principal Aly Michaelson spoke first via Zoom and said the school had about 17 students living up on Chestnut Street, many of whom who walk to and from school every day. She said she supported anything that enhances the safety for students, especially with walking paths. BNA President Joe Kantorski then spoke via Zoom and said he supported the MI application. He recalled the BNA’s presentation in July 2021 and said it was well established then that crossing the streets of Byram “is a big deal and it shouldn’t be.” He called the intersection notorious for being so dangerous and thanked Michel and DPW for “responding to our concerns.” David Wold then spoke in person as a member of the Byram Veterans Association. He said they were all for safety measures in that area as he noted the advanced age of some of the members and the trouble some of them have getting into the building. He said there were questions about access to the association’s building if the proposed improvements are made and there had been comments from veterans about whether there could be additional openings in the road to provide access in and out of the building. He said there was also problem with the parking spaces because of how tight the area can be. Camillo said he would discuss access to the building further with DPW. Michel said an additional look could be taken to see about creating some kind of loading and unloading zone for people to be dropped off by the building but said it could impact the planned amount of green space. Robert Genna spoke in person and said that he wasn’t sure the changes would slow any drivers down and suggested signage be put up showing drivers their speed, similar to what is up at Western Middle School. Michel said DPW had looked at the speed of drivers and that the speed on Delevan Avenue was not “significantly higher” than the speed limit. He said that was determined from a study going from Feb. 2022 to Feb. 2023. Michel said he was not saying speed wasn’t a problem but there were school zone signs up that displays speeds when school is in session. He said the intersection improvements could slow drivers down. Lucy von Brachel spoke in person and said she had worked with Pedal Greenwich on bike lanes in town and she said Delevan “will never be good for cyclists” so Pedal Greenwich was looking to change the East Coast Greenway path to avoid it. She said the trucks Rabin referred to were likely going to Interstate Lumber and there were not many other places for them to go because railroad bridges made it so trucks can’t pass going to Port Chester or Interstate Lumber. She said it was important for this to be a safe

place to cross for the students going to the bus stop. She called the improvements “crucial to our neighborhood.” Liz Eckert, vice chair of the BNA, spoke in person said she walks three miles a day in Byram and that she could not stress enough “how dangerous this walk is.” She spoke about how in 2019 on a rainy day her husband was walking the dog and was struck by a vehicle in the intersection. He suffered injuries to his arm and neck and Eckert said it was an issue that meant a lot to her personally because of it. She encouraged the selectmen to approve it. Brian Howtoa spoke in person and said he was new to the area and his kids go to New Lebanon School. He said it was great to be part of a community that is “so supportive and interested in keeping its neighborhood safe.” He said it was a great improvement and said the parking in the area also created line of sight issues for pedestrians. He suggested if the proposed green space could be expanded it could do a lot to make it easier to see. Michelle Carvajal spoke via Zoom said there was no doubt that making the improvement was supported and said there are other parts beyond this intersection that drivers were using as a cut through from I95. She also noted ongoing development in Port Chester building new housing and questioned whether the improvements would be able to “adapt and flow” if traffic increases in the area. Camillo said this was a “good point” and he would speak to Port Chester’s government to get an update on ongoing projects there. Peter Alexander spoke in person and credited Carvajal for looking forward. He said he was in favor of the project and also said the town should be “very careful” about what kinds of traffic increases there might be and put it into the plan. Matt Popp spoke via Zoom but was interrupted when the Zoom stream cut out for him. He briefly expressed concern about parking in the area by Burgers, Shakes and Fries when he returned. Ann Blumensaadt spoke in person and said the flashing signs that are used for pedestrians can be obscured by trees and questioned if they should be moved. Michel said one would be put at the locations and they would have more visibility.

No vote was taken as the item was a first read.

b. Lease Renewal for Mianus Boat and Yacht Club

Dan Carlsen assistant director for the Department of Parks and Recreation presented the terms of the 10-year lease renewal for the club. He said the current lease expires on March 1, 2023 and the club has the right, privilege and option to renew it for an additional 10-year term, which it has. Carlsen said there were no proposed changes to the terms and conditions of the current lease and it had been reviewed by the town’s Risk Management Department. The lease is for the property to be leased from the town for one dollar a year and the new lease would expire March 1, 2023. Camillo said he supported it. No questions were asked but Stone McGuigan questioned whether the vote should wait until the board’s Feb. 23 meeting to hold to the process the board has for first and second reads of items. Camillo said second reads were normally done but sometimes there were things

that were time sensitive or when a second read wasn't necessary. Carlsen said since the current lease was set to expire on March 1, they wanted the lease to be handled. He said he checked with the town's legal department and was told since there were no changes it would be comfortable with a single read. Camillo said he believed it could be done without a second read because it was straightforward and had a lot of support in the community. Stone McGuigan said she would rather wait but saw nothing controversial about the lease.

Upon a motion by Ms. Rabin and a second by Ms. Stone McGuigan, the lease renewal approved unanimously.

7. Public comment

No additional public comment was heard.

8. Appointments/Nominations

Upon a motion by Ms. Rabin and a second by Ms. Stone McGuigan, the board unanimously approved the appointment of Tina Courpas as a regular member of the Selectmen's Nominations Advisory Committee for a term ending June 30, 2026.

9. Adjournment

At 11:04 a.m., Selectwoman Rabin made a motion to adjourn. Upon a second by Selectperson Stone McGuigan, the motion was approved unanimously.