

Town of Greenwich

Board of Selectmen Meeting

March 22, 2023

1 p.m.

Mazza Room and via Zoom webinar

APPROVED MINUTES

1. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 p.m.

a. Attendance

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

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Special meeting of March 8, 2023

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

- b. Regular meeting of March 9, 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 said he would be attending that night's meeting of the Northeast Greenwich Association and he would be giving an update on Town matters there. He reported the previous weekend's St. Patrick's Day Parade was very successful and it was fun for everyone despite some cold weather. He thanked all those who participated and all those who organized the parade. He then noted the ceremony that was held for Greenwich High School's championship football team the last week. He said it was the third champion that was honored from GHS during this school year and said a fourth has also won high honors with the crew team taking home a national title. Camillo said the parade to honor the champion teams would be held June 11 and there would be a ceremony at Town Hall to honor the crew team. Camillo said Greenwich continues to be "Titledown CT." Camillo thanked GHS student Tom McKinney for a cleanup day he

organized at the school to clean up garbage. Camillo said there would be a ceremony at Town Hall on March 24 to mark Greek Independence Day and thanked Karen Fassuliotis for organizing the event. Camillo said on Sunday March 26 there would be a one-year anniversary celebration at Cups and Cones in Old Greenwich and on March 28 he would be part of the ceremony celebrating the reopening of the Bruce Museum. He said he would also be taking part in a Greenwich United Way mental health forum that same night. Camillo said he was again honorary chair of the April 1 Scouting for Food event from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Town's Fleet Department and the Cos Cob Fire Station. Camillo urged people to take part in the event if they had non-perishable food to donate that would go to Neighbor to Neighbor. Camillo said on April 2, there would be a ribbon cutting for Chabad of Greenwich's new synagogue location on Field Point Road, which he noted was across the street from Town Hall. He said the UJA would also have its Teen Changemakers award that day as well at the Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich. Camillo also announced the Rowan Center would have a ceremony at Town Hall on April 3 for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. He said the organization does "a very good job" and the Town was happy to host them. Camillo said he would be taking part in the April 4 ceremony for the Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich's youth of the year awards, which he said was "always a great night." On April 6, Camillo said he would be going to Western Middle School for career day. Camillo closed by saying the Town had heard from Congressman Jim Himes that the Town was to receive \$500,000 in the federal budget for work on dredging Greenwich Harbor.

4. Selectwomen's Updates

Selectwoman Rabin reported on the Central Middle School Building Committee and said the committee had a lengthy meeting on Monday night as well as Tuesday morning. He said they had been working on the educational specifications for the new CMS and working on making a recommendation to the Board of Education on how to get the new school into a "smaller footprint." Rabin said they met with architects and school stakeholders to determine what was really needed in the new school building and after the committee's latest meeting they were going to recommend to the Board of Education a program space of 81,544 square feet. She said the decision on what to do with that recommendation would be made by the Board of Education and if the Board of Education agreed with it, it meant the new school would be 125,450 square feet.

Selectperson Stone McGuigan said there would be a webinar that night put together by Cos Cob Library for the Town's Conservation Commission about the spread of invasive species. She said the annual Essentially Ellington festival would take place at Greenwich High School's Performing Arts Center on Saturday which was also the day of a turtle walk at Greenwich Audubon where the community could learn more about Binney Park's population of native and invasive turtles. She said the Friends of Binney Park love the

turtles but have to always remind people not to feed them. Stone McGuigan noted that the Town is still in its budget season and that the Board of Estimate and Taxation would hold its public hearing on Wednesday, March 29 in the Town Hall Meeting Room. She said there was not going to be a Zoom option for the hearing and because a large attendance was expected and because it was important to make the events like this accessible she requested the BET to make Zoom an option. On April 1, Stone McGuigan said there would be an event hosted by Waste Free Greenwich at Christ Church Greenwich to kick off Earth Month. She said the Sustainability Committee would present its first Sustainability Award along with the proclamation. Stone McGuigan noted the Bruce Museum was opening back up to the public on April 2 and followed up on Camillo's comments about Greenwich Harbor and thanked Himes for his help in securing the money for the dredge testing.

5. Old Business

- a. Proposal of new parking meter rates.

Parking Services Director Deputy Chief of Police Kraig Gray introduced a revised proposal for rate changes for downtown parking meters. He said after the first read of the original proposal he made changes to reduce the actual increase overall. He explained that parking at Greenwich Avenue proper would be \$1.50 per hour with \$1.25 for the side streets and \$1 for the long-term parking lot spaces. Gray presented data to the Board of Selectmen showing it was in line with neighboring communities and said he had set up the tiered approach was because Greenwich Avenue parking was a "premium location" and he wanted to set up value for long-term parkers to instead park in the long-term spaces, particularly since the Town had set up a permit program for those parkers. He said the hope was for the people parking long-term would be encouraged to use the long-term spaces instead by overcoming human nature to always park in the closest available spots.

Camillo thanked Gray for coming back the revision and said he appreciated him taking another look. He said the dollar value increase wasn't much but it was a lot percentage wise. He said this was the right thing to do but with so much going on, including the resumption of outdoor dining on Greenwich Avenue, that they "didn't throw too many negatives" out.

Rabin said the revised approach was a way to "phase in" the change and the Board of Selectmen could always reevaluate it if it wasn't show to be working by getting people off of Greenwich Avenue and into the less expensive, long-term spaces. Gray agreed that they would always reevaluate and that parking

downtown was a precious resource with only so much of it and lots of competing interests.

Stone McGuigan thanked Gray for being responsive to the Board of Selectmen's concerns about the earlier proposal.

Upon a motion by Rabin and a second by Stone McGuigan, the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved the new parking meter rates.

b. Parking Services Mobile App Enforcement Violation Fee

Gray called the item "basically just housekeeping" in the language for fines for parking violations. He said the adjustment in the language to the Town's traffic ordinance would make it "painfully obvious" to anyone who had committed a violation what it was so there would be no confusion about verbiage.

Members of the Board of Selectmen did not have any questions.

Upon a motion by Rabin and a second by Stone McGuigan, the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved the change in the ordinance.

c. Residential permit parking for Josephine Evaristo Avenue.

Member of the public Sylvester Pecora, who was the petitioner in this matter, told the Board of Selectmen that the one person who had been against removing the signage for residential parking only from Evaristo to Charles Street lives about halfway between the Post Road and Arctic Street. He claimed this person is for the change for her area and wanted to state it for the record. Camillo asked Pecora if everyone was satisfied and he said they were.

Stone McGuigan said she was concerned because most of the people who signed the petition did not live on Josephine Evaristo and live on roads that would benefit if the restriction was removed. She said she was concerned about whether the petition was representative.

Sylvester Pecora Sr. said the Board of Selectmen had to understand that there was a funeral home and a bicycle shop right around the corner and it was "very important" for them to have the parking spaces. He said he had fought for 10 years for an exception for them and they now wanted to have this change made. He said the part of Evaristo that would be affected by this change does not have the problems that other parts of the street do because those other parts have people parking everywhere from the car dealerships. That is not a problem for the designated area that would be covered by this change. He said people should be able to park there without getting a ticket.

Gray said the Parking Services Department sent a written notice to everyone in the affected area.

Upon a motion by Rabin and a second by Camillo, the Board of Selectmen approved the change in the residential parking permit program by a vote of two to zero with Camillo and Rabin voting in favor of it and Stone McGuigan abstaining.

d. Modification of parking regulations on Bruce Park Avenue.

Gray said in the timeframe of when the proposal was first discussed at the March 9 Board of Selectmen meeting they did get feedback from people in the affected area. He said there were concerns about the loss of parking spaces.

Camillo said he has heard both sides of this and wanted to address the safety issues. He said he had spoken with Town Civil Engineer Michael Kiselak, who then addressed the board and said the recommendation from the Department of Public Works to have no parking on the street was the best and most appropriate way to address safety concerns about speeding put forth by residents given the constraints on the roadway. He said they didn't see anything else they could change there and that if the Board of Selectmen did remove the parking spaces they would be able to work with residents there on permits if they wanted to have private driveways put in. Kiselak said they could put up warning signage but he didn't think it would change anyone's behavior.

Camillo thanked Kiselak for taking another look at it. He said his concern was that if they made this change it would fix one problem while creating another that would affect someone's home value. Camillo also expressed concern that moving parking down the road would create additional potential dangers, particularly when it was dark at night. He said he was against this particular proposal but said he wanted to keep working with Kiselak on other potential solutions. Camillo said he wanted to keep focusing on it to see what else can be done.

Rabin said she appreciated the effort that had gone into the proposal. She noted she had recently driven from JFK Airport in New York City and said the traffic there was caused by everyone driving slowly because of how narrow the road is. She said this was similar to Perna Lane in Riverside and felt that having cars on the side of the road slows people down and that removing them by getting rid of the parking could potentially make the problem worse. She said would abstain if a vote was taken on the proposal.

Stone McGuigan said she was very familiar with the road and that on street parking was "precious" there. She said it was strange to her that people were speeding on it because there was no reason to. Stone McGuigan said she agreed with her colleagues that they shouldn't take away the parking.

Because of the stated votes against it, Camillo said he did not feel a need to take a vote on the proposal.

e. Request for approval of 2023 Greenwich Town Party Parade

Scot Weicker, event manager for the Greenwich Town Party Inc., said he did not have much to add to what was presented on March 9 other than that they had announced who would be performing at the concert. He displayed a sign for the New Orleans themed event with a “star studded group of musicians.” Weicker said the parade would be New Orleans themed parade to fit in with the concert and said there would be no throwing of beads at it after talking with the Greenwich Police Department. Weicker said beads would be handed out along the way in a “festive, community celebration” that would be an extension of the Greenwich Town Party that would take place over the weekend.

Camillo said he’d heard “nothing but good things” since it had been proposed and said it would be a throwback to the old Greenwich block parties.

Stone McGuigan said she wanted to make sure all the permits had been secured for the parade and Weicker said everything had been submitted to the police department.

Upon a motion by Rabin and a second by Stone McGuigan, the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved the request for the parade.

f. Request for Greenwich Town Party use of Horseneck Lane Parking Lot.

Weicker said the parking would be needed for the Greenwich Town Party. The 1 Horseneck Lane lot is currently used by the Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich and it would be used on the day of the party on Saturday May 27.

No members of the Board of Selectmen said they had any questions.

Upon a motion by Rabin and a second by Stone McGuigan, the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved the use of the lot.

g. Board of Selectmen Review of ADA grievance from Alan Gunzburg and Stephanie Cowie.

Gunzburg thanked the Board of Selectmen for following up and read a statement for the record stating his support for intersection improvements on Greenwich Avenue with Arch and Havemeyer for both safety and accessibility. He said he and Cowie participated through the municipal improvement process and many community meetings to make sure it was in compliance with the federal

Americans with Disabilities Act. He noted the complaints about the project in those meetings include those about the impact on architecture, the loss of green space, the impact on monuments and trees and on the sidewalks and that Greenwich shouldn't be getting state money to do it when it could afford it itself. Gunzburg said there was a "great smattering of disinformation" about the project and even after it had been approved by Planning and Zoning and the Representative Town Meeting, an objection and an appeal was still made by members of the RTM forcing a revote. Gunzburg said he heard "the same falsehoods" again about the project and the MI status was rescinded, costing the Town the \$2.8 million state grant it was going to receive for the intersection improvements. Gunzburg said it was "unbearably disheartening" to watch the RTM "deny the civil rights of a full class of federally protected people" and wanted the record to reflect that they would not stop fighting for ADA rights and would not accept the status quo. Gunzburg said federal law was on their side and if pushed hard they would ask for help from the Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Justice.

Assistant Town Attorney Aamina Ahmad said an agreement had been reached between Gunzburg and Cowie and DPW. A decision was then drafted for the Board of Selectmen to review and vote on. Ahmad said that agreement included DPW posting its ADA transition plan on the Town's website where revisions and updates would be posted. The agreement also called for DPW to complete an inventory of all areas of non-compliance with the ADA by April 30, 2023 and develop solutions. A mini-user group would be created by DPW and the First Selectman's Committee for People with Disabilities to review plans and "make sure all items are addressed." Ahmad said the agreement also called for DPW to submit plans and cost for the intersection improvements by the end of May 2023. An interim appropriation would then be requested from the BET and RTM. Ahmad said the agreement also included the goal of completing the intersection improvement project by June 30, 2024 to coincide with the repaving of Greenwich Avenue in the summer of 2024.

Camillo said Gunzburg was right that there was a "ton of misinformation" about the project that resulted in "a death of a thousand cuts" for the project and now the Town was going to have to pay for it. He said the Town was still going to need approval from the BET for the project but he didn't think the Town would have a choice because of the federal law and the possibility of the Town being fined for not being in compliance. Camillo said he hoped this would get people on the RTM to think twice before they stood up and said something false and people piled on because now the Town was going to have to cover the costs for the project, not the State.

Camillo thanked DPW "for speeding this up" and Gunzburg thanked them too, saying they have "great partners" there and criticized people for thinking they

knew better than the Town's Department of Public Works even though they are not engineers and not qualified or trained "stoking up fear and uncertainty."

Cowie said this was not something that should happen again in the future and noted all the work that went into securing the grant. She said they were ready to continue to talk "very loud and clear" that the project should go forward. Camillo thanked Cowie and told her and Gunzburg they "had partners here."

Upon a motion by Rabin and a second by Stone McGuigan, the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved the agreement.

- h. Board of Selectmen discussion and vote on sister city partnership with Izyum, Ukraine.

Camillo said the Town had sister city relationships with a city in China and two in Italy. Stone McGuigan said she had two process questions but did not want them to be perceived as pushback against the request because she wanted to support Ukraine and encourage Greenwich's partnership there. She asked if the Board of Selectmen had to vote about this and Camillo said his office circled back to the people who had worked on the previous sister city partnerships. He said they were told it was something the First Selectman could do but he preferred to get a vote on record so it was something they could all do together. Camillo said it did not need RTM approval, which Stone McGuigan said answered her next question. Stone McGuigan said she had read that the agreement would have Greenwich provide financial support to Ukraine, which Camillo said was not true. He said he had spoken with Town resident Olga Litvinenko about doing fundraising but it was not a public thing. He said this was a way to show solidarity with Ukraine but down the line it could be "fun and enriching" with a cultural exchange and visits from representatives.

Olga Litvinenko appeared via Zoom and Camillo told her how much they were looking forward to it. Litvinenko said she was glad the financial aspect was cleared up and called it a "very exciting moment" for Greenwich and Izyum. She thanked the Board of Selectmen for doing this.

Upon a motion by Rabin and a second by Stone McGuigan, the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved entering into the sister city partnership.

6. New business

- a. GEMS request for Hillside Road closure for Kids Triathlon.

GEMS Deputy Director Patrick O'Connor said the closure would be for the triathlon race and would be for about an hour. He said things were being arranged

so it would not conflict with another event going on at Greenwich High School that morning. He said they would contact residents and they would have all the safety precautions in place.

Camillo told him they would wait until the next meeting to hold a vote and he would tell GEMS about any feedback the Town got.

b. Request for approval of a lease with the Greenwich Arts Council.

Assistant Town Attorney Valerie Maze Keaney said it was a request for a new lease from the Greenwich Arts Council for continued use of the building on Greenwich Avenue. She said the lease would be for 10 years that would, if approved by the RTM, would terminate the current lease which is in effect until April 2024. The new lease would take effect when approved. Keaney said the new lease is “very much like” the current list with changes in respect to use of the common areas on the second and third floors and provisions for lawn signs and outside artwork.

No members of the Board of Selectmen had any questions and Camillo said it would be brought back for a vote at the next meeting.

Keaney told the Board this could be her last Board of Selectmen meeting as an assistant town attorney and thanked them for their cordiality on all matters and it had been an honor and a privilege to work for the Town. Camillo thanked her for a “great career” and praised her for always being professional and thorough. He wished her all the best and said he was glad she was not leaving Town.

c. Request for municipal improvement status for the Old Greenwich School building project.

James Waters, chair of the Old Greenwich School Building Committee, said the committee was “moving with purpose” and had “made significant progress” since being formed in October. He presented information about the scope of the project, the anticipated costs and timeline and the goals of the project. He said the schematic design process was beginning with surveying and environmental testing with a goal of being done with that by June 2023. He said the committee intended to hire a construction manager at risk in April and they would help create professional estimates that would be sent to the Board of Education and Board of Estimate and Taxation. After the schematic work was done, Waters said they would be able to focus on local land use approvals working with the Planning and Zoning, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses and the Architectural Review Committee. Waters noted the importance of the school in the community and said they were looking for an “expedited and thorough review” by all local departments and agencies.

Camillo asked about the potential \$1.1 million allocation for the project in the 2023-24 budget and if it was going to be enough. Waters said it was based on a figure put together by the project team and he believed it would be enough to get through the pre-construction process and be ready to go. Camillo said he did not want to slow the project down and thanked everyone on the building committee for their work.

Rabin asked about the amount being requested for contingency in the project and about what made sense for determining the question of whether to renovate or build anew. Waters said he had spent “weeks and months in these numbers” and he felt the Building Committee’s view was it was not appropriate for a new construction building to have just a 10 percent contingency and he wanted to raise awareness with the Town about how building construction costs have increased. Rabin said he appreciated the guidance he had received from Mike Mason that it had to be a 20 percent contingency. He said as far as new construction, he had met with BET Chair Dan Ozizmir about that and had communicated the costs for new construction would be \$734 per square foot per state average. Waters said “their professionals” would look at the possibility and bring back analysis. He noted that the ed specs for the project did not call for new construction. He said information on new construction would be shared and we would “let the decision makers decide.” Waters said they were hearing from Old Greenwich that people did not want to wait on the project and the “Town needs to get this project done.”

Camillo said if it was urgent the Board would vote on the MI request but since it was not, they would wait for the April 13 meeting.

d. Discussion of state of antisemitism in Greenwich

Myra Clark-Siegal regional director from the American Jewish Committee’s chapter for Westchester and Connecticut thanked the Board for the opportunity to “address this very important issue.” She said there were members of the AJC’s Government Outreach Committee both in person and watching the meeting via Zoom. She said the issue of antisemitism is “very prevalent for all of us in civil society” and Clark-Siegal said the Jewish community is “under very significant threat” that was not connected to any particular reason or any particular political party. She said AJC has seen a rise in attacks and hate crimes in Europe over the last two decades and that this was not considered to be exclusive to Europe. Clark-Siegal explained that AJC is the oldest Jewish civil rights organization in the United States, beginning in 1906, as a “fiercely” non-partisan organization. She said they are seeing the rise in antisemitism in the United States that has been seen in Europe, citing the Tree of Life synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh in 2018. After that shooting, Clark-Siegal told the Board of Selectmen that AJC launched a survey of the Jewish community to assess what the community was experiencing.

That survey has been done every year since and Clark-Siegal said that the survey has found that 41 percent of the Jewish community feels less safe than it did a year ago which she called “astonishing” and “it should be a frightening number for all of us” because they have found that when antisemitic incidents increase so do hate incidents against others. She said the survey also found one out of every four American Jews have been “the personal victim of some kind of attack” and no community is immune to it. Clark-Siegal said there were leadership opportunities a community like Greenwich could take as part of AJC’s “call to action” for local and state governments and businesses. She presented a primer and suggestions to the Board of Selectmen and said AJC was using a “working definition” of antisemitism that was not legally binding but that presented a way to define it, measure it, raise awareness and address it. She said more than 38 countries have adopted this working definition and 33 states have, including Connecticut. She said Connecticut municipalities have done it too and they requested Greenwich adopt it as well while pledging to work with Greenwich as a partner.

Camillo thanked Clark-Siegal for the presentation and agreed that “one incident is too many” and noted the growing attacks against many people including working groups like the police. He said it had to be condemned and agreed Greenwich had to be proactive by showing support.

Stone McGuigan said there could be no tolerance for hate and credited the work of groups like AJC and the Anti-Defamation League. She thanked them for all they do.

Rabin thanked the AJC for bringing this to the Town’s attention and wondered what had to be done to get involved and if a formal vote of the Board of Selectmen had to be taken. She said it was important to get the message out and said she and her colleagues were “ready, willing and able” to get involved.

Camillo asked Clark-Siegal if signing on was something that had to be done by a municipality’s legislative body or of the executive branch. Clark-Siegal said that it varied by municipality but that it could be done by an executive order. Camillo said that was his thought as well but he wanted to confirm with the Town’s legal department. He said he wanted the AJC to come back for the April 13 meeting and pledged “anything we can do to help.”

Clark-Siegal emphasized this was not legally binding for the Town of Greenwich and Camillo thanked them for “championing civility and respect.”

7. Public Comment

Town resident Peter Alexander made a request to the Board of Selectmen to get “shared promises we won’t sue each other” through indemnification for work he wants to do in Caroline Pond. Camillo recalled a similar request last year from Alexander that had to be denied and suggested he speak to Elizabeth Evans, the Town’s Director of Environmental Affairs. Camillo said Alexander was looking for approvals of something they had had been told “no” on “over and over again.” Alexander claimed he had never been told no. He said he wants to be able to have a contractor walk along a stream bringing run off into the pond bringing lots of debris into it so work could be done to restore the migratory fish channel. Camillo said they needed more information because multiple jurisdictions, not just Greenwich, would have to be involved. Camillo said he did not think he was able to grant what Alexander wanted and told him to speak with Evans and said he understood it was frustrating. Alexander said it was “very, very time sensitive” because action had to be taken by April 1.

8. Appointments/Nominations

No nominations were made

9. Adjournment

At 2:44 p.m., Selectwoman Rabin made a motion to adjourn. Upon a second by Selectperson Stone McGuigan, the motion was approved unanimously.