

Town of East Hampton
Town Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, November 10, 2020
Town Hall Council Chambers and Zoom

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Pete Brown, Vice Chairman Dean Markham, Council Members Tim Feegel, Derek Johnson (via Zoom), Barbara Moore, Mark Philhower and Kevin Reich and Town Manager David Cox.

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda:

A motion was made by Mr. Markham, seconded by Mr. Reich, to add item 7b – Proclamation for the Election Process. Voted (7-0)

A motion was made by Mr. Markham, seconded by Mr. Reich, to adopt the agenda as amended. Voted (7-0)

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Moore, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to approve the minutes of the Town Council Regular Meeting of October 27, 2020 as written. Voted (7-0)

Public Remarks

None

Presentations

None

Bids & Contracts

None

Resolution/ Ordinances/ Policies/ Proclamation

Review of Policy Related to a Memorial Tree/Bench Program

Parks & Recreation Director Jeremy Hall provided an overview of the policy related to the Memorial Tree/Bench program. The proposed policy will be included with the minutes filed in the Town Clerk's Office.

A motion was made by Mr. Markham, seconded by Mr. Reich, to approve the policy for the Memorial Bench/Tree Program. Voted (7-0)

Proclamation for the Election Process

Mr. Markham read a proclamation regarding the success of the election process.

A motion was made by Mr. Markham, seconded by Ms. Moore, to accept the Proclamation for the Election Process. Voted (7-0)

Continued Business

Affirm & Authorize Acceptance of Four (4) Properties on Comstock Trail

Mr. Cox reviewed four properties on Comstock Trail that are being requested to be donated to the Town.

A motion was made by Mr. Philhower, seconded by Ms. Moore, to accept the donation of four (4) properties on Comstock Trail and authorize the Town Manager to sign any related documents. Voted (7-0)

New Business

Discussion of Budget and Capital

Mr. Cox noted that with budget preparation beginning, Council members are asked to bring up any specific projects for the budget early in the process. Mr. Markham, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Philhower will be providing feedback regarding the budget. They will also be working on the Budget Policy Statement for the November 24 meeting.

Discussion of Hunting on Town Property

A request was received from a resident for permission to hunt on Town property. There is no ordinance on the topic. The only information on file is a letter from a former Town Attorney indicating that Town residents do not have a right to hunt on Town land simply by being a resident and a former Town Manager noted no hunting on Town property. Council members discussed the areas in question and whether hunting should be allowed. The Town Manager will look at the property maps and bring additional information back to the Council.

Discussion of East Hampton's Participation in the RiverCOG Joint/Regional Affordable Housing Plan

Planning & Zoning Official Jeremy DeCarli provided an overview of the requirement for an Affordable Housing Plan. The Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments proposed to its members a regional effort lead by RiverCOG staff and likely funded by grants held by the River COG for regional planning. The Council members requested more information on what the COG has done in the past and what our neighboring towns are doing for this plan. More information will be provided for an upcoming meeting.

Council Participant for Review of RFP for Athletic Field Improvements Submissions

Proposals for the Athletic Field Improvement project were received and will be reviewed in the upcoming weeks. The Council is asked if one its members would like to be on the review panel. Mr. Reich will assist the review panel.

Discussion Regarding High School Athletic Fields & the High School Building Committee

The High School Building Committee has completed its work on the original project and have done so without considering or taking action regarding the inclusion of the athletic field project in the scope. At its last meeting, the Committee adopted a motion to close the project and submit the project to the Board of Education. According to the Resolution that established the High School Building

Committee, which is found in the materials for this meeting, the Committee automatically dissolved and the member terms ended “once the assigned project has been turned over to the Board of Education....” It is the opinion of the Bond Council that it is no longer an option to appoint new members to the Building Committee or assign those duties to another body, in order to move the athletic field project ahead using funds available in the High School project. In the alternative, a different process will need to be employed. The Council may have two options. First, the original Resolution that authorized the High School construction project could be amended to include the athletic field projects specifically. That Resolution would require Board of Finance approval, Town Council Approval and Town Meeting approval. Similarly, a second option would be a completely new Resolution authorizing the project using anticipated excess proceeds of approximately \$1 million in the High School project. The same approval process would apply as the other option. The Council is asked to consider these options and determine which they wish to pursue. Based on the Council’s desires, staff will work with Bond Council and the Town Attorney to establish the proper actions and process for consideration at the November 24 Regular Meeting or some other special meeting as may be necessary.

A motion was made by Mr. Markham, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to direct an amendment to the original resolution be written to include the athletic field project. Voted (7-0)

Discussion of Meetings Returning to Zoom Only

Due to the COVID Red alert level for the Town, the Council is asked to consider whether it wishes to return to solely virtual meetings (Zoom) or stay with the hybrid model.

A motion was made by Mr. Reich, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to have all Town commission meetings return to Zoom format. Voted (5-2) Mr. Feegel and Mr. Philhower against.

Town Manager Report

Mr. Cox provided an overview of the Town Manager’s Report, which will be included with the minutes filed in the Town Clerk’s Office.

Appointments

None

Tax Refunds

A motion was made by Mr. Philhower, seconded by Ms. Moore, to approve tax refunds in the amount of \$1,369.34. Voted (7-0)

Public Remarks

Paul Smith, Superintendent of Schools, asked that the Board of Education be exempt from holding their meetings via Zoom only. It would set a wrong example if the Board meets virtually but the schools are in person.

Communications, Correspondence & Announcement

Ms. Moore read a piece regarding the history of Veteran’s Day.

Executive Session

Attorney Client Privilege Communication – Pending Claims Against the Town

A motion was made by Mr. Markham, seconded by Ms. Moore, to enter Executive Session at 7:50pm inviting in Town Manager David Cox, Town Attorney Richard Carella and Finance Director Jeff Jylkka. Voted (7-0)

Executive Session ended at 8:25pm.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Markham, seconded by Ms. Moore, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25pm. Voted (7-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Cathy Sirois
Recording Clerk