

TOWN OF WASHINGTON
Board of Selectmen
Minutes
February 6, 2020

Minutes are subject to the approval of the Board of Selectmen.

Present: First Selectman James L. Brinton, Selectmen Jay Hubelbank and Michelle Gorra.
Public: Leslie Anderson, Susan Smith, Bob Papsin, Chris Charles, Janet Hill, Tom Osborne.

Call to Order: First Selectman James Brinton called the meeting to order at 5:30p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

- **Motion:** To approve the minutes of the January 23, 2020 meeting of the Board of Selectmen. By Michelle Gorra, seconded by Jim Brinton and unanimously approved.

Communications:

- **Elizabeth Rea letter:** Follows:

- **DESIGNATED SCENIC
WEST CHURCH HILL ROAD (EAST)
PROPERTY OWNERS**

February 6, 2020

Dear Board of Selectmen:

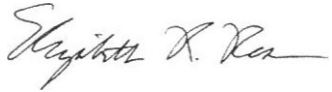
RE: West Church Hill Road (East) Signage Discussion

I would like to submit this letter to be included on the agenda of the February 6, 2020 Board of Selectmen meeting.

On December 4, 2019, following the unannounced widening and paving of the lower portion of the road (see attached letter to Board of Selectmen dated January 1, 2019), Town officials agreed to the need for road signage on West Church Hill (East) as a safety measure for both those who live and travel on the road. Since that time nothing had been done about this dangerous situation until residents took action to place the appropriate signage.

With regard to the discussion concerning Scenic West Church Hill Road (East) as recorded in the minutes of the January 23, 2020 meeting, my fellow residents (see attached map of property owners) and I respectfully request that, for issues of safety, the Town immediately approve the signs that were created and erected on this road until such time as the Town approves of the same or similar signage. In addition, as requested by the First Selectman, in an on site meeting this January, the property owners are preparing suggested proposals of action to remedy the negative impact of the widening and paving of our road which we will present to the Board of Selectmen in the next couple of weeks.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth R. Rea

Property Owner

West Church Hill Road (East)

West Church Hill Road (East) Property Owners

January 1, 2020

Dear Board of Selectmen,

I own the majority of property on West Church Hill Road (East) and join with my fellow property owners in continuing to bring to your attention our serious, ongoing concerns about recent actions taken by the town that have adversely impacted one of Washington's most beautiful and unspoiled scenic country roads.

The sudden, unannounced widening and paving of the first 500 feet of the lower portion of West Church Hill Road (East) appear to be the result of a series of hasty, poorly planned decisions taken without any notice to or appropriate process for the four West Church Hill (East) owners. We were given absolutely no opportunity to object or offer input.

These purported "improvements" to West Church Hill Road (East) not only detract from the scenic, natural character of the area, they actually dramatically endanger those who live and travel on our road. The intersection of Lower Church Hill and West Church Hill now creates confusion. Previously, traffic traveling on Lower Church Hill Road could clearly delineate that West Church Hill was a secondary road and that they should follow Lower Church Hill even though it turns sharply to the left. Since the actions taken to change the road, trucks and other vehicles now perceive West Church Hill as a primary, navigable, 28 foot wide paved road, and a potential shortcut to many destinations. After following the paved, steeply ascending first 500 feet around a blind turn, drivers suddenly realize they have taken a dangerous turn and are now on a one lane dirt road, requiring large trucks to potentially have to back down West Church Hill Road.

We respectfully request that the town work with the four West Church Hill Road (East) property owners to arrive at an appropriate plan to remediate this situation that has adversely affected the scenic and historic qualities of our road, as well as undermining the safety of its residents.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Richebourg Rea

Jerzy and Anna Henisz

Richard Brunhuber

Cyrus Pouraghabagher and Laleh Javaheri-Saatchi

Note: Map is attached to the hard copy filed with the Town Clerk.

Jim Brinton has met with Ms. Rea and has advised the residents to compile a list of concerns. A follow-up meeting will then be scheduled.

Appointments/Resignations:

- **Board of Finance and Zoning Commission vacancies:** The Democratic Town Committee has recommended Elizabeth Fenton be appointed to the Board of Finance and Ted Bent to the Zoning Commission. Jim Brinton explained that vacancies on the Board of Finance are filled by that Board until the next scheduled municipal election when the name would be placed on the ballot. Jim further stated that he was not comfortable with the Board of Selectmen making the appointment to Zoning as doing so would not follow the newly adopted policy for filling vacancies. Further he has corresponded with Zoning Chairman Nick Solley for his input on making this appointment and has not yet heard back from him. Jim asked DTC Chairman, Janet Hill, if she would be comfortable in waiting until a response from Nick was received. She agreed.

First Selectman's Report: Jim Brinton reported the following:

- **Superintendent Meeting:** Jim, along with the First Selectmen of Bridgewater and Roxbury, met with Region #12 Superintendent Megan Bennett and Board of Ed member, John Buonaiuto who brought the Selectmen up-to-date on current matters including bonding for infrastructure and facilities – all three were in full support. Jay Hubelbank applauded the Superintendent's efforts and agreed with support. Michelle Gorra also complimented the Region on its ability to return revenue to each of the Towns.
- **Updating of Town Ordinances:** Town Clerk, Sheila Anson, and her assistant are working on making sure Town Ordinances are up-to-date both in the Town Clerk's Office as well as on the Town's website.
- **Land Use Bylaws:** Land Use Coordinator Shelly White is currently making certain that each Land Use Board and Commission's Bylaws are up-to-date and available to the public as well as on the Town's website. Jay Hubelbank and Michelle Gorra spoke of the need to make sure funds are in the budget for these updates to occur and to be available.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **CT Education Network (CEN):** Jay Hubelbank reported that the contract with CEN is in place which allows the Town to rent internet access which in turn can be provided to the public without the public's ability to access Region #12's internet. Equipment has been purchased and the projection for internet service in the Depot is still scheduled for the end of February.
- **Washington Gives:** Michelle Gorra reported that the event went very well and the committee has received positive feedback. The WBA driven event, will begin planning earlier for next year's event with the hopes of reaching out to help more people in the community as well as holding the Volunteer Reception at a later time in order for more people to be able to attend. The student panel discussion will again be a part of next year's program.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Regional Performance Incentive Program Applications: (1) Regional Produce Processing Service: Motion:** To endorse the Regional Performance Incentive Program for Regional Produce Processing Service. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank. Discussion: Northwest Hills Council of Governments in collaboration with EdAdvance, proposes to develop and implement a Regional Produce Processing Center to be able to serve school districts in the 21-town COG service area as part of a regional Farm-to-School program. The motion passed unanimously. **(2) Regional Animal Shelter Facility: Motion:** To endorse the Regional Performance Incentive Program for a Regional Animal Shelter Facility. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank.

Discussion: The goal of the project is to construct a modern animal shelter facility to serve the long-term needs of the Northwest Hills region. This will enhance the quality of care to animals and provide a cost effective program for the sheltering of animals in need. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Resolution for the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection: RESOLVED**, that the Town of Washington may enter into with and deliver to the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security any and all documents which it deems to be necessary or appropriate; and FURTHER RESOLVED, that James L. Brinton, as First Selectman of The Town of Washington, is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Town of Washington and to do and perform all acts and things which he deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents, including, but not limited to, executing and delivering all agreements and documents contemplated by such documents. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank. Discussion: This resolution needs to be passed annually and allows the Town to receive necessary supplies and equipment in a disaster as well as providing mutual aid. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Support of Parks and Recreation Commissions recommendation for Beach House tenant:** The Parks and Recreation Commission recently advertised for the position of Beach House tenant and caretaker. Several applications were received and interviews conducted. **Motion:** To approve the recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Commission to approve Ralph Averill as the tenant and caretaker at the Town Beach. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank and unanimously approved.
- **Condolences on the death of Gary Fitzherbert:** The Board of Selectmen recognized with gratitude the many years of service to the Town by Gary and extended deepest sympathy to his family.

Visitors:

- **Janet Hill** and 10 commissioners and staff members recently attended by legal seminar.
- **Chris Charles** referred to conversations and correspondence with Gary Fitzherbert (who had served on the Zoning Commission) regarding proposed zoning regulations to incorporate affordable house applications under Connecticut General Statute 8-30g. Chris shared this correspondence with the Selectmen.

Adjournment:

- **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 6:08p.m. as there was no further business for discussion. By Jay Hubelbank, seconded by Michelle Gorra and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Anne Greene
Selectmen's Assistant