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**MINUTES**  
**Board of Selectmen**  
**Tuesday, July 18, 2017 – 7:00 PM**  
**Norma Drummer Room – Town Hall**

**Members Present:** W. Kurt Miller, Len Greene Jr., Al Bruno, Annmarie Drugonis, Stephan Behuniak, Nicole Klarides-Ditria & Karen Stanek

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Mike Kearney – Commander Post 10 American Legion, Rich Buturla – Town Counsel, Jim Severson & Joe Linear of the Oxford Land Trust, Fred Messoro – Economic Development Director

**Item #1: Call meeting to order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM.

**Item #2: Pledge of Allegiance**

All present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Item #3: Public comment**

Mike Kearney – 37 Bank Street – I had the pleasure of sitting with Annmarie at a social function and I'm not sure everyone is sure what the American Legion, Post 10 does. We're involved in a lot of community events. We recently returned from our state convention and the items in front of Annmarie are the awards we won. We've won one award 6 times. The Bigelow award is the award for the VA hospital. We brought 2 truckloads of gifts this Christmas down to the VA. We sponsored 2 boys and girls for Boys & Girls State this year. One girl ran for governor at Girls State and won Outstanding Girl. We're the ones that put the flags on the veterans' graves for Memorial Day. We're also the flag stewards for all the flags on Town property.

**Item #4: Approve minutes from July 5, 2017 regular meeting**

A motion was made to approve the minutes as presented.

**Motion:** Annmarie Drugonis

**Second:** Karen Stanek

**Vote:** 7-0

**Item #5: First Selectman's Report**

**Item #6: Discussion and take possible action regarding Oxford Land Trust request regarding Rockhouse Hill Sanctuary Trail**

Jim Severson – The Youth Conservation Corps has involved over 200 kids at Oxford High in building trails at the Rockhouse Hill Sanctuary. There are some issues in that Seymour holds land within the sanctuary area. We have an issue with ATV access from Seymour's property into Oxfords. We're also working on building trails in the Oxford side of Holbrook Road.

Joe Linear – Students in the Conservation Corps volunteer 50 hours per year. We've even developed a line item in the Wetlands budget for paid internships. We'd like to go into the Keith Mitchell Forest to develop trails for hiking and mountain biking. We'd like permission to look at the feasibility of creating

trails from Oxford High to Route 34. We're hoping to eventually connect it into Naugatuck State Forest as well.

Al Bruno – You mentioned issues with ATVs, what's your plan to curtail that?

Joe – We put up fencing around a lot of our properties and worked with the local police to step up enforcement. We've had an issue with access through 188, but I haven't seen it this year. Where we're looking to build trails we haven't had the issue. We'll go in and blaze the trails. We wouldn't promote it as a mountain bike trail initially.

Rich Buturla – I'll speak to Oxford's Town Counsel. Is the land owned by the Town or the Land Trust in Oxford?

Joe – I believe it's owned by the Town.

Rich – We do things with the best of intentions. It's a wonderful resource and we want to make it available but from a risk management perspective, there are some things I'd want to look into.

Jim – We have support from the Seymour Land Trust. We're looking for authorization both in terms of permission as well as to help us in looking for funding.

Kurt – I would ask that if you add trails you just return to give us updates so we're aware.

Len – Is this already partially constructed?

Jim – Yes, the map you received is already complete.

Kurt – As long as we can make the legal aspect work, and I have no doubt that we can, the Board has no issue with this.

#### **Item #7: Discussion with Economic Development Director**

Fred Messore – We're at 108 days of 120 for the Greenway Trail's construction cycle. Today they reopened the lane on 67 that had been closed. We look to be on-schedule and below budget. It may go a little past the end of July but keep an eye out for information on the ribbon cutting. We're working with NVCOG to identify funding sources for the next phases of the project, which would probably be on River Street. I've had some discussions with Tom Haynes as well about moving the trail north along Franklin Street towards Beacon Falls. I was at Haynes new Outdoor Living Showroom last Friday. They had events all last weekend with over 1,400 attendees. Once they finish quarry walk, they want to refocus their efforts on Franklin Street. I've also been working with CBRE, the firm that's representing the former Bank of America property. Their RFP closed July 12<sup>th</sup> but I haven't gotten any information on the proposals submitted.

Karen – In the last 3 months, can you approximate how much of your time was devoted to Economic Development in Seymour?

Fred – 100%. Obviously some of my time is going to overseeing the Greenway Trail project but that's a quality of life project and which was supported by this Board and the Economic Development Commission.

Karen – In the last 12 months, what can you attribute to your efforts to retain and expand businesses in Town?

Fred – Basement System's expansions have utilized our tax incentive policies.

Karen – The policy was voted on by this Board. My understanding is that Basement Systems' plans far expanded our expectations.

Fred – On Roosevelt Drive, I helped procure the buyer for Stone's Throw as well.

Karen – Haynes’s expansion has been in the works for quite some time. I think that’s a credit to the Haynes brothers.

Fred – In meeting with the Haynes brothers, they need assistance with signage on Route 8 so I’ve been working with the State. That’s the type of service I provide as a point of contact for the Town.

Karen – Where is the list of Town-owned properties? Your job description says there will be a list.

Kurt – There are no properties. That refers to properties like Maple Street School that are being sold by the Town. We have none currently.

Karen – With regards to the EDC website, is it updated in a timely manner?

Fred – Yes, it is to the best of the EDC’s availability. We’re working with the Town to maybe wrap that into the Town’s website. The Commission has always been responsible for that. If I get a request, I will pass that along to the First Selectman’s Office to be updated.

Karen – As far as the Greenway Trail, I think it’s a great project. I don’t see it as economic development, though. It’s a 1,400-foot sidewalk. I wonder how much of your time in your part-time capacity does this project require.

Fred – It varies from week to week. There are certain questions that need to be answered by the Town. I’m the point person in those situations and we have biweekly progress meetings. In terms of the benefits it brings to the Town, the Naugatuck Greenway Committee recently did a study with UConn regarding the economic results of greenway trails on communities that I can provide you.

Karen - I think there is a lot of reliance on your time that this project will draw people to Seymour. One of the arguments for the Fish Bypass was that it would draw people to Town. In the same line of thinking, I think Broad Street Park is lovely but there are several problems that make it difficult to access including the difficulty of parking. I brought up the idea of a crosswalk two years ago to make crossing safe and again I’ve been told it can’t be done. I fail to see how they’ll be the economic boons they’re supposed to be. I don’t see it as the job of the Economic Development Director.

Kurt – I assigned this project to Fred so your problem is with me. I believe that this project will be big for economic development.

Karen – So if we assigned him to be dog catcher, is that allowed?

Kurt – Ansonia and Derby are in phase 4 and 5 of their trails. I can’t help that we didn’t make any efforts in the past.

Karen – There’s no guarantee that there will be funding for expansion of the trail. I don’t see it happening.

Kurt – Should we cease all projects going forward?

Karen – I think Fred’s time could be better used on business expansion and retention.

Len – I have not read the master economic development plan in some time. Does it recommend improvements downtown?

Fred – The 2012 plan included the symbiosis with the construction of the Fish Bypass. The plan won an award from the CT Main Street Center. Based on that, we were able to get State and Federal funds in conjunction with NVCOG for phase 1. There is special funding for projects that connect pedestrian and bicycle traffic within transit-oriented development. By completing phase 1, we’ll be able to show that further investment is worthwhile. It’s not a standalone project. It’s in conjunction with maintaining our finances and developing what little land is available. Several of the parcels in town that are high-priority don’t seek help marketing their properties.

Len – So to reiterate, it is part of the plan and it is your job to execute the plan.

Karen – I don't want to be misunderstood. I'm not against the Greenway Trail. It's something the Town can be proud of and we need more things like that. There is a feeling that your time could be better spent courting businesses. I also don't see it as a major attraction until it progresses past phase 1.

Nicole – To Karen's point, I think all of us want to see new businesses come to Seymour. To Fred's credit, he's constantly courting these businesses. We're not Shelton. We don't have Bridgeport Avenue. Our antique district wouldn't support that kind of business. In conversations with my family's plaza, many businesses have criteria that they do not depart from.

Karen – I left Shelton out of my comparison for a reason.

Fred – The only comparable area is Roosevelt Drive but it lacks sewers. The zoning regulations would have to be updated as well.

Karen – My son tried some years ago to negotiate for a business in Tri-Town plaza and he said it was difficult. When was the last time we used eminent domain?

Fred – Not during my time here.

Stephan – What is the difference between us, Derby and Ansonia in terms of attracting business and what can we do to make us comparable.

Fred – It's difficult comparing communities because they have different regulations and property layouts. I think we should look at what we are and what has been successful. I get comments on how charming downtown is. We don't have a high vacancy rate but we do have a niche – antiques. My understanding is the ones that are here do well. On a larger scale, some of these communities have areas that are more suitable for today's type of development. I don't know that we want to focus on retail. If we look at forecasts, there is a shift to online. We need to focus on our attractive points – our price point for housing stock, our experienced workforce our safe community.

Stephan – You mentioned zoning regulations. Can you mention any specific regulations that would spur economic development?

Fred – The Planning & Zoning Commission is in charge of that.

Stephan – Absolutely, but that seems like a good place to start to encourage economic development. I'm sure Planning & Zoning would be open to suggestions. I'm told it's hard for businesses coming in to find a list of available properties? If not, why not?

Fred – I don't have a list. I work with the real estate groups that have vacancies in town because of my other role as a VP of a brokerage firm. That's one way that I keep track of available properties. We have a relationship with CERC that allows us to place properties on the site if they're not being marketed by a firm. If they are, they are usually put on by the firm. I get calls all the time from realtors looking for space. I prefer a personal approach because of my experience versus a website.

Stephan – Do you have any reason to believe that anything will happen with Tri-Town before their deadline?

Fred – I think the group in control of their property intends to follow through but we can only go by what they tell us. They had a broker who was handling the property and I offered my assistance. The buildings there are antiquated and they need to come down. No one would reuse those structures.

**Item #8: Discussion and take possible action regarding George J. Hummel Little League tax abatement**  
READS LETTER

A motion was made to abate the taxes as presented.

**Motion:** Stephan Behuniak

**Second:** Annmarie Drugonis

**Vote:** 7-0

**Item#9: Discussion and take possible action regarding 293 Roosevelt Drive Tax Abatement**

READS LETTER

A motion was made to abate the taxes as presented.

**Motion:** Annmarie Drugonis

**Second:** Len Greene Jr.

**Vote:** 7-0

**Item #10: Discussion and take possible action regarding capital plan**

Kurt – I haven't taken any further action since our discussion last week because the State still hasn't passed a budget. I wanted to give you all some more opportunity to review it. The key fob money is being repaid to the general fund over the next four years through the capital plan. I will have numbers on the golf simulator next meeting.

**Item #11: Discussion and take possible action regarding Charter Revision Committee**

Kurt - Tonight we have two resolutions. Next meeting we will have a resolution appointing the specific members.

RESOLUTION

ESTABLISHING SEYMOUR CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

WHEREAS, Section 7-188 of Connecticut General Statutes authorizes Connecticut municipalities to invoke the power to amend the municipal charter, which is the organic law of the municipality; and WHEREAS, Seymour desires to utilize this process to improve the Seymour Town Charter; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED pursuant to Section 7-188 et seq. of the Connecticut General Statutes, there shall be established a Seymour Charter Revision Commission.

A motion was made to approve the resolution as presented.

**Motion:** Annmarie Drugonis

**Second:** Len Greene Jr.

**Vote:** 7-0

RESOLUTION

ESTABLISHING THE MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA OF THE SEYMOUR CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

WHEREAS, by resolution enacted by the Board of Selectmen, the Town has authorized the creation of a Charter Revision Commission;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Seymour Charter Revision Commission shall consist of nine (9) electors, not more than one-third may hold any other public office in the municipality and not more than a bare majority of whom shall be members of any one political party.

A motion was made to approve the resolution as presented.

**Motion:** Len Green Jr.

**Second:** Nicole Klarides-Ditria

**Vote:** 7-0

**Item #12: Appointments**

Mike Magut for a 2-year appointment to the Friends of the Broad Street Park Committee ending July 18, 2019.

**Motion:** Len Green Jr.

**Second:** Nicole Klarides-Ditria

**Vote:** 7-0

**Item #13: Tax Refunds/Abatements**

A motion was made to approve the tax refunds/abatements as presented.

**Motion:** Len Greene Jr.

**Second:** Annmarie Drugonis

**Vote:** 7-0

**Item #14: Transfers**

A motion was made to approve the transfer of \$58,000 for Public Works within the Department for labor and trucks for fiscal year 2016-17 surplus to be encumbered.

**Motion:** Len Greene Jr.

**Second:** Al Bruno

**Discussion:** This has been approved by the Board of Public Works and tentatively by the Board of Finance.

**Vote:** 6-0-1 (Annmarie Drugonis abstains)

**Item #15: Correspondence**

Resignation letter from Rich Luby for the Livable Communities Committee

Letter to Susan Debarber from the CT State Library regarding the Historic Documents Preservation Grant

An update on personal property audits from the Assessor'

A copy of a letter from Town Counsel to WPCA counsel reminding them of provisions in the charter regarding the WPCA budget

An opinion from Town Counsel regarding Small Cities Grant consultant Lisa Lowe & Associates

**Item #16: Public Comment**

Mike Kearney – I'm asking for your intervention regarding a problem my wife and I have been having since May 2016 regarding an incident from April 2016 with the Seymour Police Department. My wife was not contacted regarding a citizens' complaint until the final report was submitted. We had to secure a copy of that report as well as the dispatch through FOI requests. We were shocked by the reports. I attended the October Police Commission meeting and were added to the agenda because the minutes clearly showed we were supposed to discuss the incident and personnel. The Board never notified the officers so we couldn't do so. I received a letter from the Board chair who said there was an opinion from Town Counsel saying the 90-day window to discuss the incident was closed. If we wanted to pursue our complaints we'd have to resubmit complaints. I submitted new complaints in November. I heard nothing. There was supposed to be an independent investigation by the Woodbridge Deputy Chief. He told us he was doing a review, not an investigation. We read his report in disbelief because it was full of misstatements and contradictions. We sent a letter to the whole Commission and only

received response by the Commission secretary encouraging me to speak during public comment. We were told we couldn't discuss the officers in question. We were never given opportunity to discuss the incident. The statements made by the officers and Commission are untrue. We should not be threatened by police union lawyers if we pursue this complaint. The Seymour Police website is still down. There are no complaint forms available. This goes for commendations as well. All we want is our day in court. No one has talked to my wife still.

**Item #17: Selectmen's Public Comments**

Karen – At our last meeting I asked the question about liability for branches on Holbrook Road. I got up early the next morning and the branch was gone. I'd like to congratulate Post 10. I've had a relationship with them since I asked for their help in speaking to one of my history classes. I heard a complaint today that our skate park is being used at 10 at night.

Len – I want to recognize the members of Seymour Fire Department for putting together a great carnival this weekend.

Al – I want to say well done to Post 10 and thank you for sharing their accolades with us tonight and encourage them to share with the community.

Annmarie – I want to thank Post 10 for everything you've done. My daughter was fascinated to know she can join since she's the granddaughter of a World War II veteran and congratulations to Grace Brangwynne for her accomplishments at Girls State. I took my daughter to the carnival as well. We also attended the police academy and she loved it.

Nicole – I'd like to congratulate Mike Kearney and Post 10 for his personal award as well as those for the Post and congratulations to Grace as well. Some legislation for veterans passed through the house and senate unanimously. It pertains to the property tax exemptions, increasing the existing exemptions \$3,000 each.

**Item #18: Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion:** Annmarie Drugonis

**Second:** Karen Stanek

**Vote:** 7-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 PM.

Submitted by,



Rory Burke  
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by,



W. Kurt Miller  
First Selectman