

Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Gregg Schuster, First Selectman

Commission Chairmen Special Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 8, 2011
Colchester Town Hall – 7:00PM
Meeting Room 1

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COLCHESTER, CT
2011 AUG -5 AM 11:27

MEMBERS PRESENT: First Selectman Gregg Schuster, Selectman James Ford, Selectman Stan Soby, and Selectman Rosemary Coyle.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Selectman Greg Cordova

OTHERS PRESENT: Adam Turner, Jim Paggioli, Nancy Bray, Dot Mrowka, Rose Levine, David Anderson, Nick Norton, Rob Parlee, Pam Scheibelein, and other citizens.

1. Call to Order

First Selectman G. Schuster called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Commission Updates – Commission Chairs

Rose Levine reported that the Commission on Aging has a full committee, Theresa Hendrickson is the vice-chair of the committee and also the liaison to the Building Committee, by-laws are being reviewed, currently promoting the Senior Center and its events, preparing "Senior Resource Guide," and developing a professional provider network.

Dave Anderson reported that the Board of Assessment Appeals is working well. The members work hard to either raise, lower, or maintain assessments and ask the Town and the property owner to prove the value they are seeking – with the understanding that lowering an assessment also means lowering taxes paid and vice versa.

First Selectman G. Schuster read a written report from Ron Goldstein concerning the Board of Education.

Nick Norton reported that the Open Space Advisory Committee evaluated the health and circumstance of the protected White Oak Tree in the White Oak Farm Development, has issues with value of dedicated open space during subdivision and/or other development, is working with the Norwich Utility Company to purchase open space along the Norwich Utility reservoir, reviewing plans for a series of trails in the Ruby Cohen parcel, and staff has drafted a revised open space map that includes conservation easements.

First Selectman G. Schuster read a written report from Joseph Mathieu concerning the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Robert Parlee reported that the Police Commission is working on the Police Rules & Regulations, the 5-year Equipment Plan, and Strategic Goals. Officers are becoming mountain bike certified. Computer and computer software equipment is continually being upgrading in the vehicles. New uniforms are being considered. A crossing guard

program is being discussed with Board of Education. The town is trying to implement a third shift for Colchester officers.

Pam Scheibein reported that the Youth Services Advisory Board presented their Youth Leadership Award at their last meeting to Janelle Gagnon. The decision is made by school staff. Also, the board is in the process of acquiring two new vans and will begin working with the local prevention council.

First Selectman G. Schuster read a written report from Laurie Robinson concerning the Zoning Board of Appeals

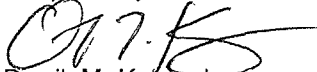
No reports received from:

Bruce Hayn regarding the Board of Finance
Merja Lehetinen regarding the Cable Advisory Committee
Falk Von Plachecki regarding the Conservation Commission
Stephen Cohn regarding the Economic Development Commission
Genea Bell regarding the Ethics Commission
Jack Faski regarding the Fair Rent Commission
Ellen Sharon regarding the Historic District Commission
Jan LaBella regarding the Housing Authority
Sean O'Leary regarding the Parks & Recreation Commission
Brendan Healy regarding the Police Retirement Board
Richard LeMay regarding the Sewer & Water Commission

3. Adjourn

R. Coyle moved to adjourn the Commission Chair Meeting at 7:16 p.m., seconded by S. Soby. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,



Derrick M. Kennedy
Executive Assistant to the First Selectman

Attachments:

- Report from Ron Goldstein regarding the Board of Education.
- Report from Joseph Mathieu regarding the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Report from Laurie Robinson regarding the Zoning Board of Appeals

I am out of town Thursday and not sure if I will be back by 7pm. Please accept this written report in lieu of my attendance at the Commission Chair Meeting.

Although school is out, the Board of Education remains busy over the summer months. We recently welcomed John Reever to the Board, to fill out the term remaining for a Board member who had resigned. John brings a passion for education and student achievement to the Board, and he also has professional expertise in the area of human resources and personnel – I am sure he will be a valuable member to the Board.

The District is installing several new software applications this summer, utilizing the virtual server technology that was approved by the Boards of Finance and Educations last year. The most “visible” of these applications will be our School Messenger system, replacing Global Connect, which was our main communication tool with parents and guardians. The new system has enhanced features and capabilities and will allow more efficient communications – and also a lower annual cost.

Also this summer we are finalizing our revised policy allowing for Student Members to the Board of Education. We are proposing adding two students to the Board as non-voting members. One Bacon Academy Junior and one Senior will be chosen by students, and the Senior member will sit at the Board table with the rest of the Board. The goal of this new policy is to provide authentic learning for the students while enhancing the role of the student perspective in all of our deliberations. These new members will not simply be “reporters” who tell the Board what is happening with the students – although that surely will be an important part of their role. Rather, the Board members will be active participants and conduits for opinions back and forth.

In addition to all of their other duties, our administrators also use the summer months to analyze standardized test scores and improve teaching strategies. The Board looks forward to hearing a complete presentation about our scores in September.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or comments. Thank you.

Ronald Goldstein

Dear First Selectman Schuster,

I am unable to attend the Chairman's meeting this evening but please accept this brief update on the Commission's recent activities.

From an application standpoint, we are currently considering the application of NERP Holdings /Tractor Supply Co. to develop a retail facility at the intersection of Route 85 and Lake Hayward road. The applicant and staff have worked very diligently to overcome many engineering challenges presented by this particular parcel and I expect that we will be in a position to close the public hearing and begin deliberations at our next meeting on August 17. Regardless of the outcome, I commend our staff for the time and effort they have put into this application.

From a planning standpoint, staff has completed the drafting of proposed changes to our zoning regulations. As I have mentioned in past reports, these drafts contemplate some significant changes in the way we approach zoning within the Town. The drafts will be circulated to the Commission members for comment in the coming weeks. We then intend to hold informal public informational sessions regarding the proposed changes to gain feedback from the community. After that, we would hold a number of public hearing sessions and finally deliberate and vote on the changes. We hope to conclude the process in the December / January time frame.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Mathieu
Chairman

To: Gregg Schuster, First Selectman
From: Laurie Robinson, Chairman, Zoning Board of Appeals
Date: 8/4/2011

Subject: ZBA Quarterly Report

Hello Gregg,

Please accept this report-out for the Zoning Board of Appeal's recent news, for use at this evening's Commission Chairman's Meeting:

- The ZBA is currently hearing one application.
- Due to a recent resignation, the ZBA now has no alternates, and this puts us at risk to ensure a full voting board of 5. We appreciate any support the Board of Selectmen can offer to recruit and appoint qualified Alternate members for the ZBA.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie R. Robinson
Chairman, Zoning Board of Appeals