

Water Mill Citizens Advisory Committee  
PO Box 880  
Water Mill, NY, 121976  
[watermillcac@gmail.com](mailto:watermillcac@gmail.com)

Minutes for August 14th, 2023

Minutes for July 10th, 2023 approved

Members: Rachel Verno, Karen Sutton, Gloria Rabinowitz, Alan Harper, Jamie Egerton-Warburton, Rik Kristiansson

Guests: SH Fire District Commissioner David G Price, SH Fire District Secretary Kristin White, Lucile Herbert, Jesse Wellen, Susanne Emmerich, Regan Kiembock, Jim Weidner, Olivia Motch, Johanna Halsey, Patricia Halsey Wellen, John C. Higdon, Nancy Miller, Mark Keenan, Ed Kush, Elizabeth Walbol, Nicolas Michael, Trudy Pereira, Maximilian von Elb, Scotty Ruane, Christy Ruane, Carol Finocchio, Cedric Meeschaert, Joel Perlman, Nancy Skulth, Jennifer Mahl, Michele Mahl

#### PROPOSED FIREHOUSE AT 319 UPPER SEVEN PONDS ROAD

- Some residents and CAC members attended the Fire District meeting on August 10th, 2023.
- The CAC had a number of questions, some were addressed, others the Fire District Commissioners have said they will respond to by our September meeting.
- The CAC formerly submitted the statement made from the July 13th, 2023 FD meeting as well as the questions from the August 10th, 2023 meeting. Material was also submitted to the Planning Board and Town Board for the files.
- Rachel gave a brief overview. Discussed the formation of the SH Fire District and the FD Commissioners, the history and their role.
- Discussed how fire protection for the district is contracted with the SH Village Fire Department. The current contract is for 3 years (we are about 6 months into the contract).
- The Fire District owns property on North Sea Road. There is site plan approval for a firehouse designed by Ben Chaleff, the same architect who has been hired for the Water Mill firehouse. The CAC has copies of the site plan approval for this project.
- The Fire District Commissioners stated at their August meeting that the District and the Department will eventually merge, the North Sea Road firehouse will be built and become the primary firehouse. The Hampton Road property will remain (secondary) and the Windmill Lane property will probably be retired. The WM firehouse would replace the Windmill Station.
- When asked why the North Sea Road firehouse has not been built, Commissioner Price said they needed to have approval from the Village. It is not clear if there needs to be approval or cooperation. The CAC needs to clarify this.
- It does not appear as though the FD needs Village approval for building the Water Mill property. It is not clear why not.
- Currently the FD owns no equipment, they have no membership and no built structures. This would be the first structure that the FD would own. Not clear how this firehouse would be equipped and manned. Has any of this been negotiated and approved by the Fire Department that owns all the equipment and has the membership?
- Discussion about why this is being called a substation when it is being designed as a firehouse.
- It is still unclear why the North Sea Road location would not be built first since it is more centrally located to where volunteers live and more centrally located for the North east/west area of the district that seems to be a concern.
- Discussed that the North Sea Road location would not only better serve this district but it would also negate the need for the WM location.

- Discussed locations and why this firehouse is located in a residential neighborhood.
- The Commissioner was asked why a location on the highway was not chosen and there were conflicting answers.
- Revealed that the FD asked the Planning Board to allow Philip Young relief from putting affordable housing on the townhouse property in exchange for putting a firehouse and EMS building on the corner lot. CAC stated this was never discussed with the community and obviously the developer would not agree to putting a firehouse on site since that would reduce the value of the townhouses.
- The FD also considered the Burden property.
- The 2 million dollar amount that the FD has said they have spend on this property is a number they came up with and is not based on any specific requirements or guidelines. That number could be raised since there is over 9 million dollars in reserve funds. One guest pointed out that 2 million is low for finding a property in a commercial zone which is the only acceptable location for the community. They also pointed out that this number was decided on years ago and property values have increased while the 2 million dollar number has not.
- Discussed that it is not appropriate to place a firehouse in a residential location and not acceptable to look for another property in a residential zone. The CAC and the community could not support another residentially zoned location for this firehouse.
- When asked about the need for flashing lights in a residential neighborhood to control traffic, Commissioner Price stated the FD did not want to have flashing lights or change the roads or take away parking on Old Mill Road BUT the Planning Board could require that. It was pointed out that the Planning Board would most certainly require those kind of improvements.
- It appears as though the traffic study that the Planning Board asked for may have been conducted during the time that Upper Seven Ponds and all of Old Mill Road were closed for a Highway Department road project. CAC needs to confirm when the traffic study is/was conducted. One resident on Old Mill Road pointed out that the trip counter near their home was cut. Not clear what study that trip counter was part of.
- Asked why the Willow property isn't being considered. The FD has said that property is too small and there is flooding on Willow Road. The North Sea Fire Department substation is on a similar sized piece of property so it is unclear why .9 acre is not large enough for a substation.
- Asked to clarify Commissioner White's statement that the Fire Department supported this project. Commissioner Price acknowledged that the SH Village Fire Department does not fully support this. It is still unclear why this project is being pursued if the SH Village Fire Department does not support this.
- Also unclear that if there is an actual need for a substation in Water Mill. Also, if and when the Windmill Lane location is retired, would this location be an appropriate site.
- It appears as though everyone agrees, even those who support the concept of a substation in Water Mill, that this is an extremely bad location for a variety of reasons.
- CAC would like the FD to stop pursuing this plan and spending any more money on this project.
- Commissioner Price reminded us that the FD does not have to go through the planning process at all. The CAC believes that work sessions and pre-submission conferences are not mandatory for municipalities but a public hearing would be required. The FD has already indicated that they will not participate in the pre-submission conference.
- It appears from this meeting that the FD its continuing to pursue this project.
- Discussed that a homeowner as retained legal representation.

#### MILL CREEK PARK

- Jeffrey Bragman is representing a homeowner who lives adjacent to the proposed park. He will be attending the September 11th meeting to discuss concerns about using Settler's Field for parking.
- Mr. Bragman has sent a letter to Jacqueline Fenlon and he sent a copy to the CAC.
- Another property owner living across from Mill Creek has expressed concerns for how the park will be used.

- Marlene H. has asked us to address what conditions have been placed on the park in the TB Resolution. Will there be protections that prohibit future uses such as fundraisers, large events, organized events etc.
- Councilmen Martel has also mentioned the cost to construct what is being proposed.

#### MILLPOND

- Although the CAC was told back in March that the DEC permits for harvesting Lily Pads was underway, they have not yet been issued. This means we will most likely miss the window for the second year in a row to get this done. Still unclear why DEC permits are necessary for this work and if they are required, why the Trustees have yet to secure the permits which we have been discussing for several years.
- The Trustees will be hearing a presentation from Solitude Solutions at their August 21st meeting to discuss what they have learned from the last carp harvesting and fishery survey. They will be making recommendations. CAC members will attend.

#### BIKE PATH ON CRESCENT

- The highway department has moved forward with this project.
- Still unclear why this bike path is needed on a dead end street and where is it going.
- CAC has asked for a master plan for the area bike path system. There does not seem to be a plan other than to put in bike paths and clear town right of ways as roads are being repaved by the highway department.
- The bike lane will only be on the east side of Crescent. There will be no bike lane on the west side.
- There will be a parking area at the end of Crescent and there is a potential plan for a kayak launch. Members discussed that launching a kayak at that area is not advisable for safety reasons.

#### OLD MILL ROAD DRAINAGE PROJECT

- The drainage project is almost complete and appears to be working although during the recent massive downpour, the road did flood. The good news is that the water quickly drained from the area.
- Some questions about the drainage around the area south of the intersection (around where the bench is located). It appears as though water may be flowing directly into the pond or the drains that are placed there are not properly working.
- The intersection of Old Mill Road and Head of Pond has been redesigned and re-striped. It feels a bit off, but it is a big improvement.

#### LITTLE COBB CONE PROGRAM 7/26-8/8

- During the drainage project, the Highway Superintendent decided to implement the cone project on Little Cobb that was discussed last year during the blinking light pilot program.
- The CAC did not support the concept last year and they do not support the plan as it was implemented this year.
- Upper Seven Ponds Road from the intersection of Head of Pond Road to the bus depot was shut down to all traffic from 5am-10am. The entire length of Old Mill Road was shut down from 5am-10am. No turns off the highway were permitted on to Old Mill Road heading either east or west from 5am-10am.
- Little Cobb Road was turned in two lanes heading east from 5am-10am with no lane heading west.
- The merge of 2 lanes off of Little Cobb was moved onto Rt. 27. The 2 lanes ended before Proprietor's Lane.
- Cones were used to create the 2 lanes. The turning lane on Rt. 27 heading west onto Little Cobb was blocked.
- The traffic light at Station Road remained blinking. A police officer was stationed there.
- The following comments were made:

1. Conducting a traffic study when part of Upper Seven and all of Old Mill Road are closed does not represent a realistic set of circumstances.
2. The traffic from Upper Seven Ponds was diverted on to Head of Pond Road. Instead of making a left turn off of Old Mill, motorists went to Head of Pond to make the left hand turn back on to the highway. Traffic on Head of Pond Road heading east was considerably heavier during the morning rush.
3. Did the study include any comparative analysis of traffic on surrounding roads like Head of Pond, Deerfield and Cobb with the closure of Upper Seven and Old Mill?
4. Not allowing turns off of the highway on to Old Mill again just diverted traffic to Head of Pond and Deerfield. Did the study include that data?
5. While exploring no left turns off of Old Mill needs to be studied and addressed, not allowing right hand turns off of Old Mill Road makes no sense.
6. The residents who live on Little Cobb Road were UNABLE TO MAKE A LEFT HAND TURN OUT OF THEIR DRIVEWAYS from 5am-10am for over a week. If a resident wanted to head west or go to the beach before 10am, they had to turn right out of their driveway (which was also difficult) and head east on to the highway and then figure out a way to turn around and head west.
7. Turning left on to Cobb Road when heading west is extremely dangerous. There is currently no turn lane and the shoulder along that section of the highway is narrow. That intersection has a high accident rate, especially making a left turn on to the highway where there is limited site lines. Will a traffic light at Little Cobb being considered?
8. What happens to the bike lanes on Little Cobb and the Highway. Parking spots were actually removed on the south side of the highway in the hamlet to make way for bike lanes?
9. The residents of Water Mill and the CAC have always fought the plan to create two lanes heading east through the hamlet center. The cone program does exactly that.
10. The blinking light during the morning rush definitely helps traffic. The cost to have a police officer stationed at that light is unrealistic. Can the light have trigger plates so it stays green until a car needs to exit Station Road?
11. Have the Planning Board and Town Engineer been consulted in regards to the traffic light since plans for the Dennis Suskind Station Road project, the Koral Brothers project and the Townhouse project all used the traffic light as part of their traffic plan? Approvals were granted with the understanding that there was a traffic light at that location. It can not simply be blinking all the time.
12. Why was the light at Station Road blinking all day long without a police officer on 8/8?
13. Councilman Martel indicated that the cone program was considered a success and would try to be implemented in 2024.
14. The residents on Little Cobb Road asked who to contact to express concerns and they were directed to Councilman Martel and Highway Superintendent McArdle.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

- Discussed the proliferation of temporary signs especially at the Water Mill Shoppes.
- Reminder that Trustees holding a meeting on Monday 8/21 at 1pm.

Minutes taken by Rachel Verno