

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Tuesday, May 19, 2020 – 7:00 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT

Members Present via Remote Access: Steven M. Everett, First Selectman; Deputy Selectman, Robert Hellstrom, Judy Ortiz, Selectman; Lisa Napolitano, Selectman.

Members Absent: William O'Brien, Selectman.

Also Present via Remote Access: Mark Walter, Town Administrator; Beverly Ciurylo, Finance Director; Marc Volza, Recreation Director, Bernadette Derring, Senior Center Director.

This is a web-based call, so we are operating under the following procedures: This session is being both video and audio-recorded. The Selectmen and staff will generally remain on mute except when speaking or voting and will generally be keeping video of themselves on throughout the meeting. There will be public comment during the Audience of Citizens and for the Lake Construction & Maintenance of Structures and shoreline on Columbia Lake. If a member of the public creates an audio or video disruption, they may be manually ejected from the meeting upon recommendation of staff or the First Selectman.

CALL TO ORDER: S. Everett Called the Meeting to Order at 7:00 PM

1. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** S. Everett asked for a moment of silence for all those affected by COVID.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Agenda as written. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
 - 3.1 **BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for April 21, 2020.** S Everett moved to Approve the meeting minutes for April 21, 2020. MOTION CARRIED 4.0. **BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for May 5, 2020.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Regular BOS Meeting Minutes for May 5, 2020. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.
4. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** *For public input before the meeting please email your comments to PublicInput@columbiact.org. For public input during the meeting, your comments can be submitted through the "Chat" feature in Zoom Meeting or wave your hand and request your mic to be un-muted. PLEASE INCLUDE IN BOTH METHODS YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS.* No Comments from the Public.
5. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - 5.1 **Board of Selectmen Resolution Re-acceptance of the Donation Agreement between Trust for Public Land and the Town of Columbia for the Markell Property.** M. Walter explained that to comply with the Executive Order 7JJ the motion will need to be redone. Once the motion is done correctly it will then be sent to FiPAC for informational purposes only. M. Walter stated that the protection of the Wells Woods area is consistent with the 2016 Columbia plan of conservation and development and was approved at the Planning and Zoning January 13, 2020 meeting. S. Everett read the following motion and the MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen has previously recommended that the Town accept the donation by Markell Properties of that certain 100' x 100' parcel of property located

on Pine Street in accordance with a certain Donation Agreement between The Trust for Public Land and the Town of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen will refer this proposed acceptance of such donation to the Financial Planning and Allocation Commission for informational purposes only; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed and approved the proposed acquisition under CGS 8-24 at its January 13, 2020 meeting;

WHEREAS, the Town Charter would ordinarily require a special town meeting to accept the donation of the subject property; and

WHEREAS, in light of the current Declaration of Public Health and Civil Preparedness emergencies in the State of Connecticut and executive orders issued by Governor Lamont in conjunction with such declaration the holding of a town meeting would not be prudent; and

WHEREAS, Section 4 of Executive Order 7JJ issued by Governor Lamont on May 6, 2020 permits the Board of Selectmen, upon finding that taking such action in a timely manner serves an important public interest or to avoid financial loss, to take action to acquire interests in real property without complying with the Town Charter or any statutory requirement to hold a town meeting or referendum to approve such acquisition; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen has determined that delaying the acquisition of the subject property would potentially adversely impact the associated open space transactions that have been previously approved by special town meeting.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:

RESOLVED: That, pursuant to the authority granted under Section 4 of Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7JJ, the Board of Selectmen does hereby accept the donation by Markell Properties of that certain 100' x 100' parcel of property located on Pine Street in accordance with that certain Donation Agreement between The Trust for Public Land and the Town of Columbia.

Discussion ensued regarding the property. J. Ortiz asked if a recommendation from Open Space was provided. M. Walter explained that the Chairman, Ann Dunnack expressed her approval in the last BOS meeting. L. Napolitano feels it was not presented that there was a direct connection to the proposed state park and if there could be parking. She stated that the Town does not know what kind of responsibilities the town or the state will have and what will be done on this property. She stated she is not comfortable moving forward. She stated that there is just something not right about it and it's interesting timing that this is presented now without public meetings. S. Everett asked if we don't approve the motion, does it kill the deal for the Markell. M. Walter stated that Markell wants to sell every piece of the property. J. Ortiz felt there was not enough information, but probably is a good deal. R. Hellstrom stated we have options to decide what we want to do with it. If we decided to sell it to Infinity Farm, we could do that. M. Walter stated it's up to the BOS to decide to do what to do with the property.

- 5.2 Discuss plans for Town Beach and Rec Park Operation.** S. Everett asked the BOS to provide their input on the beach re-opening document that M. Volza, Recreation Director provided. L. Napolitano stated that what was outlined works and to open the beach. J. Ortiz asked how we are going to police the plan of no more than 30 people at a time and groups of 5 people. M. Volza stated that one staff member will be at the gate counting how many people are coming into the beach and determining capacity. Once capacity is reached the gate will be shut. He stated that lifeguards on duty, and that at all times there is one lifeguard that is not guarding the swimmers and they will inform

residents of the rules with social distancing, use of masks and the state guidelines for parks and beaches. Lifeguards will enforce the rules and the staff reserve the right to ask them to leave. If it escalates, the Rec Dept Director will be called to assist and if it escalates any further the State Police will be contact. M. Volza stated that the rules will be handled just like any other beach rules. J. Ortiz asked if the lifeguards feel comfortable using CPR. M. Volza explained that the lifeguards are comfortable with the appropriate procedures that have been established. M. Walter recommendations to the BOS is to consider is discounting the beach pass by \$5.00. M. Walter stated that signs will be posted at the beach explaining the rules and will be posted on the website and social media. S. Everett read the guidelines presented by M. Volza:

State Guidelines for Beaches currently require the following

- Limit capacity to 50%.
- 15 feet between blankets/groups of people.
- No sports/activities.
- No groups larger than 5, groups should be from the same living unit.
- Masks are required when social distancing is not possible.

Columbia Lake Procedure

- Residents will purchase beach passes using the regular process and beach pass system. Passes will go on sale May 20th.
- Memorial Day weekend and the last weekend of May we will use staff to limit the capacity of the beach to 30 people at a time and enforce social distancing by residents. (swimming will be at your own risk)
- Beginning June 6th, we will begin staffing the beach with lifeguards, checking for beach passes, while still limiting the beach capacity and enforcing social distancing.
- The Murphy House bathrooms will remain closed, 2 portables have been rented along with a sanitizing unit.
- We will not be selling concessions this year due to Covid-19.
- The floating dock will remain beached this year due to social distancing issues it will cause.
- Using beach markers to mark 15ft between groups.

S. Everett MOVED to accept the rules and guidance as written by the Rec Director. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

S. Everett stated that Rec Park remains open with appropriate social distancing and wearing masks. The Playscape will remain closed.

- 5.3 **Municipal departments operations in light of COVID-19 re-entry.** B. Derring stated that she has talked with other Senior Center Directors around the state and no one has been opening their Senior Centers. She stated that there is a need for the transportation program, and they will be installing plexiglass in the van to protect the drivers and will disinfect the vehicle often. She felt that she would like to see how things go tomorrow with the re-opening of the state and over the over the next weeks before deciding to open the senior center. She is looking at opening mid to late June. S. Everett stated that they recently received the Libraries plan on re-opening and will be reviewing. M. Walter stated town departments are handling residents needs through various means, such as through our website, mail, email, and phone. M. Walter stated that at this moment in time

town department will not open to the public until June 20th. M. Walter stated that at each BOS meeting we will reevaluate openings and procedures.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

6.1 Discussion of 4th of July Parade. S. Everett stated he was contacted by Steve Piro, President of the Lions Club to discuss the 4th of July parade and asked if Steve could address the BOS. S. Piro stated that the board of directors of the Lions Club met last night and they concluded that they would be cancelling the parade. He said that the board was felt it was not something they felt comfortable going forward with. S. Piro stated that maybe the Lions Club could do some sort of other event later on for the town.

7. COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH.

7.1 Proposed amended and restated Guidelines for Granting Permission for the Construction and Maintenance of Structures and Shoreline on Columbia Lake. S. Everett explained that after extensive meetings with LMAC the regarding the amended guidelines and that what is presented tonight is the amended and restated guidelines for the BOS to consider and approve. L Napolitano asked if this document had gone out to people living around the lake. Henry Beck, LMAC member stated that the document has been available at several BOS meetings and at the Columbia Lake Associations (CLA) meetings. H. Beck stated that at the CLA meetings it was discussed favorably. In addition, CLA newsletters included information on the guidelines. R. Hellstrom stated he likes what he has seen in the document and the changes that were made. J. Ortiz did not have any questions. S. Everett stated he wants the BOS to be comfortable with the new guidelines and asked the BOS if they would feel more comfortable giving two more weeks additional time to review. H. Beck stated that we do have some time, but it should be fair so that people can have more time to plan. He added that the only things that are new in the guidelines are in respect to boat lifts and what is grandfathered and what is not. H. Beck stated that most everything else is tightening of definitions and re-organizing and updating the application. S. Everett asked that the BOS review the guidelines and get your questions to the town administrator and they BOS will vote on it in two weeks. For public comment residents can send their comments to PublicInput@columbiact.org

7.2 Public Comment Specific to Guidelines. M. Roickle recommends sending the documents to the CLA for their comments as well.

8. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS: None.

9. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

9.1 Workers Compensation Premium. M. Walter stated that the Town has a 0% increase in Liability and Property and the Workers Compensation premium is at 3% Workers because the town's safety record.

9.2 Public Works & Volunteer Gardeners. M. Walter thanked our volunteer gardeners, specifically Ingrid Wood, Millie Ramsey, and Joan Hill and how well the volunteer and Public Works departments have been working together.

10. CORRESPONDENCE:

10.1 Emergency Management Director's Update.

10.2 State Police Monthly Report for April.

10.3 Resources for Re-Opening.

11. BUDGET:

11.1 Transfers. S. Everett MOVED to Approve Transfers totaling \$2,781.00.

| TRANSFER#/AMOUNT | FROM A/C# DESCRIPTION | TO A/C# DESCRIPTION |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 2020-030/\$1,000.00 | 10-4420- 500/Professional /Tech | 10-44420-300/General Supplies |
| 2020-031/\$1,500 | 10-4440-230/Electricity | 10-4112-230/Electricity |
| 2020-032/\$8,000.00 | 10-4660-230/Electricity | 10-4670-120/ Telephone/Communication |
| 2020-033/\$111.00 | 10-4260-230/Electricity | 10-4260-120/ Telephone/Communication |

MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

11.2 Refunds: S. Everett MOVED to Approve Refunds totaling \$6,045.00.

| AMOUNT | FROM | TO |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| \$6,045.00 | TOWN OF COLUMBIA | Steven S. Adil |

MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

12. APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS: S. Everett MOVED to Approve payment of bills totaling \$221,225.72 consisting of 2019-2020 Emergency, 2019-2020 Regular, Bond '01 payment, Credit Card, and Paychex. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

13. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS: M. Walter provided a summary of an email that came from Jeff Morrison, 14 Columbia Landing stating that the town should keep Columbia beach and rec park open with no lifeguards and swim at your own risk. Michele Barton commented that she felt 30 people at the beach is an unrealistic number and is confident most people will be turned away. She was concerned about paying for a family beach pass and then being turned away and felt that was unfair. She asked if the BOS would reconsider the fees for the beach pass. S. Everett explained that we are following the state and DEEP guidelines on social distancing. He stated that he will work with the Rec Director about the social guideline rules as well as the cost for beach passes. A question was asked regarding overhead costs and how did the Town come up with the measurements of up to 30 people. M. Volza responded that there has to be some sort of staffing to make sure that the capacity limit at the beach is being monitored and the porta-potties are being cleaned and disinfected. M. Volza stated that determined the number of people at the beach by using a GSI map of the beach and they hand measured the beach by breaking it into 15- ft increments. S. Everett stated that he appreciated the comments and questions from residents and will look into the issue of beach pass pricing and the amount of people who can be at the beach safely, while adhering to the State and DEEP guidance rules.

14. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: J. Ortiz asked if the BOS could be contacted weekly between Board meetings to keep them informed on what is going on at the beach and in the town. M. Walter stated he will send a summary weekly. L. Napolitano stated that she walks on the trails and people are respectful. R. Hellstrom stated he is impressed with the Towns people and that they have been doing the right thing. He is hopeful this will be the same at the beach. M. Walter stated that S. Everett has the authority over things that are not managed by the Health District.

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Real estate per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(D); Pending Litigation per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B); Personnel per State Statues Section 1-200(6)(A).

16. ADJOURNMENT: S. Everett MOVED to Adjourn the Meeting at 8:15. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.