

TOWN OF CHAPLIN
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
October 29, 2018

Approximately 53 electors and those authorized to vote at Town Meeting assembled at the Special Town Meeting on October 29, 2018 at 7:00 P.M. at the Chaplin Senior Center, 132 Chaplin Street, Chaplin, Connecticut and transacted the following business:

1) Call to order. The Town Clerk called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. and opened the floor to nominations to elect a moderator for the meeting. William Rose / Eunice Edelman moved / seconded to nominate Irene Schein. Hearing no further nomination, Irene Schein was declared moderator. The Moderator indicated that this was a Chaplin town meeting and non-Chaplin residents would not be eligible to vote. The Moderator reviewed two rules of conduct; the first being that people were to be recognized before they speak and the second that people were to address their questions to the Moderator. She then read each item of the call as it arose.

2) To nominate and elect to the Regional Board of Education of Regional District #11 one member to fill a vacancy for a term of three years to commence upon the vote at the October 29, 2018 Special Town meeting with a term ending on June 30, 2019; Eugene Boomer /Jaclyn Chancey moved / seconded to nominate Stephanie Harrington. Stephanie Harrington was declared elected to the Regional District # 11 Board of Education.

3) To appropriate for fiscal year 2018-2019 the transfer of an amount not to exceed \$75,000 from the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance to the FY 2018-2019 CIP Fund Project #3325.3 (Senior Center/Library Roof Replacement). Robert Dubos / Jean Lambert moved / seconded to approve the transfer. William Rose gave background information regarding the need for replacement, solar panels on the roof and the cost of the project. Questions were asked regarding the type of shingles that will be used, the scope of the project, the life expectancy and warranty of the new roof, damage to the roof caused by the solar panels, the details of the solar panel contract and the Green Bank. The Moderator called for a hand vote of those in favor of approving the transfer with the following results: Yes – 49, No – 1, Abstentions -Zero. The motion passed.

4) To appropriate for fiscal year 2018-2019 the transfer of an amount not to exceed \$15,000 from the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance to the FY 2018-2019 CIP Fund Project #3305.14 (Tree Removal). William Hooper / Helen Weingart moved / seconded to approve the transfer. William Rose discussed the hazards of the current tree situation caused by ash boring beetles, gypsy moths and heat stress. The tree warden advised us that there could be up to 1000 trees to be removed over the next 4 to5 years. It was noted that Chaplin's DPW crew can remove the trees and because of this the town is able to avoid the cost of hiring a tree removal crew at \$1,200 to \$1,500 per day. Questions were asked regarding possible mitigating the cost of tree removal by selling the lumber and possible additional costs. The Moderator called for a hand vote of those in favor of approving the transfer with the following results: Yes 48, No – Zero, Abstentions - Zero. The motion passed.

The Moderator advised that there would be a limit of 5 minutes per person to speak during public discussion on items #5 and #6 and opened the floor for discussion.

5) Public discussion for input regarding status of the Chaplin Museum at 11 Chaplin Street. William Rose gave an overview of the history of ownership and use of the museum, discussed deed restrictions as well as cost of maintaining the building, appraisals of the building and the possibility of selling or moving the building or leaving it as is. In his overview he indicated the following:

- If the Town sells or relocates the building the land reverts to the grantor. The sale of the land or building would give the grantor's heirs the right of first option to purchase.
- 1982 Town Attorney opinion that the town owns the museum and land in fee simple.
- 1983 – 1984 the museum society was formed and dissolved in 2013.
- 2011 William Rose applied for funding thru the “vibrant community initiative” but was denied.
- Quotes to move the building have been obtained. There is \$35,000 in the CIP account for moving the building.
- Basic maintenance has been done to the building.
- 2016 the McKleroy's expressed a desire to purchase the building.
- 2018 the McKleroy's presented the Board of Selectmen with a petition to block the move of the building.
- 2018 Landmark Properties was consulted regarding the appraisal/sale or relocation of the building.

Many electors expressed passionately their opinions regarding the museum.

Peggy McKleroy addressed William Rose directly stating she had been told by him that Landmark Properties said the museum was not worth anything, that he had previously told her he obtained federal funding from the Historic National Trust to move the museum which she thought was a lie, she stated that she researched grants that were given to Chaplin to move the building and found none. William Rose said he had never applied for federal funding.

Catherine Smith stated that the legal warning of this meeting refers to 11 Chaplin Street, but the museum is known as 1 Chaplin Street.

Paul Siege stated he felt that the museum is the “welcoming center” of the town and if it is moved that would be destroyed.

Christopher McKleroy presented the audience with handouts and a presentation outlining the history and use of the museum and that it was originally a dry goods store and then became the town hall and then a museum. He stated that one of the things that enticed them to buy their home in the Historic District was the fact that the village is controlled by the Historic District Commission and that things would not be changing but stay unaltered. He presented two letters from the State Historic Preservation Office that recommends against moving the museum and that if moved it could possibly be delisted from the State Historic Registry. He stated that the Historic district has been unaltered since it was built beginning in 1815. He stated that he and his wife spoke with the people of the village and stated that over 85% of the Chaplin Historic Village residents are against the move. He presented a map with houses that were marked as being against moving the museum. That he obtained a quote for \$45 – \$50k to move the building. He stated that they would be good stewards of the museum if they purchased it because they have taken good care of their own home. He also stated that he spoke with the zoning officer about converting the museum into a usable apartment.

Johann Philbrick stated that there are two separate issues regarding the museum. The first is the maintenance and future of the museum and the second is the history of the town. For sixteen years she attended to the museum when it was open to the public.

She is concerned that if the building is sold it is gone from the town forever and concerned if it would be kept up by the person who purchases it.

William Hooper asked questions regarding if the property should be sold would the town have the right of first refusal.

Sally Zimmerman spoke of her work with preservation easements on historic properties and how a preservation easement may be applied to the sale of the museum. She said that she will place a preservation restriction on her historic property on Chaplin Street known as the Lincoln Store.

Eunice Edelman read a letter from her husband Marvin who spoke about his work with the Thomas Paine National Historic Museum and his preference to house the museum's artifacts in the Chaplin Library and against moving the museum.

Susan Peifer spoke against moving the museum and pointed out difficulties with moving it and bringing it up to code if it were to be used by the public.

Adelaide Northrop spoke of her history in the town relating to the historic district and asked questions regarding a 99-year lease of the museum.

Paul Peifer, Historic District Chairman spoke referencing CGS- 7-147j (d) regarding demolition permits and requested a legal opinion from Attorney O'Brien. He will add this to the next Historic District Commission meeting agenda.

Stacy Foster asked what the cost of maintaining the building is. She added a comment that if the property is sold then it is a loss to the community.

William Rose asked for clarification regarding if the museum would conform to zoning regulations if it were converted to an accessory apartment.

Warren Church commented about the museum deed restrictions and if the right of first refusal extends to the grantors heirs and assigns. William Rose stated there is an attorney opinion letter from 1982.

Steven Smith commented that the town should keep the museum and not sell it.

Cesar Beltran suggested the option of granting the McLeroy's a 99-year lease.

William Rose stated the purpose of this meeting was to discuss all available option including moving or selling the museum or leaving it as it. A 99-year lease could be a fourth option.

Leslie Ricklin stated that she would feel badly if the museum was moved and felt it would not jeopardize the future of the building if it were sold. She is in favor of selling the building.

Catherine Smith spoke in favor of the town keeping the museum.

6) Public discussion only regarding status of the Chaplin William Ross Library at 57 Chaplin Street. William Rose expressed concern that decisions need to be made regarding the building. There has been a study done to see if the building could be converted to a municipal building. Eastern Highland Health District walked the property and felt the property / building could have a septic and well, but a perc test would still be necessary. An A-2 survey would need to be done to see if an easement is necessary for driveway access. There is moisture in the basement and leaks in the roof.

Nell DeVane expressed interest in purchasing the library.

Roberta Cardinal asked what Landmark Properties assessment of the property was at the time they appraised it. William Rose responded between \$40 - \$50k.

Leslie Ricklin spoke about repairs that were done years ago to the slate roof on the library and turrets and said she would like to see the building have continual use.

Catherine Smith asked if there was money left in the fund created by William Ross for the upkeep of the library. She spoke about grant funds that may be available for restoration.

7) To appropriate for fiscal year 2018-2019, the transfer of an amount not to exceed \$3,500 from CIP account #3320.1 (Revaluation) to General Fund #23103 (In-House Computer System) for Main Street GIS upgrade. William Rose explained that this upgrade would add another layer containing lot dimensions to the online GIS system. William Hooper / Ann Chuk moved / seconded to approve the transfer. The Moderator called for a hand vote of those in favor of approving the transfer with the following results: Yes - 43, No - Zero, Abstentions - Zero. The motion passed.

William Hooper / Ann Chuk moved seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 P.M.