

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2019 AT 6:30 P.M. IN ROOM 207-209 TOWN
HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

Paul A. Bowman, Chairman; Patti Flynn-Harris and Timothy Slocum
Arnett Talbot, Asst. Town Manager

Guests: Don Walsh, President Lights of Hope and Linda Blackburn, Treasurer, Lights of Hope.

1. ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

3. Discussion re: Naming a section of the Linear Trail as “Trail of Hope:.

Chairman Bowman stated that this matter has come before the Council on an informal basis, and was referred to the Planning Committee.

Ms. Blackburn, a 22-year Cheshire resident, explained that the recommendation for naming a section of the Linear Trail as “Trail of Hope” (between Cornwall Avenue and West Main Street) has been discussed with the Recreation Director Gawlak, who supports the naming.

Mr. Walsh stated this is not a memorial type naming request. The naming is about keeping the name of Lights of Hope organization out there. The organization is about “neighbor helping neighbor”, raises money to help people, and provides scholarships to Cheshire High School students. Mr. Walsh commented on people outside of town using the Linear Trail, and wanting to let them know that Cheshire is a great community, which supports Lights of Hope. The Committee was told by Mr. Walsh that this year the Cheshire businesses went above and beyond past years of sponsorships. The naming of a section to Trail of Hope is appropriate for Lights of Hope and everything the group does for the community.

Regarding the signage, Ms. Flynn-Harris asked what it would look like. She walked this section of the Trail and bridge this weekend with her stepson, who commented on it being a great area to honor people, i.e. Boy Scouts or organizations. Ms. Flynn-Harris said there should be no carving into the wooden rails.

In response, Mr. Walsh said the organization pictures naming the Trail section with the Lights of Hope logo – a bag with a heart in it –which is recognized by people in town. It would be a simple sign.

Mr. Slocum said the bridge section could be named for Lights of Hope, and this would be appropriate.

Mr. Bowman stated his support for naming this section of the Trail as the "Trail of Hope". There is a vision for this area for other opportunities, i.e. benches.

In that regard, Mr. Walsh said the area could have donations for benches and other types of recognition.

Ms. Flynn-Harris supports moving the naming forward to the Council.

MOTION by Ms. Flynn-Harris; seconded by Mr. Slocum.

MOVED that the Planning Committee approves naming the section of the Linear Trail, Cornwall Avenue to West Main Street, as the "Trail of Hope", and forwards this approval to the full Town Council for approval.

Discussion

A question was raised by Mr. Slocum about the timing with this naming of the Trail section. He expects the Lights of Hope will go on forever, but asked what happens if it is a non-incorporated group in future years.

There is an endowment for Lights of Hope, and Mr. Walsh stated the group will go on forever. The scholarships are being paid through the interest from the endowment. Attorney Bruce Diamond is legal counsel to the organization and is currently working on the transition when Don and Jen Walsh can no longer head the group. Mr. Walsh noted that many groups in Cheshire are dependent on the Lights of Hope donations; there are many in need; and this start-up charity has lasted for many years. Mr. and Mrs. Walsh are proud of what they have done, and understand they cannot do it forever. They will work with the transition and the scholarships will continue for CHS students.

Ms. Blackburn reported that CHS has an active Lights of Hope Club.

The club started with three (3) students and now has 110 students working for the organization. Mr. Walsh said this club will continue at the high school. The three (3) students who started the club graduated in 2019, but selected new students to hold office on the Board of Directors, and they will continue the student involvement. Mr. Walsh commented on being amazed at these students passing the torch along to new students, and their parents. Next year, every student in the club will have to be a street captain as part of their commitment.

Mr. Bowman stated this is a great platform to teach students leadership skills, and find a way to be involved in the community. With this youth group, Mr. Bowman said they could work in cleaning and maintaining this section of the Trail.

When the naming is approved, Mr. Walsh said there would be an official celebration and naming ceremony in Spring 2020.

The opportunities are endless and Mr. Bowman said the Trail could also be a holiday lighting area for the community.

It was reiterated by Mr. Walsh that local businesses, especially those abutting the Trail, want to be involved with the Trail of Hope.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

From a naming procedural process, Ms. Talbot advised the naming request will go to the Town Council and advisory committees (Parks and Recreation Commission) to get final approval.

- 4. Determination of status of Committee matters**
 - a. Route 10 Traffic Study (2003)**
 - b. Microgrid Grant Program (May 2014)**
 - c. Subdivision Homeowners' Association Responsibilities (November 2016)**
 - d. Request for relocation of war memorials (November 2016)**
 - e. Naming of Basketball Courts at MacNamara Legion (2017)**
 - f. Development of electronic recording polity for meetings (June 12, 2018)**
 - g. Review of Town owned property Naming Policy (September 11, 2018)**
 - h. Naming of a section of the Linear Trail as "Trail of Hope" (September 17, 2019)**

Mr. Bowman stated the Committee will decide on these open agenda items, and make a determination on their status. For items "a through f", he does not support moving them forward, or leaving them for the next Council Planning Committee.

The Committee briefly reviewed the following items:

- c. Subdivision Homeowners' Association Responsibilities (November 2016)** – this is a Planning and Zoning Commission responsibility.

- d. **Request for relocation of war memorials (November 2016)** – this came from the original discussions on the Chapman Property; Veterans groups talked about merging all the monuments in one location in town.
- f. **Development of electronic recording polity for meetings (June 12, 2018)** – the next Town Council will undertake this matter.

There has been discussion about a permanent camera in Room 207-209, and Mr. Bowman said this can be handled by the next Town Council.

Ms. Talbot explained that staff is working on making Room 207-209 more high tech, with live video on CH 14. There is a new State grant with the submission date of November 1st to fund expansion of electronic recording.

- g. **Review of Town owned property Naming Policy (September 11, 2018)** – the Committee agreed there is no problem with this Policy.

The naming request for a section of the Linear Trail to “Trail of Hope” has met all the policy requirements, and will be an agenda item on the November 12th Town Council meeting.

Before adjournment, the Committee discussed a request from the CHS Class of 1980 to name the Cheshire Park Pavilion or Park Trail in honor of Mark Jardim, the only Cheshire resident who was a victim of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. A letter from Linda Bourchard, CHS Class of 1980, will be forwarded to the Town Council for consideration of the request.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Flynn-Harris; seconded by Mr. Slocum.

MOVED to adjourn the Planning Committee Meeting at 6:52 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk