

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2020

Public Access made available through live streaming on YouTube at www.youtube.com/c/CheshireChannel14

Public comments accepted at Comments@cheshirect.org, and by voice mail message at 203-271-6638.

Present

Timothy Slocum, Chairman, David Borowy and Jim Jinks

Staff: Town Manager Sean Kimball and Asst. Town Manager Arnett Talbot

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: LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The draft of the 2021 Legislative Recommendations was reviewed by the committee, and it was noted that the State Legislative session runs from January 6th to June 9th 2021.

Town Manager Kimball pointed out the recommendations are categorized “General Legislative Requests” which are favorable to many towns, and “Cheshire Specific Requests” which specifically relate to the Town of Cheshire.

The committee discussed the best strategy for Legislators to focus on the requests. Some of the long time requests can be removed – i.e. the STEAP grant, which is now a smaller grant program.

General Legislative Requests

1. Concerns with the 2020 Police Accountability Bill

The committee agreed this is an important matter. Police Chief Dryfe will join the full Council meeting for review and discussion on this bill.

2. Juvenile Justice Reform

There is no juvenile justice reform at this time for juvenile crimes and penalties. The committee agreed to keep this matter on the short list.

3. Prevailing Wage

The threshold was revised in 2017 to \$1,000,000 for larger projects. Cheshire is advocating for an increase in the threshold for renovation projects from \$100,000 to \$400,000 or higher.

4. Binding Arbitration

Cheshire advocates for a time line of six (6) months from the start of proceedings to conclusion.

5. Enabling Legislation for Community Choice Aggregation for Energy

This is a request supported by the Energy Commission. It enables people to have options and choices with purchase of energy utility services.

Mr. Kimball recommended keeping this item on the list. It was not passed or advanced at the State level; it allows more local control or option to purchase electricity through this process.

With the current issues on electric bills, Mr. Slocum agreed with keeping this in the recommendations, and noted there has been no discussion on it at the State level.

Following review of these five items, Mr. Jinks agreed that this short list is fine and supports moving it to the Legislators.

Cheshire Specific Requests

6. Transfer of Bus Depot property from State to Town of Cheshire

This request has strong Council and local support, and will remain on the list.

7. Upgrading RT68/70

This dovetails with the West Main Street development. The upgrade will designate a bike route.

8. CT Rail Express Shuttle

This item needs to be vetted further, and is not on the horizon this year.

Mr. Jinks said the town is waiting to hear if DOT is making improvements for a safe bike route. This is not expected to be on the Legislative agenda soon or to be advanced. He recommends removing items #7 and #8 from the requests, and putting municipal speed limits and cross walk legislation back in. These two items will likely be coming up in Transportation Committee this year and have support.

Mr. Slocum and Mr. Borowy agreed with removal of #7 and #8 from the list.

It was noted by Mr. Slocum that there have been improvements to crosswalks in town, and he asked about progress on this issue.

The West Main Street Hawk system is a matter of concern and debate. Mr. Kimball said the town is looking at installation of permanent barriers to navigate at slower

speeds. There will be a continued look at education campaigns; requirement of ADA compliance at crossings with new ramps; more visibility for cars to take extra care. Mr. Kimball explained that the proposed bill requires drivers to yield to pedestrians waiting in the crosswalk.

Mr. Jinks pointed out the current law does not require a car to stop until a person is in the cross walk. The change would be for the person waiting on the sidewalk to cross to have the right-of-way...the driver stops until the person is safely across. This law was reversed in 1990 and is now going back to the prior law...a car always waits for a pedestrian.

Chicanes – Mr. Slocum asked about getting back to chicanes, doing them on State property prior to knowing what the Legislature decided.

Following the discussions on the list, the Planning Committee made the following conclusions and recommendations which Cheshire would support:

- Remove #7 (Upgrading RT 68/70) and #8 (CT Rail Express Shuttle)
- Re-introduce Municipal Speed Limits (formerly HB6590)
- Include Pedestrian Crosswalk Safety (formerly HB7203)

Mr. Slocum stated it is expected the Legislative Session will open virtually this year.

The Planning Committee recommendations will be presented to the full Town Council for review, discussion and approval.

The memo from Police Chief Dryfe dated 11/3/20 cites a matter of great importance to the Cheshire Community. Chief Dryfe will attend the Town Council meeting to speak about CPD concerns.

The revised Legislative Recommendations document will be e-mailed by Mr. Kimball to the Council members.

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Mr. Jinks.

MOVED that the Planning Committee advances the Legislative Recommendations to the Town Council for review and approval.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Mr. Jinks

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk