

**CHESHIRE TOWN BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2014 AT 7:30 A.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROOM 207 / 209**

Committee Members Present:

Chairman William Bonaminio, Pat Archibald, Susan Dillman, Jane Presnick-Lyon and Jo-Ann Vitarelli

Committee Members Absent:

Pauline Cacace, William Meyerjack, Lynn Voelker and Mike O'Donnell - Park & Recreation Commission Representative

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

John Milone, Milone & MacBroom

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bonaminio called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

It was determined that a quorum was present for this meeting.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 8, 2014 Regular Meeting
February 26, 2014 Special Meeting

MOTION by Susan Dillman that the Town Beautification Committee approves the minutes from the January 8, 2014 Regular Meeting with the following corrections: Page 3, seconded sentence should read, "Chairman Bonaminio said that many people..." and Page 3, fifth sentence should read, "...TBC didn't get the beneficial exposure that others did..." **SECONDED** by Jo-Ann Vitarelli.

VOTE: In Favor – Archibald, Bonaminio, Dillman, Presnick-Lyon and Vitarelli
Opposed – None

The motion passed 5 – 0.

MOTION by Jane Presnick-Lyon that the Town Beautification Committee approves the minutes from the February 26, 2014 Special Meeting as submitted **SECONDED** by Jo-Ann Vitarelli.

VOTE: In Favor – Archibald, Bonaminio, Dillman, Presnick-Lyon and Vitarelli
Opposed – None

The motion passed 5 – 0.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications to the Town Beautification Committee

VII. BUSINESS

- A. Site Review
 - 1. Core Development – 589 South Main Street
13 Unit Planned Residential Infill Development (Revised & Resubmitted)

Mr. Sitko introduce John Milone of Milone and MacBroom who was present on behalf of the Core Development project proposed for 589 South Main Street. Mr. Sitko informed the Committee that this project was originally proposed and reviewed in October 2013 by the Town Beautification Committee but the plans were withdrawn from the Planning & Zoning Commission. The project has since been revised and re-submitted so Mr. Milone is appearing today to review the revised plans with the Town Beautification Committee.

Mr. Milone stated that the property for this project is in an R-20A Zone on South Main Street at the corner of Elmwood Drive. He talked about the Infill Residential Housing Regulation that was recently created for sites between ½ an acre to 2 acres in size, near the center of Town.

Mr. Milone explained that the new plans for this property would have primary access via South Main Street to help with the neighbor's concerns about traffic on Elmwood Drive.

The plans call for retaining the trees and the house in the front of the property, which is the Joshua Hitchcock House and was built in the 1740's. The revised plans call for the creation of 3 buildings on the back section of the lot, each building would have 4 condo type units in them with an internal driveway and detached garages with residential style lighting. Belgium block curbing will be continued and used in the apron of the garages. The new buildings will be attractive, Colonial style, simple buildings. There will be porches not decks for each unit and there will be a fence along the west side of the property for a buffer to the back neighbors. The same style fencing will be used for the emergency entrance gate on Elmwood Drive. There will be a total of 13 residential units on the property, including the existing front house, which will be renovated inside. The access driveway will be widened just a little but plans are to keep the existing front trees on the property and there will be no curb in front. It was noted that approximately 4 feet of the front wall would be removed. The total lot size is 1.2 acres. Mr. Milone noted that he has met with the neighbors, at Mr. Voelker's request, and they seem more receptive to the new plans for this property. Committee members commented that they agree the revised plans are an improvement to the area and for the Town.

Mr. Milone noted that there is a sidewalk along Elmwood Drive and the existing vegetation along the Elmwood Drive side of the property will remain to help with screening. Additional shrubs will be planted along the back of the building along Elmwood Drive. He noted that cobblestone pavers used on in the project would be used on the emergency access way on Elmwood Drive. The emergency access gate will be 3 feet high and will be similar in style to the fence that will be installed along the back of the property.

Mr. Sitko noted that the Town Beautification Committee has had concerns in the past with applicants that represent specific plantings in their landscape design plans but don't follow through with the plans to the end of the project. Mr. Milone commented that he believes the trees in the front of this property are Beech trees. The house in the front of this property currently is a rented apartment on the 2nd floor and an office rental on the first floor, but it is not occupied at this time. The new units will be approximately 1300 square feet each and will have 1 garage space and 1.5 parking spaces per unit on the property.

MOTION by William Bonaminio that the Town Beautification Committee finds the plans for Core Development at 589 South Main Street to be nicely landscaped, to have nice buildings proposed and seems to fit the use of the area. The Committee therefore accepts the plans as presented with the landscape to be completed as represented upon completion of the project. **SECONDED** by Susan Dillman.

VOTE: In Favor – Archibald, Bonaminio, Dillman and Vitarelli
Opposed – Presnick-Lyon

The motion passed 4 – 1.

When asked why she was opposed to the project, Ms. Presnick-Lyon stated that she feels the proposed project is too dense for the property size, she is concerned with the proximity of the property to Cheshire High School and she has concerns about the traffic and access in and out of the property.

Ms. Dillman commented that she agreed that the project seems to be too dense for the property but that she voted to approve based on the landscape plan. She noted that if the Town Beautification Committee can say the project is too dense for the property, she would like to change her vote to be opposed to the project. Mr. Sitko replied that the members are certainly entitled to their opinions but the Planning & Zoning Commission is responsible for approving the density of a project and the Town Beautification Committee is responsible for the landscaping of the projects.

Mr. Milone stated that he appreciated the input on the project from all the Committee members, both positive and negative. He explained that this proposal is a result of trying to find a use that is more desirable and compatible with residential uses near by. He added that if the property were to be used with an office building added to the property, the old house would probably not be kept as well as probably not all the trees that Mr. Milone is planning to keep with this project.

Ms. Presnick-Lyon also mentioned concern for the limited parking in the proposed development. Mr. Sitko noted that the Planning & Zoning Commission will review the parking proposed for the project, too. Ms. Presnick-Lyon added that she appreciates the plans to preserve the existing house on the property.

B. Election of Officers

NOMINATION by Jane Presnick-Lyon to re-elect William Bonaminio as Chairman of the Town Beautification Committee. **SECONDED** by Jo-Ann Vitarelli.

NOMINATION by Jo-Ann Vitarelli to re-elect Pauline Cacace as Vice Chairman of the Town Beautification Committee. **SECONDED** by Jane Presnick-Lyon.

NOMINATION by Jo-Ann Vitarelli to re-elect Lynn Voelker as Secretary of the Town Beautification Committee. **SECONDED** by Jane Presnick-Lyon.

The NOMINATIONS presented to the Town Beautification Committee were unanimously approved by all members that were present.

C. Chamber Home, Garden and Business Expo – April 12

A sign up sheet was passed around to the members for sign up times during the April 12th Chamber Home, Garden and Business Expo. Ms. Dillman reported that she has updated the Town Beautification Committee display for the Expo with new Beautification awards and information. Chairman Bonaminio suggested that the Committee could get labels noting that the plantings people take home from the Expo are from the Town Beautification Committee.

D. Adopt-A-Spot Program

Mr. Sitko stated that the Town Beautification Committee's Adopt-A-Spot program may need to find 1 or 2 new location sponsors. It was suggested that perhaps the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce could help find a few new organizations that would like to participate in the program. Ms. Dillman commented that Campion Ambulance has done a nice job on their property the last few years and perhaps they would be interested in adopting the location near their property. Mr. Sitko commented that it would not be a bad idea to run a local ad to get a more updated list of organizations that would be interested in participating in the program going forward. He added that the existing organizations in the program would have first priority.

E. Budget FY14 and 15

Mr. Sitko reviewed the proposed 2014 – 2015 Fiscal Year Operating budget as it stands with the Town Manager. Mr. Sitko had proposed a budget of \$13,300 for the Town Beautification Committee and the Town Manager has reviewed and recommended \$12,950 to the Town Council. The reduction was mostly in Beautification maintenance costs and other services.

F. Arbor Day

Committee members thought that more Arbor Day pencils will be needed for this year's celebration. Chairman Bonaminio suggested that perhaps a new type of tree could be planted this year instead of a Kousa dogwood. Mr. Sitko asked if the Committee would like to continue the Arbor Day program at the school and it was agreed by all that it was a great program and that they would like to continue. Chairman Bonaminio noted that he was not sure if the Committee would be able to purchase the trees from Preferred Properties again this year. Ms. Dillman suggested that the Committee stay local for the purchase; perhaps with either Cheshire Nursery or Dietrich Gardens who have both participated in the Adopt-A-Spot program. Chairman Bonaminio commented that Dan Dietrich does a great job with his large area for Adopt-A-Spot and that it would be great to do business with them. Ms. Archibald suggested that perhaps the Committee could look into a shade tree for planting near the school playgrounds.

Chairman Bonaminio mentioned his concern with the 12-foot clearance that CL & P is taking on each side of their power lines in Cheshire and the number of trees being taken down and their location. He stated that when he worked for the State Department of Transportation there only needed to be 8 feet of clearance. Chairman Bonaminio stated that he thinks CL & P tree trimming crews are taking way too much down and destroying good trees by not trimming them correctly.

Mr. Sitko commented that years ago electricity reliability was really bad in Cheshire, that combined with the severe storms in the last few years, has resulted in CL & P trying to be pro-active but agrees they may be taking it to the extreme. Ms. Dillman noted that in Hamden, United Illuminating's tree trimming plan was way too extreme, residents spoke

up and they have now scaled back the trimming plans. She suggested that Cheshire residents and perhaps this Committee should speak up too. Chairman Bonaminio suggested a meeting with the Supervisor of Tree Trimming for CL & P and Mr. Sitko stated that he would see about arranging a meeting within the next week or so. Committee members thought that was a good idea and did not want to put off the meeting for too long as tree trimming work continues on an almost daily basis. Ms. Dillman noted that it is also the property owners' responsibility to speak up and say they don't want their trees taken down.

G. Liaison Reports

There were no liaisons present at this meeting of the Town Beautification Committee.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Jane Presnick-Lyon to adjourned the March 5th meeting of the Town Beautification Committee at 9:00 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Jo-Ann Vitarelli.

VOTE: In Favor – Archibald, Bonaminio, Dillman, Presnick-Lyon and Vitarelli
Opposed – None

The motion passed 5 – 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Substitute Recording Secretary