

DRAFT

*Watch Hill Fire District
Watch Hill, R.I. 02891*

DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING

Friday, May 27, 2016

3:50 p.m.

Fire Station

222 Watch Hill Road

Watch Hill, RI

A meeting of the District Council of the Watch Hill Fire District was held at the Watch Hill Fire Station at 3:50 p.m. Friday, May 27, 2016.

The following members were present:

Charles S. Whitman III, Moderator
John M. Regan III, Deputy Moderator
Paul Verbinnen, Finance Committee Chairman
Grant G. Simmons III, Chairman Park Commission
Robert Peacock, Fire Chief
Andrew Parsons, Member at Large

By Phone: Robert Murray, Treasurer

Other voters present:

James Nicholas

Also present were:

Dale Faulkner, The Westerly Sun
Judy Kelley, Fire District Office Manager

Proper notice having been given and a quorum being present, the Moderator, Charles S. Whitman III, called the meeting to order at 3:50 p.m.

Minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of September 25, 2015, which were previously circulated, were approved.

Finance Committee – Mr. Paul Verbinnen

Mr. Verbinnen moved that the 2016-2017 budget, as presented, be approved for submission to the voters. The motion was seconded and approved.

New Business

Mr. Whitman noted that there had been much Westerly generated discussion on access to the beaches. There will be a series of meetings over the next few weeks. This was not really a Fire District responsibility and it related to areas outside of Watch Hill as well. There was discussion as to the possibility of drop off areas at some access points and also, which access points were true rights of way.

Mr. Whitman reported that Mr. Simmons, along with representatives from the Town of Westerly, had a meeting with the state wide management committee to ask for funds to complete the sidewalks and curbing in downtown Watch Hill. This would be the finalization of a federally mandated storm water retention project for which the Town lost funding when they failed to resubmit amended plans. (The

Conservancy's utility pole project just took advantage of the opening of the streets to bury lines.) The street lighting is a town issue. Mr. Nicholas asked what had happened to the old curb stones. Mr. Simmons replied that they had been preserved and would be put back. They are currently stored behind the Holdredge building.

Mr. Whitman reported that the matter of the solar panels on St. Clair Annex was in a state of settlement. Mr. Nicholas said he felt there needed to be better communication between the business owners and the District Council and asked, going forward, what changes should be made to achieve this. Mr. Whitman said that the issue with solar panels came about because of an error by the Westerly Zoning Board. However, in terms of communication, if there is a change of use or the need for a zoning variance, abutters are advised. However, if a project does not fall into those categories, or the District is not an abutter, there is no way to know in advance what may be planned. In this particular case, the District was an abutter but the plan shown to the District did not reflect solar panels on the front of the building. Mr. Regan proposed that the District Council suggest to the village merchants that they contact the Park Commission if there are planning to do something that might influence the downtown aesthetic to see if there might be an objection. Mr. Nicholas emphasized that this communication needed to be two way

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Kelley
Office Manager