



TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID FORMAT

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339

860 464-3203
Roxanne Maher

Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

MINUTES
LAND USE/PLANNING/PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE –
SPECIAL MEETING

Monday, December 11, 2023

6:15 PM

Town Hall Annex Building

DRAFT

- I. CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order by Councilor St. Vil at 6:15 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex Building.

Councilor St. Vil welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. He stated for the Town Council Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee and members of the Public who were participating via video conference that the remote meeting information was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town's Website – Granicus-Legistar Meeting Portal.

- II. ROLL CALL –

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location	Arrived	Departed
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	6:15 pm	6:43 pm
Kevin Dombrowski	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	6:15 pm	6:43 pm
Gary St. Vil	Committee Chairman	Present	In-Person	6:15 pm	6:43 pm
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Council Chairman	Present	In-Person	6:15 pm	6:43 pm
April Brunelle	Town Councilor	Present	Remote	6:15 pm	6:43 pm
Earl (Ty) Lamb	Historic District Commission	Present	In-Person	6:15 pm	6:43 pm
Karen & Kieth Parkinson	Tri-Town Trail Association	Present	In-Person	6:15 pm	6:43 pm
Roxanne Maher	Administrative Assistant	Present	Remote	6:15 pm	6:43 pm

- III. CITIZENS' PETITIONS – None.

- IV. PRESENTATIONS/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS- None.

- V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 6, 2023
Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Buhle

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

- IV. BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

1. Progress regarding the enforcement of regulations to address blight issues

Councilor St. Vil stated that the review of blighted properties was a long-standing item that was forwarded from the Town Council's Twenty-sixth Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee (LUPPW).

Councilor Dombrowski provided some background explaining that the review of Blighted Properties has been included on the LUPPW Committee's Agenda to monitor how effective Ordinance #300-012 (rev 1) "*An Ordinance Concerning Blight and Public Nuisance for the Town of Ledyard*" was; and to see if the Ordinance needed to be modified. He stated the LUPPW Committee has been receiving quarterly updates from the Land Use Department's Blight Enforcement Officer.

Councilor St. Vil questioned whether Ordinance #300-012 (rev 1) "*An Ordinance Concerning Blight and Public Nuisance for the Town of Ledyard*" was effective as written.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that they believed the provisions provided in Ordinance #300-012 (rev 1) were effective, explaining that the intent of the Ordinance was to get property owners to comply. However, he stated because the Land Use Department Office has been short-staffed that the quarterly Blight Property Reports have not been provided on a regular basis.

Councilor St. Vil questioned whether the LUPPW Committee needed to continue to carry this item on their agenda. Councilor Dombrowski stated at some point the LUPPW Committee could remove this item from their Agenda.

Councilor Buhle noted that the last Blight Report attached to the meeting packet was dated May – July, 2023. Councilor St. Vil asked for an updated Blight Report to be provide for their January 8, 2024 meeting.

RESULT: NO ACTION

Next Meeting:01/08/2024 6:00 p.m.

2. Discuss the process to designate the Spicer Ruins, within the Clark Farm property, as a Registered Historical Site.

Mr. Earl (Ty) Lamb, 93 Lambtown Road, Ledyard, Historic Commission Member, stated that he appealed to the previous Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee (LUPPW Committee Meetings 10/10/2023 & 11/6/2023) to consider seeking a historical designation of a 2-3 acre area of the Spicer Homestead Ruins, which was located within Clark Farm Property (1025 Colonel Ledyard Highway).

Mr. Lamb provided some background noting that based on the Tri-Town Trail Association (TTT) approaching the Historic District Commission to solicit their interest to preserve and to seek a historical designation for the Spicer Homestead Ruins from the State that the Historic District Commission has been doing some research to determine whether it was a viable project. He went on to state that the Historic District Commission has included on their December 18, 2023 Agenda an item to consider whether they would accept the Spicer Homestead Ruins parcel, should the Town Council Assign the Administrative Control of the parcel to them.

Councilor Dombrowski stated the Town Council would not assign Administrative Control/Oversight of the Spicer Homestead Ruins parcel to the Historic District Commission until after the town received the Historic Designation from the State.

Ms. Karen Parkinson, 55 Rose Hill Road, Ledyard, Tri-Town Trail Association (TTT) President, stated that she has been working with Mr. Lamb on this initiative to obtain a Historical Designation of the Spicer Homestead Ruins property from the State. She questioned whether Councilor Buhle and Councilor St. Vil have walked the Tri-Town Trail that runs from Bluff Point to the Preston Plains Park. Both Councilor Buhle and Councilor St. Vil responded that they have not walked the Tri-Town Trail. Ms. Parkinson stated that she would be happy to take them on a walk of the Trail and to the Spicer Homestead Ruins site, noting that it would give them a better understanding regarding this historic designation project. She also stated walking the Tri-Town Trail would give them some history, which has become common knowledge of the Tri-Town Trail.

Ms. Parkinson went on to state in working to construct/develop the Tri-Town Trail, they discovered a very old forest near the border of Mr. Bill Geer's property. She stated in the forest they found a very old large "*Erratic Rock*". She stated in talking with families who have lived in town for many generations the Tri-Town Trail was told that there was an old homestead in that area. She stated in researching the area they found an old dug well, and the remnants of a homestead house where the center chimney was. She stated because the Tri-Town Trail Association did not want to go through the homestead area they rerouted the trail to go around the parcel. She went on to note that the Spicer Homestead dated back to 1650 at which time Peter and Mary lived in the home with eleven children. She stated to put this into perspective that it was 100 years before the Revolutionary War and 110 years before the Historical Nathan Lester House was built on Vinegar Hill Road. She stated five generations lived at the Spicer Homestead. She stated in the 1780's the property was divided and sold, and they now have Spicer Hill Road and other places. She stated the Spicer Family was one of Ledyard's Founding Fathers that settled in the area between 1650 – 1700 (Allyn Family, Geer Family, Spicer family, and others). She stated the Clark Farm was bought in 1889 from the Geer Family and used as a major Dairy Farm.

Ms. Parkinson stated the Tri-Town Trail Association used some grant funding to hire Sarah Holmes, PhD Archaeology Consultant to conduct an Archaeological Land Record Study to verify that the site was the Peter and Mary Spicer Homestead dating back to 1670; and they have obtained an Archaeological Site Number. She stated the Tri-Town Trail Association's mission was to build the Trail; and because the Tri-Town Trail Association was not a Historic Preservation Organization, she engaged the Historic District Commission, noting that Mr. Lamb has been very helpful. She stated there were stone walls around the house with small gardens and a barn. She stated they were hoping to use a drone to outline the immediate area where the house was located, stating that this was the area they would like to preserve.

Councilor Dombrowski stated although the details that Ms. Parkinson has mentioned would be important to know, that before they talk about getting drones, or mapping out the area, etc., or applying to the State that they have to figure out the path forward.

Councilor Dombrowski noted the following:

- Determine whether the Historic District Commission wanted to take on the Spicer Homestead Ruins parcel.
- Does the Town want to entertain pursuing preserving the Spicer Homestead and seek a Historic Designation from the State.
- Need to obtain an 8-40 Review from the Planning & Zoning Commission to state that the historic preservation and designation of the Spicer Homestead was consistent with the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD).

Councilor St. Vil questioned whether there was any documentation that outlined the actions/process required to designate/preserve a historic parcel in town.

Councilor Dombrowski stated the Tri-Town Trail Association was not an Agency of the Town of Ledyard. Therefore, he stated the Historic District Commission would be the ones to take the lead on this initiative. He explained that the Historic District Commission should lay out a plan regarding the process and the actions required to seek/obtain a historic designation that they would then present to the Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee as part of the process to obtain Town Council authorization to proceed with the project.

Councilor Dombrowski went on to explain that the Town owned the Clark Farm, and that it was under the Administrative Control/Oversight of the Town Council, noting that the Tri-Town Trail Association only had an easement to the property to access their Trail. Therefore, he suggested if Ms. Parkinson would like to participate in the project with the Historic District Commission that she should do so as a private citizen, and not as a member of the Tri-Town Trail Association. Ms. Parkinson agreed, noting that the Tri-Town Trail Association was a 501(c) 3 Organization and was not an Agency of the Town

Councilor St. Vil stated that he appreciated the Archaeologist's Report that was provided to the LUPPW Committee in September, 2023; and he questioned whether there was any other documentation that resulted from the Tri-Town Trail Association's work pertaining to the Spicer Homestead. Ms. Parkinson stated that the Tri-Town Trail Association obtained a \$1,000 Grant from the Ledyard Rotary for fencing and signage for the Spicer Homestead. She stated the Tri-Town Trail Association could obtain permission from the Ledyard Rotary to transfer this Grant Funding to the Historic District Commission to be set-aside for the project. However, she stated that they did not have any other deliverables pertaining to the Spicer Homestead.

Councilor Dombrowski suggested the LUPPW Committee schedule a Site Walk of the Spicer Homestead. Councilor St. Vil agreed and suggested the Committee select a date for the Site Walk. Councilor Buhle questioned the ability to hike the property in January due to the weather.

Councilor St. Vil stated that he would like to see the LUPPW Committee collaborate with the appropriate Commissions to determine the way forward in seeking a historic designation of the Spicer Homestead Ruins. He stated that they all recognized that they needed to conduct their due diligence to ensure they were proceeding in the proper manner. He stated that he would like to hear more from Historic District Commission Member Mr. Lamb.

Mr. Lamb noted at their December 18, 2023 meeting that the Historic District Commission would be considering the following:

- Whether seeking a State Historic Designation of the Spicer Homestead Ruins was a viable project.
- Consider establishing an Account in which they could receive funding toward the Spicer Homestead Ruins Project.
- Discuss Developing a Plan with the LUPPW Committee.

Councilor St. Vil questioned what would happen if the Historic District Commission decided that they did not want to take on the Historic Designation of the Spicer Homestead Ruins project. Councilor Dombrowski explained that if the Town Council decided that obtaining a Historic Designation of the Spicer Homestead Ruins was a viable project that they could move forward with the initiative, noting that the property would remain under the Town Council's Administrative Control/Oversight. He suggested the LUPPW Committee wait for the results of the Historic District Commission's December 18, 2023 meeting. He stated if the Historic District Commission agreed to take on the Spicer Homestead Ruins project that the LUPPW Committee should schedule a Joint Meeting with the Historic District Commission to discuss project.

Chairman Rodriguez suggested the LUPPW Committee review the List of Administrative Control of Town-Owned – Town Leased Property that was recently updated on August 23, 2023.

RESULT: CONTINUE

Next Meeting: 01/08/2024 6:00 p.m.

3. Any other Old Business proper to come before the Committee. – None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT-

Councilor Buhle moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary St. Vil
Committee Chairman
Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee