

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

DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING
Friday, January 22, 2010
4:30 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 4:30 p.m. Friday, January 22, 2010.

The following members were present:

Edwin L. Russell, Moderator
Grant G. Simmons III, Chairman of the Park Commission
William H. White, Treasurer
James Beale, Chairman of the Finance Committee

Voters present:

Richard Ahearn
John Felber
Peter Griffin
Judy Lentz
Walter Lentz
Robert Peacock
John Regan III
Shelley Weier
Stuart Weier

Also present were:

C. J. Doyle, Cherenzia
Edward McDonald, Contractor
Paul Myer
Harvey Demovick III
Philip Koretski, Misquamicut Club
Judy Kelley, Office Manager
Lyn Traver, Fire District Administrative Assistant

By Phone:

Penelope Kelly, District Council Member at Large
Andrew Parsons, District Council Member at Large

Proper notice having been given, the Moderator, Edwin L. Russell, called the meeting to order at 4:30 P.M. A quorum was not present.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the November 28, 2009 meeting. Since a quorum was not present, the motion will be made again at the next District Council meeting.

Fire Department Request

Mr. Russell introduced Mr. Lentz who asked for a moment of silence in honor of C. Shepard Desillier, who passed away recently. Mr. Lentz then suggested that the Fire District send a letter of condolence to Marion Desillier, also expressing thanks for Mr. Desillier's many years of service.

At the last District Council meeting, Mr. Stuart Weier was appointed to complete Mr. Desillier's term as a fire department member at large.

Financial Review – James Beale

Mr. Beale noted that District real estate taxes are due on September 30th. As of December 31st, \$37,000 remained unpaid. In the beginning of January, 2010, \$12,000 came in. This was about the same as last year. Mr. Beale wondered if the Fire District was getting the appropriate interest payments on these past due balances. He will check with the tax collector.

Mr. Beale reported that expenses were in line with the budget.

Treasurer Bill White reported that, thanks to an inquiry by George Jenssen, the Fire District received verification from the State of Rhode Island that the District did not have to pay unemployment taxes. This will save the District approximately \$4,500 annually. The State holds a reserve of prior year payments of approximately \$25,000 that the Fire District will try to get returned.

Mr. Russell pointed out that for the period from June through December, the Fire District was within 1% of its budget.

The current cash position as of December 31, 2009 was \$422,000, ahead of budget by the Cabana lease payment of \$66,000.

Water Line Break- Richard Ahearn

Mr. Ahearn explained that in the process of work to reconstruct the cabanas, the contractor hit a six inch water main buried twelve feet below the surface and running through the center of the dunes underneath the cabanas. The water company was called and they installed a valve to temporarily shut off the water. Neither the project manager, CJ, nor Mr. Koretski, Manager of the Misquamicut Club, knew of the existence of this line.

CJ explained that normally before construction the water company is called and asked to mark their lines. On August 18, 2008 a representative from the water company measured out where he thought the line was. Neither the water company nor the Misquamicut Club had any actual plans. There was no reason to suspect that the drawing made in 2008 was wrong.

Mr. Koretski said that when the Beach Club was being rebuilt in 2004-5, there was a discussion of exactly where the water line ran. It was determined at that time that the line was not under the road.

This newly found line goes through where the new septic system for the cabanas will be. It cannot stay there. The line is old, made of cast iron and while it could be chlorinated, it is unlikely that it would support the 200 psi test.

Mr. Simmons asked if the septic system could be moved. CJ replied no. She noted that had they known of the line's existence, it would have been removed as part of the project.

Mr. Peacock advised that with the new dispatch program in place, the Fire Department was able to adjust who is called to bring in water should there be a fire at the site. The situation is satisfactory now but would not be after April 15th when the Misquamicut Club opens.

CJ suggested that a new line be put in to meet project needs and that the old line be capped and left in place.

Mr. Russell pointed out that the old water line is on private Fire District property and therefore it is the District's responsibility to fix it.

Mr. Ahearn estimated that the cost for a new line would be approximately \$50,000. The contractor confirmed that he could have a new line in place by 4/15/10.

Mr. Koretski said he was comfortable with the proposed new line.

Mr. Regan asked who would pay for the new line. Mr. Russell suggested it would come out of the Park Commission budget, noting the unbudgeted income from the cabana lease. Mr. Simmons said he thought the Yacht Club should pay for part of the work. The issue of who will pay will be further discussed.

Mr. Peacock said that the Fire Chief would like to have the fire hydrant at the Misquamicut Club moved outside the gate as part of the new water line installation.

Mr. Ahearn thanked the Fire District for all their help as the Yacht Club deals with the water line situation.

Website – Andrew Parsons

Mr. Parsons reported that the only section fully completed is the Finance section. The public spaces section is incomplete and they need information from Mr. Simmons to complete the Parks Commission section. Mr. Parsons would also like more photos of Watch Hill in all seasons. He suggested a possible photo competition.

Mr. Parsons said a decision must be made on whether to include the Fire District Charter and By Laws in the Governance section. He personally believes in transparency and would like to have them there. Mr. Simmons said he had reservations. Mr. Lentz suggested that the documents be

available for residents but not the general public. Mr. Russell suggested that no decision be made at this time. Mr. Parsons replied that this would delay getting the site up and active. Mr. Russell said a final decision will be made at the next meeting.

Mr. Parsons wanted to know who would update the events section. It was decided that the District Office would provide updates.

Fire Department- Robert Peacock

Mr. Peacock advised that the Fire Department had created a Charles S. Desillier award.

Mr. Peacock also reported that negotiations were under way to give the old ladder truck to Middleton, NY collector, Andrew Leader, who is trying to establish a fire museum and who will pay to tow the old ladder truck to Middleton as soon as details are settled. It was agreed that the words "Watch Hill" and "Pegasus" will remain on the truck. If the museum fails, the Fire District will be offered the opportunity of having the truck back before any other disposal options are considered.

Mr. Peacock reported that the Ocean House alarm system will go on line on March 1 and that false alarms are expected, as is common with any new system of this size.

Boat Cruise – Edwin Russell

Mr. Russell said that next Friday he, Mr. Simmons, Mr. O'Brien and two others will be meeting to try to finalize the cruise schedule and to come up with pricing. There is discussion on the pricing piece as to whether this will be a high end cruise or a ferry. Mr. Russell feels they need to come up with a rate and schedule for the first year and then modify as necessary.

Park Commission – Mr. Simmons

Mr. Simmons reported that about a month ago a sailboat anchored in Little Narragansett Bay became locked in an ice flow. Westerly authorities have sent notices to the owner. The boat is in good shape so far but will be destroyed if it goes further up on the beach. Apparently no one wants to salvage the boat as they would need a place to put it. Mr. Simmons would like to have it towed away so as not to be a danger to the beach.

Airport Road – Mr. Russell

Mr. Russell reminded those present of the need to deal with the traffic problem that will be created by the new light on Airport Road. Mr. Beale noted that the Department of Transportation (DOT) decided to put the light there and that the Town of Westerly had no say. However, if the traffic becomes an issue, Chief Mello can appeal to the DOT.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Judith Kelley
Office Manager