



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

CARL P. FORTUNA JR., FIRST SELECTMAN

SCOTT M. GIEGERICH, SELECTMAN

MATTHEW PUGLIESE, SELECTMAN

302 Main Street • Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475-2384
Telephone (860) 395-3123 • Fax (860) 395-3125

MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 23, 2024
6:00 p.m.

Old Saybrook Town Hall – First Floor Conference Room

Direct link to the recording: <https://youtu.be/55s4LoUizmc>

It is also included in the following playlists:

Board of Selectmen Meetings: _

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKX0JMf1KPp9SQAHO0GUQCR3yLtNYxKOWK>

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – All members present
- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Recited.
- III. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** – None.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE SELECTMEN** – Mr. Giegerich opined that the referendum was relatively well attended and resounding in favor of a study. Mr. Pugliese asked about what's next: Mr. Fortuna stated that a contract has to be executed. After that, he guesses that some information, including current and former rosters of officers with contact information, will be requested. Other information may also be needed before any in person visits are scheduled. Mr. Fortuna also understood that all patrol positions have now been filled by the Police Commission suggesting that attraction of officers may be less an issue than retention. Mr. Pugliese attended the Save our Shade meeting. The Board discussed Ms. Connolly's letter also at this time (attached). Mr. Pugliese mentioned that the Save our Shade group mentioned becoming an Arbor Day Town. Mr. Fortuna also mentioned David Brown's passing, Mike Cronin's retirement and the very large proposed development in Westbrook, CT.
- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Board of Selectmen Meeting January 9, 2024 – *A MOTION was made to approve January 9, 2024 meeting minutes.*
FORTUNA/PUGLIESE
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
- VI. **BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD**
 - A. Discussion and possible action Tax Refund- EAN Holdings (Enterprise) – *A MOTION was made to approve Tax Refund- EAN Holdings (Enterprise)*
FORTUNA/GIEGERICH
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
 - B. Discussion and possible action Encroachment permit bond release – 267 Schoolhouse Road – *A MOTION was made to approve release of the encroachment permit bond.*
FORTUNA/GIEGERICH
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Board of Selectmen
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- VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION** – To discuss possible land acquisition. *The board went into Executive Session at 6:35 p.m. No motions were made and no votes taken. The board exited Executive Session at 6:52 p.m.*
- VIII. ADJOURMENT** – *A MOTION was made to adjourn at 6:53 p.m.*
FORTUNA/GIEGERICH
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl P. Fortuna Jr.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carl P. Fortuna Jr., First Selectman

To: Carl Fortuna, Scott Giegerich, Matthew Pugliese

Cc: Georgiann Neri, Christine Costa, Lynette Wacker

Re: Budget considerations, 2024/25

1/19/2024

From: Kathleen G. Connolly, 60 North Cove Road

During the current budget cycle, please consider a new approach to how our town manages all vegetation on public land—not only trees. These steps are climate-forward, fiscally responsible, and supportive of efforts for the “Sustainable Saybrook” program.

Background

Trees and shrubs have always been appreciated for their beauty and the shade they offer, but they are now understood for their role in air purification, stormwater management, erosion control, cooling, wind management, noise buffering, and habitat for declining populations of birds and pollinators.

Invasive plants respect no boundaries, and their burgeoning presence calls on municipal teams everywhere to cooperate in their elimination. Invasive plant management is exacting and expensive and calls upon land managers for skilled decision-making and appropriate timing.

While lawns remain useful and popular, many people now understand that lawns are expensive, demand maintenance time, and are sources of air pollution and carbon emissions. Furthermore, they offer little to birds, pollinators, or other wildlife. Where lawns are being maintained “just because” they have always existed and serve no recreational purpose, there may be an opportunity to eliminate them. This creates an opportunity to replace them with native trees, shrubs, deep-rooted grasses, and flowering plants. *Note: This does not suggest that ballfields, playgrounds, or town greens should be eliminated*

Actions

Please consider a new approach to planning for vegetation management and, of course, budgeting.

1. Request Land Use, DPW, the school district, and Parks and Rec to engage in a vegetation planning process:
 - a. Inventory municipal areas infested by invasive plants. Set priorities for removal and replacement, acknowledging that this is a multi-year process.
 - b. Inventory lawn areas. Consider whether mowing schedules can be reduced in some areas. Consider whether some lawn areas can be replaced with trees and shrubs.
 - c. Identify areas where trees need maintenance.
 - d. Identify other areas where new trees and shrubs can be useful, particularly areas prone to erosion.
 - e. To the extent these inventories and plans require funding, create a vegetation planning fund.

2. Increase budgets for purchasing and planting trees and shrubs, anticipating that the inventory process will identify opportunities.
3. Increase budgets for professional assistance for tree planting, tree health assessment, and tree maintenance.
4. Budget training in tree care and planting as well as invasive plant removal for DPW, school grounds, and Parks and Rec personnel.
5. Make these plans and their implementation visible to the public, an example to private landowners who might follow the same path.

Again, these steps are climate-forward, fiscally responsible, and supportive of efforts for the "Sustainable Saybrook" program.

Thank you for your consideration. I will be happy to discuss these points with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kathleen G. Connolly".

Kathleen G. Connolly