MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN JOINT SPECIAL MEETING AND
THE BOARD OF WARDEN & BURGESSES OF THE BOROUGH OF LITCHFIELD
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2026 ~ 6:30 P.M.
IN-PERSON AT LITCHFIELD FIREHOUSE, 258 WEST ST, LITCHFIELD, CT AND
REMOTE MEETING BY LIVE INTERNET VIDEO STREAM AND TELEPHONE

Call to Order First Selectman Denise Raap called the special meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Warden and Burgesses of the Borough of Litchfield to order at 6:38 p.m. Selectmen present were Anne Dranginis, John Bongiorno, First Selectman Denise Raap, and Jeff Zullo and Dan Morosani who both joined remotely. Warden Gayle Carr was present, Burgesses present were Elisa Bauer, Dirk Patterson, William Buckley, and Wolf Boehme.

New Business

A) **Tree Plantings on the Green - Litchfield Tree Warden** Tree Warden Raz Alexe reviewed the Heritage Landscapes LLC master plan, expressing support for the Green revitalization while raising concerns about tree placement near utility lines, roadways, and intersections. He noted that the approved species list did not identify specific planting locations and highlighted potential conflicts involving mature tree growth, utility wires, and traffic sightlines.

The Board reviewed recent plantings, including five trees on the East Green and eleven on the West Green, with five additional trees planned for the upcoming planting season. D. Patterson noted that Heritage's designer and an arborist conducted site visits to determine appropriate locations. It was agreed that R. Alexe and DPW's landscape architect would participate in future on-site layout and planting sessions before installation.

G. Carr discussed road salt damage to newly planted trees on the West Green, where repeated salt exposure required three replantings before a more salt-tolerant species was selected. Roadway elevation changes across from the Congregational Church have also directed runoff onto the Green. The Borough completed approximately $170,000 in drainage improvements on the East Green to address standing water, lawn saturation, and winter icing. G. Carr confirmed that the contractor obtained the necessary CT DOT permits.

The Board also reviewed the Heritage plan's designated uses for the Greens, with the West Green serving as the primary community gathering space, the East Green for walking and passive recreation, and the Center Green undergoing review for pathway and crosswalk alignment. The planned landscape feature at the East Green corner was clarified as a shrub mass rather than an earthen berm.

B) **Discussion Regarding Burying Utilities** The Boards discussed a proposed underground utility project covering the East Green and portions of North Street, South Street, and Meadow Street. A preliminary site walk was scheduled with J. Zullo and B. Buckley to identify potential transition points. Both the Board of Selectmen and the Borough expressed support for the project, contingent on securing funding.

B. Buckley reviewed the technical requirements, including separate underground conduits for electrical and telecommunications services, replacement of pole-mounted transformers with screened, ground-mounted units, and conversion of individual building connections to underground service. It was noted that these lateral conversions should be included in the overall project cost rather than charged to individual property owners. The underground system would need to be fully installed and energized before existing overhead lines and poles could be removed.

Additional considerations included maintaining the emergency fire siren, providing underground power for Green lighting and seasonal events, and addressing necessary pole supports where overhead lines terminate.

Potential funding sources include CT DOT cost-sharing, state bonding and legislative appropriations, federal USDA funding, and state infrastructure grants. If utility relocation is required as part of the planned CT DOT highway project, relocation costs may be shared equally between the State and the utility, with those contributions potentially applied toward undergrounding expenses.

C) **Community Field Improvement Plan Update** D. Raap reviewed completed and ongoing improvements at Community Field, including new clay resurfacing on two Little League fields, drainage improvements, and future construction of four new dugouts at an approved cost of $95,000. Additional projects include basketball court fencing replacement, new drinking fountains, playscape upgrades, resurfaced walking paths, and planned backstop replacements. Sound-dampening blankets were also installed along the pickleball court fencing at a cost of $27,000 from a grant to address noise concerns.

G. Carr reminded the Board that all structural improvements within the historic district require Historic District Commission review, including in-kind replacements. D. Raap and project managers will verify that all current and planned installations, including dugouts and fencing, have received the necessary approvals.

Old Business

A) **Sidewalk Project** B. Buckley reviewed the $800,000 state Connectivity Grant, which has been received by the Town. Sidewalk improvements on Woodruff Lane and East Street were deferred until spring due to seasonal construction limitations. Civil 1 Engineering is working with the Town to finalize design adjustments and bid documents, with construction anticipated to begin in early spring. Proposed sidewalks will generally be four feet wide, expanding to five feet where possible. Approximately 21 ADA variances were required due to existing terrain and property conditions, following HDC restrictions on sidewalk widths.

D. Raap also discussed unidentified CT DOT survey work along Route 202. DPW had not been notified. D. Raap will contact CT DOT District 4 to clarify whether the State is planning separate sidewalk improvements. The Town has also received proposals from Civil 1 to evaluate sidewalk conditions along West Street and develop an accessible pathway design.

Regarding the Center School crosswalk, CT DOT has awarded an RRFB installation project, but construction is not scheduled until 2028. The potential need for Historic District Commission review was also discussed.

B) Policing D. Morosani presented three potential staffing models for a town-wide constable program, ranging from one full-time and one part-time officer to a rotating roster of part-time certified officers. G. Carr indicated that the Borough may consider contributing financially if the program provides direct local enforcement benefits.

D. Patterson reviewed the history of the Borough's parking enforcement program, which was discontinued around 2013 due to costs exceeding ticket revenue. Discussion included current enforcement limitations, the Borough's existing parking ordinance, and the Town's lack of a town-wide parking ordinance. D. Morosani emphasized prioritizing public safety concerns, particularly vehicles blocking fire lanes and crosswalks, rather than focusing solely on two-hour parking limits. J. Bongiorno also discussed legal restrictions on tire chalking and expressed opposition to app-based parking meters.

The Boards addressed enforcement of the November 15 through April 15 overnight parking ban on West Street. Due to ongoing violations that interfere with snow removal, officials discussed increased public notification, warning notices, and potential Borough ordinance changes to allow ticketing and towing during snow events. The availability of overnight parking in the rear municipal lot was also noted.

C) Signage G. Carr discussed reducing excess regulatory signage along the Green, including replacing clustered no-parking signs with consolidated CT DOT-compliant signage and painted yellow curbs.

B. Buckley proposed additional crosswalk warning signs on Woodruff Lane near 49 Woodruff Lane due to limited visibility approaching a blind crest. R. Alexe questioned their effectiveness and the potential for unnecessary sign clutter, while B. Buckley emphasized winter road conditions and pedestrian safety.

G. Carr also discussed state requirements for accommodating bicycle lanes during roadway reconstruction. The Board expressed concerns about implementing bike lanes through the historic center due to limited roadway widths, visibility constraints, and safety concerns. R. Alexe noted that previous efforts to introduce bike lanes on South Lake Street faced resident opposition and that safe cycling infrastructure would require additional roadway width or physical barriers.

D) Parking Fees The Boards discussed the possibility of paid parking through automated meters, mobile applications, or QR-code payment systems. J. Bongiorno and D. Morosani expressed opposition to implementing app-based parking fees, citing concerns about inconvenience to visitors and the potential impact on local businesses and tourism.

E) DOT Road Changes The Board reviewed the proposed Route 202/63 realignment project, which is advancing to the engineering design phase, expected to take 6–12 months to be at 30%

complete. If approved, construction is estimated to begin in approximately five years, with projected costs of up to $10 million. CT DOT will present the design at a required public hearing, after which both the Town and Borough must approve the plan for the project to proceed.

Proposed changes include reconfiguring intersections around the Green, restricting certain turning movements on the South Street connector, relocating the Meadow Street intersection, and adjusting traffic flow at the East Green and Route 118 intersection. The North Street extension would accommodate two-way traffic with designated turning lanes and the removal of parking along its east side.

The Board raised concerns about potential losses of commercial parking along the Center Green, emphasizing that existing spaces must be preserved or replaced elsewhere. The proposed elimination of the Meadow St. extension near Espresso 59 would allow for additional municipal green space. CT DOT also expressed preliminary willingness to install uniform granite curbing along Route 202 bordering the Green.

F) **Heritage Plan Re: South Side of Center Green** The Board discussed proposed changes to the Center Green pathways and pedestrian crossings as part of the CT DOT roadway redesign. The existing walkway on the east side of the Green, which forms a "Y" configuration and dead-ends near the Ambulance Association driveway without a corresponding crosswalk, is proposed for removal. The angled crosswalk in front of the historic courthouse and Lawrence Jeffrey Jewelers would be eliminated and replaced with a squared crosswalk shifted west toward the corner. The proposed configuration would include a three-way stop with three parallel crosswalks to better align pedestrian movement between the historic building and the East Green.

B. Buckley discussed relocating the fire hydrant near the corner approximately 35 feet, subject to applicable distance requirements and approval by the Fire Marshal. This adjustment would allow for the addition of one on-street parking space. D. Patterson recommended using available grant funding to retain Heritage Landscapes to update and revise the Center Green master plan to reflect the proposed DOT roadway configurations while preserving existing mature trees.

G) **Community Connectivity Grant Money and Interest** G. Carr requested that the Town place the $800,000 state Connectivity Grant funds into a separate short-term investment account until construction begins, anticipated around April 1. At an estimated 4% annual interest rate, the funds could generate more than $13,000, which the Borough hopes to reinvest in sidewalk rehabilitation. D. Raap noted the need to comply with FDIC insurance limits or use a collateralized municipal investment account and will coordinate with the Town Treasurer regarding the available options.

H) **Grant Money and Grant Availability for Sidewalks and Green** W. Boehme reported that the Borough's annual $175,000 sidewalk appropriation is insufficient to address deteriorating sidewalks and brick pavers and advised that the Borough would like to submit a $200,000 request to the Town's Capital Improvements Committee for sidewalk rehabilitation. D. Raap discussed concerns regarding the Town bonding funds for infrastructure owned by the independent Borough, including potential liability and insurance implications.

D. Raap also discussed alternative funding opportunities, including Sustainable CT and Patronicity matching grants, as well as future rounds of the Community Connectivity Grant Program, TRIP, STEAP, and federal USDA rural community facility grants. These programs may provide additional support for sidewalk rehabilitation and improvements to the Green.

Adjournment D. Raap adjourned the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

Denise Raap, First Selectman