

**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Town of Litchfield**  
**Borough/HDC Consolidation Study Committee**  
**January 12, 2023, 6:00 PM**  
**Litchfield Firehouse; 258 West St., Litchfield, CT**

**Call to Order – Committee Chairman:** Chairman Jonathan Tarrant called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Other members present were Dan Parsons, Michael Castelli (alternate member), Leo Paul (alternate member), Bruce Schnitzer, Cleve Fuessenich, and Leslie Caron. Chuck Conn arrived at 6:02 p.m., and Pat Iannuzzi arrived at 6:07 p.m.

Absent: Ty Williams, Ron Leal

**Seating of Alternate Members as Regular Members if appropriate:** Chairman Tarrant seated both Leo Paul and Michael Castelli as regular voting members.

**Approval of 11/10/2022 Special Meeting Minutes: Motion:** C. Fuessenich moved to approve the minutes of 11/10/22 and B. Schnitzer seconded. *[C. Conn arrived here at 6:02 p.m.]* In discussion, C. Fuessenich noted the Borough Charter was updated 34 years ago, not 24. Also, the Heritage Foundation Board **suggests** changes to be made on the Green, not makes the decisions. **Amendment:** B. Schnitzer moved to approve the minutes subject to clarification at the next meeting of the role of Heritage. C. Fuessenich seconded the amendment. All voted aye on the amendment. Voting on the original motion, all voted aye except L. Paul, who abstained because of absence, and the motion carried. They will check on the correct name of the Heritage Foundation Board for the next meeting. *[P. Iannuzzi joined the meeting here at 6:07 p.m.]*

B. Schnitzer reported there is now a Litchfield Green Conservancy, Inc., a 501-3-C, established to raise money for the Green. We could approach the Chairman to discuss its role. Paul Rosenberg asked if the Conservancy has spoken with the Board of Warden and Burgesses. C. Fuessenich said Dirk Patterson may have attended a couple meetings before he stepped down.

**Discuss Historically Appropriate Documents:** L. Caron said she has been researching documents and has found some old books and documents at the Historical Museum, the library and Boro Hall office. There is one book that gives a very detailed history of Litchfield. The oldest book from the Historical Museum will be going to Mass. to be digitized, as it is very fragile. The minutes she is reading are from the start of the 1900's. She is looking for reference to boundaries or extension of the Green and who is responsible for it. The Borough says they now pay for their electric, and she thought the Town should look into this to see what they pay for and what the Town pays for. The original term "village" was changed to "Borough" by the State when it incorporated with a charter that focused primarily on fire services.

J. Tarrant showed documents given to Town Clerk Lisa Losee that name the Litchfield Village Improvement Co., 1914, and the Village of Litchfield Incorporation and Organization, 1818. The Village Improvement Co., started after the charter, had no real power, and unfortunately, did not do much.

**Discuss Financial Documents/Info:** B. Schnitzer helped J. Tarrant in working on the financials, and L. Caron approached the Borough and secured some financial information. We have their 22/23 budget

and the last three budgets. She's had trouble, however, trying to get expenses by line item from the Borough, but has since received them. D. Raap also secured the latest audit of the Borough for fiscal year 2020/2021. J. Tarrant gathered from the reports that they budget a certain amount of money, knowing they won't spend it all. The overage is put into a fund balance, or reserve, which is now too high at \$570,00. The Town prefers its fund balance to be 15%. P. Rosenberg said they could pay off the entire forbearance agreement now and still have 25% reserve. J. Tarrant thought the Borough over taxes its residents, and they are not aware of it. B. Schnitzer said the Borough budget is not publicized or sent in any way to the residents before the budget vote. We may be able to come up with some recommendations in a consolidation that will save money. J. Tarrant estimated that the Litchfield taxpayer will end up paying .1 to .2 mills more with consolidation of the Borough by removing the many duplications of effort. L. Paul cautioned against estimating a mill rate increase without more detailed investigation of line items. B. Schnitzer felt it would be more challenging to get approval from the Borough voters than from the Town voters. He felt there should be a position we can recommend with enthusiasm that should be approved by two different constituencies whose interests are not entirely consistent. Studying the numbers is really important. If the Borough taxes go down substantially, or if the Town taxes do not go up at all, this might bring the two entities together enough to pass the votes.

**Discuss Next Step(s) in the Consolidation Study Process:** C. Fuessenich thought the HDC was an issue for the Borough, but it would be retained and decided how members would be appointed. J. Tarrant thought the Borough could still exist after the consolidation as a commission that would be appointed by the Board of Selectmen and have reduced functions and responsibilities and far reduced authority. We could also find a way to have the HDC appointed by the Board of Selectmen and represent people concerned about the historic district. C. Conn suggested three distinct considerations: 1) economics, 2) Historic District Commission, and 3) administration of the Green. Recommendations would solicit discussions with the Borough residents. L. Caron said the Town should be responsible for maintenance of the Green. P. Rosenberg said the Charter is the problem, as it gives the Board of Warden and Burgesses all power except for the annual Borough Budget Meeting and elections. L. Paul agreed as it is only responsible for fire, parks and sidewalks. They no longer control the fire departments, so it should be redone. J. Tarrant said that would be a waste of time to pursue. L. Paul then suggested working with the Borough to consider a joint committee to manage the Green. He felt they could work out the problems they are at odds over. J. Tarrant reiterated that keeping the Borough as a commission could preserve the concerns of the Borough residents. A consolidation could rid us of the bad and preserve the good aspects. C. Conn suggested that the HDC is an important component and felt a persuasive argument could be made that the HDC with a broader representation from residents throughout the Town would sufficiently preserve it. P. Iannuzzi felt this concern for the HDC would be diminished if it were carried over to the Town as a commission.

**Open Discussion:** Members felt this had been a very good discussion.

**Adjournment: Motion:** L. Caron moved to adjourn at 7:17 p.m. and P. Iannuzzi seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

  
Jonathan Tarrant, Chairman