

**Town of Litchfield
Borough/HDC Consolidation Study Committee
Special Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2024 ~ 4:00 p.m.
Litchfield Firehouse, 258 West St., Litchfield, CT**

Call to Order: Chairman Jonathan Torrant called the special meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Other members present were Leslie Caron, Chuck Conn, Dan Parsons, Bruce Schnitzer, Ron Leal, Pat Iannuzzi and alternate Leo Paul. Chairman Torrant appointed Leo Paul as a regular voting member in place of Cleve Fuessenich. Cleve entered after the approval of the 2/21/24 minutes, and L. Paul resumed his alternate role.

Absent: Michael Castelli

Approval of 2/8/24 Regular Meeting Minutes: Motion: L. Paul moved and R. Leal seconded a motion to approve the 2/8/24 meeting minutes. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Approval of 2/21/24 Special Meeting Minutes: Motion: L. Caron moved and B. Schnitzer seconded a motion to approve the special subcommittee meeting minutes of 2/21/24. All voted aye except L. Paul and D. Parsons, who abstained because of absence, and the motion passed.

Discuss Draft of Interlocal Proposal for Borough of Litchfield: B. Schnitzer discussed the final proposal (V4.02282024 attached). They recommend to the Board of Selectmen that they engage the Borough to discuss the implementation of a refreshed interlocal agreement along the lines of the proposal that would benefit all and reduce costs. The goal would be to reduce Borough taxes without increasing Town taxes. If that is unsuccessful, the Committee would put certain questions before the Town and the Borough as outlined in "Next Steps".

P. Iannuzzi referred to Next Steps, 2c, and thought the Committee should put forward a unified stance on the control of the Green and felt it should vote on which way to go in its proposal.

C. Conn felt the Committee should take a position on control of the Green, and if divided, could say "the majority of the Committee feels...".

C. Fuessenich felt the composition of the Green Administration Commission would not work, as the Borough would feel they were outnumbered 4-3.

L. Paul thought perhaps the Borough Warden was unaware of the proposal when interviewed, and would account for why she said the Board would not entertain a proposal for an interlocal agreement. He also felt there did not need to be Town members from every section of Town. B. Schnitzer added that the Borough has been afraid of this Committee from the beginning, thinking that its only goal was to dissolve the Borough. It was agreed that the reference to the "First Selectwoman" under Section C should be changed to "First Selectman".

P. Iannuzzi thought there should be a Green Administrative Commission made up of Borough members and Town members from different sections of Town to work together on the governance of the Green. If not, we should add clarity that this committee has no interest in changing anything about administration of the Green. J. Torrant suggested the makeup of the

Commission be left out for now. Once everyone agrees to the interlocal agreement, then they can decide on the makeup. If there is no agreement, it would go to referendum as outlined in Step 2.

L. Caron pointed out the wide use of Park & Recs running the greens in other towns. C. Fuessenich pointed out that they do not have a Borough as we do. L. Paul said Bantam Borough's P&Z was very protective when there was a proposal for affordable housing at the old Bantam School.

C. Conn said the controversial part is control of the Green, so we need an avenue that will please the voters. B. Schnitzer agreed and said that if a majority of the Committee recommends the Town have control of the Green, that's all anybody will see. Any efforts of cooperation, saving money or providing better services will be completely ignored. J. Tarrant added that there is no clear definition of who owns the Green, so the legality of taking it over is not even a question. B. Schnitzer reminded the group that Town Counsel advised from the very beginning that a Town takeover of the Green should be done at its own risk with expectation of a complete war. The only way control of the Green can be passed to the Town is if the voters of the Borough decide otherwise and the Board of Warden and Burgesses decide to cede that control. P. Rosenberg said that the two things the Borough Meeting has control over are the budget and real estate transactions, so the Borough meeting could conceivably overrule the Burgesses.

It was agreed to eliminate from Next Steps, 2c, any reference to the makeup of the Green Administrative Commission, and replace it with "...its composition to be determined before the referendum is presented to the voters."

J. Tarrant thought the Borough Board would be glad to give up responsibility for Community Field if there was more cooperation.

Motion: L. Caron moved to review the edited proposal at the April 11th meeting based on tonight's conversation. D. Parsons seconded the motion. J. Tarrant clarified that a tightened up version of these recommendations will be sent out to the members before the next meeting for their review with the caution that they may not discuss it with anyone ahead of the meeting.

Vote: Upon voting all voted aye and the motion carried.

Discuss Next Steps(s) in the Consolidation Study Process: J. Tarrant suggested that the next meeting be held earlier than 6:00 p.m., and the group agreed on 4:00 p.m. He reminded them this would become a special meeting because of the time change.

Adjournment: Motion: L. Caron moved to adjourn at 5:15 p.m. and P. Iannuzzi seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Jonathan Tarrant
Chairman