MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE TOWN BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 6TH, 2025 AT 8:30 A.M., 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE, CT 06410 – ROOM 207/209

Present:
William Bonaminio, Jessica Fischer, Patricia Archibald, Maria Colacrai, Cindy Braga, Joanna Giddings, Elizabeth Morin, Jessica Feustel, Don Walsh; Town Council Liaison.

Staff/Guests:
Shain Strother, Minutes Clerk, Andrew Martelli, Assistant Town Manager.

Absent:
Susan Dillman

1) CALL TO ORDER

Andrew Martelli called the meeting to order at 8:30 A.M.

2) ROLL CALL & DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Andrew Martelli, assistant town manager, called the roll. There was a quorum. Susan Dillman was absent.

At this time, Jessica Fischer moved to review the sign permits before other business. Patricia Archibald seconded the motion. The committee voted all in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

3) SIGN PERMIT REVIEW / SITE PLAN REVIEW

A. Harvey & Lewis Opticians – Stone Bridge Crossing

The committee discussed the sign design plan for the site with the applicant: Mark from Signlite. Mark spoke about the sign, stating it was mounted on the building, it was a blade sign, and that it was a set of black letters with halo lighting around the letters. Joanna Giddings moved that the committee accept the sign design as presented, and Cindy Braga seconded the motion. The committee voted all in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Bank of America - 185 Highland Avenue

The committee discussed the sign design plan for the site with Jeremy Waycott, the applicant. He said that the sign was a small reduction in size, would be put into the same place, and would be lit at night. Maria Colacrai moved that the committee accept the sign design as presented, and Cindy Braga seconded the motion. The committee voted all in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Hartford Healthcare GoHealth Urgent Care – Stone Bridge Crossing

The committee discussed the sign design plan for the site with the applicant. The applicant went over a front and back sign, both with aluminum backgrounds and reverse channel lettering in white. Maria Colacrai moved that the committee accept the sign design as presented, and Patricia Archibald seconded the motion. The committee voted all in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

D. Shake Shack – Stone Bridge Crossing

The committee discussed the sign design plan for the site with the applicant, Pam Breely. The applicant discussed four signs, all of them being halo lit. She talked about a hamburger sign and three other signs, all being matte black and green and internally lit. Jessica Feustel moved that the committee accept the sign design as presented, and Joanna Giddings seconded the motion. The committee voted all in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

E. Arisco Insurance Group - 55 Elm Street/Two Town Center

The committee discussed the sign design plan for the site with the applicant, Tom Arisco. He said he wants to put down a wall-mounted sign on the building, an aluminum sign. Patricia Archibald moved that the committee accept the sign design as presented, and Maria Colacrai seconded the motion. The committee voted all in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

F. Avanti Grille - 122 Elm Street

The committee discussed the sign design plan for the site with the applicant, Dominic Futilla. He said he wants seven signs, four on Academy Road entrance, one on the south side entrance, one for the east side of the building, and one in the central courtyard. The committee discussed the placement of the business with the applicant, and the design of the sign. Cindy Braga moved that the committee accept the sign design as presented, and Maria Colacrai seconded the motion. The committee voted all in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

G. Club Pilates – Stone Bridge Crossing

The committee discussed the sign design plan for the site with the applicant, Jeremy from Arnco Signs. He spoke about the sign's design, including black reverse channel letters, reverse lit. He showed the committee the vinyl signs he planned to put on his doors and windows. Jessica Feustel moved that the committee accept the sign design as presented, and Cindy Braga seconded the motion. The committee voted all in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

4) BUSINESS

A. Fall Festival

The committee discussed the plans for the fall festival with Mark Cunningham, Director of Public Works. They talked about the holiday display for the year, and leaving the geraniums in place. They talked about food trucks, how to use the band-shell, and about tractors, wagons and hay bales. They talked about creating a spot for pictures. They also talked about putting in a sign to show that the TBC had been behind this activity. The committee also asked the deliverers of the mums to soak them down.

B. Mugwort

The committee talked to Mark Cunningham, Director of Public Works, about an infection of mugwort in a drain near Bartlem Park. They also talked about removing some badly-pruned cherry trees in the area before the fall festival. Mark said that Public Works intends to mow the mugwort out before it seeds out. He said they also have plans to overseed the drain with wildflower mix over a couple of years so that the basin can have better growth. Mark said that the plan calls for Public Works to only mow the drain 2-3 times per year, because the area was intended to be a biofilter. He said that the plan called to attach a mowerhead to a skid steer to mow the drain area. The committee recommended spraying down the area with pesticides, and Mr. Cunningham said he'd look into it.

C. Town Hall Landscaping

Mark Cunningham talked to the committee about Public Work's plans regarding the town hall's landscaping. He confirmed he got the list of desired tasks the committee had submitted. The committee talked about a site walk in order to gather a list of more suggested changes. The committee discussed the contours of the wildflower areas, and Mark said that the intent was to get something to spread near the treeline, and that it would be one of the last mows of the season. Mr. Cunningham talked about how he selected his wildflower planting mixes, talking about using UConn consultants to help. The committee also talked more about how mugwort was spreading everywhere in town. The committee discussed possibly going out next year and pulling it out.

5) APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting August 6th, 2025

The committee discussed corrections they wished to see to last meeting's minutes. On line 28, the committee wanted to see the "recent" next to "trees planted" struck and replaced with "poorly pruned". On line 50, the committee wanted to see Cheshire Nursery replaced with Maple Oak, reflecting who the committee was talking to about the watering program. On line 51, the committee wished to see Hammond St. replaced with Chipman Dr. On line 52, the committee wanted the statement to reflect that the landscaping was being done AT town hall, not

NEAR town hall. On line 63, the committee wanted the minutes to show that they met with Chris Beebe and looked at potential changes at town hall with Dan, and then those changes were referred to Chris Beebe who would give the committee a landscaping plan. On Line 66 – the commitee wanted the minutes to reflect that they wanted mowed curved contours around the wildflower bed, and their request had nothing to do with the sidewalk.

Jessica Fischer moved to accept the minutes with these corrections, and Patricia Archibald seconded the motion. The committee voted all in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

6) BUSINESS

D. Street Tree Project Update

The committee discussed the street trees which had been planted, saying that all of the ones except those on Chipman Dr. looked good. The tree which was at a severe angle was straightened, and should eventually recover.

E. Senior Center Project Update

The committee discussed the landscaping around the senior center. Watering twice a week on the south side had been completed, and the plants looked good. Andrew Martelli said that the sign at the senior center will be replaced as soon as he got a mockup. He said that a former user was donating money for programming. The committee discussed the cleaning around the back entrance, and about continuing with a patio area with drainage that needs railings. Mr. Martelli mentioned that Dan Bombaro had walked the property to get ideas. Mr. Martelli said they would put in more handicap spots in the parking lot.

F. Maintenance of Commercial Properties/Business Letter

The committee discussed formulating a letter regarding businesses in town and their maintenance of their properties. The committee discussed who should go on the list, noting that businesses should be recognized for beautiful properties, as well as warned if they have ugly or neglected properties. They discussed blight ordinances and their enforcement. They discussed ordinance enforcement review committees and historic district committees which held sway over properties that the committee discussed.

G. Mugwort in Bartlem Park

The committee discussed a public comment sent to the committee regarding an eyesore in Bartlem Park: invasive mugwort. The committee discussed spraying the mugwort with pesticides, and discussed a survey they had done to make recommendations. The first recommendation is to remove all mugwort in the area and replace it with self-sustaining drought-tolerant rainwater plants. The committee discussed the money being unavailable, stating that a better plan was needed for next time. They discussed cutting down four crabapple trees. They discussed the danger that mugwort poses, stating that next month the mugwort would seed everywhere and spread uncontrollably. The committee stated their desire to overseed the mugwort with native wildflowers to keep it at bay. The committee discussed the need to prioritize mugwort this fall, spraying and cutting it back once it dies, then repeating the process continually. The committee also briefly discussed the Japanese knotweed plants near the highway.

7) **ADJOURNMENT**

Jessica Feustel moved to adjourn the meeting, and Patricia Archibald seconded the motion. All in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 A.M.

Attest:

Shain Strother, Minutes Clerk