**East Lyme Democratic Town Committee**

**February 25, 2021, 7:00 p.m.**

**Meeting via Zoom**

**Minutes**

**Jason Deeble called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. The attendance at this meeting met the requirements for a quorum.**

1. **Minutes of November 23,2020**

Cate Steel submitted a motion to approve the minutes for the December meeting. Dave Jacobs seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved except for an abstention from a member who was not in attendance at that meeting.

1. **East Lyme Scholarship Association**

Joanne Hopkins and Jason Deeble wished to address a request from the East Lyme Scholarship Association for the ELDTC to approve a $300 award on behalf of a student. The criterion to grant the award would be based on the student’s interest in politics via running for student government or via participation in a campaign. The ELDTC had approved this award last year. A discussion ensued on whether the criterion should be modified to ensure that the award should be needs based. Jill Carini submitted a motion to increase the award from $300 to $500. Nickie Delucco Padilla seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved. Jill Carini submitted a motion to change the award criterion to ensure that the student had a financial need for the award. Michelle Maitland seconded the motion. This motion was not approved by the ELDTC members in attendance.

1. **Treasury Report/Donations**

Joanne Hopkins noted that the current budget is $7139.80. There are no outstanding checks and two assessments have been received. It was noted that the annual assessment of $100 is a suggested amount and is not a requirement. Ms. Hopkins noted that donations can be made electronically through the ELDTC website (with a link to anedote.com) or payment via check. Michelle Maitland noted the possibility of donations to help defray costs incurred by the senior center after the van was recently vandalized. RoseAnn Hardy noted that expenses from the vandalism seemed to be covered by insurance, so no motion was submitted regarding the vandalism. Donations to help Jeff Langan pay for costs for roadside cleanups was discussed at this meeting and different members stated that they would help.

1. **Public Presentations/Continuum Conversations/Meetings**

On 2/18, there was a well-received discussion on immigration. The speakers were Esteban Garcia and Cate Steel’s brother Joseph DeMott (an immigration lawyer). Cate Steel, Beth Hogan and Jason Deeble complimented the speakers at this event. Mr. Deeble noted that Earth Day will be the same day as our Thursday ELDTC monthly meeting with a discussion on the environment with Rosemary Ostfeld scheduled. Because of this, there is a possibility that the March meeting may be rescheduled. Mr. Deeble provided a link to a video on immigration and a link to a survey on the topic of immigration. A major goal of that anonymous survey was to measure attitudes towards immigration by ELDTC members and to ascertain whether attitudes changed based on viewing of that video. The attitudes toward immigration by participants was generally favorable but the video did not appear to significantly change the favorability scores provided by ELDTC members. Most ELDTC members seem to be open and feel positively about future continuum conversations of this nature in future meetings.

1. **State Central** **Report/Legislative Subcommittee**

Tony Attanasio stated that were not any significant updates as there has not been a State Central meeting since our January meeting. He is looking forward to different meetings, calls and summits that are sponsored by State Central. A few members expressed interest in exploring a ELDTC legislative subcommittee. The purpose of this legislative subcommittee would be to advocate for certain bills and watch testimony on bills and issues that are being discussed in our state legislature.

1. **Board of Selectman/Board of Finance/Board of Education**

Dan Cunningham noted that the presentation by the BOE regarding their budget request was highly informative. Training for police officers will include less lethal techniques in dealing with crises. Funding for breathing apparatus for firefighters was approved. Land was donated to the town (in the Pattagansett region) by the Girl Scouts. This donation was approved by the BOF. Nickie Delucco Padilla expressed interest in doing a presentation to the BOS on the declaration that racism is a health crisis. Ms. Padilla would be representing the Southeastern Connecticut Organization for Racial Equity (SCORE). RoseAnn Hardy noted that there appears to be a need for drivers to volunteer to drive senior citizens for their COVID vaccines. Current drivers are limited since they can only transport one individual at a time due to COVID restrictions. Different members expressed interest in volunteering as drivers. A BOF summary of events was provided to the ELDTC members via e-mail. A grant of $250K was approved for a “corridor study” that will be conducted by consultants associated with the Council of Governments to study sidewalks and traffic in and around the Groton Pond Area. This grant is contingent upon the town of East Lyme kicking in 25K, which the BOF voted to appropriate from an existing College of Natural Resources (CNRE) fund. Michelle Williams and Terence Donovan addressed the ramifications of this grant and their feedback was positive. Cate Steel provided an update on BOE activities. The BOE voted to accept the proposed Superintendent’s budget with a 3.79 percent increase. Deb Kelly is the new ELHS Principal as of this week. She was previously the interim principal. Initiatives and action plans to deal with issues of exclusion continue. Reopening plans are in place and the plans can be viewed on the East Lyme Public Schools website. Teachers will be eligible to register for the COVID vaccine in March. This should facilitate the reopening process.

1. **Zoning/Planning/Wetlands/ Zoning Board of Appeals**

A summary of Zoning Commission activities was provided to ELDTC members via email. Terence Donovan addressed the continuance of a public hearing on a property on 159 Boston Post Road. He also noted that there will be a May 18th public hearing on the Ryder Truck property regarding a change in use request. Mr. Donovan also noted that an approval was given to a town resident in order to increase the number of livestock and poultry on their property. The request by the resident was for 12 chickens and 4 goats to be allowed. Richard Gordon provided Planning Commission updates. Correspondence with different boards and commissions is anticipated shortly involving the updated POCD. This correspondence will address different proposals in the POCD and how they can best be implemented. The Planning commission is reviewing the current bylaws to see what updates are needed. The bylaws are expected to be updated to better reflect the actual job activities that individuals are currently performing. Larry Fitzgerald is being appointed to a position on the Planning Board. This position was open due to a recent resignation. Mr. Fitzgerald was a previous member of the Planning Board. A summary of activities for Inlands Wetland Agency and the Zoning Board of Appeals was provided to ELDTC members via email. Roseann Hardy addressed the issue of an historical building in the Flanders section being torn down and transformed into a Dollar Store and further discussion ensued. The discussion involved how to modify the application and approval process to ensure that historical buildings are preserved.

1. **ELDTC Subcommittees/ Motions/Other Business**

Michelle Maitland noted that East Lyme restaurant week is occurring from March 4th through March 14th. She would appreciate any pictures from any members who come out to support local participating restaurants during this week. A scavenger hunt is planned by the outreach committee and Kara Donnelly is planning other outreach activities for the fall. The governance committee submitted an update of activities and plans that was forwarded via email to ELDTC members. Interviews of candidates is occurring with introductions of candidates being anticipated to occur at the March meeting. Beth Hogan asked ELDTC members to perform outreach within their network to see if there are any other interested individuals who may wish to be interviewed to become a potential candidate for a position. Jill Carini submitted a motion to schedule the caucus for July 22nd. Beth Hogan seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved. Cate Steel volunteered to assume the position as vice-chair of the ELDTC. She submitted a motion to approve herself to the position and Tony Attanasio seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Carini thanked Dan Cunningham’s daughter and the entire Ledge Light Health district for their work on behalf of the community in dealing with the COVID crisis.

Motion: Dan Cunningham submitted a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:43. Cate Steel seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Gordon