

# **Boathouse and Hains Park Improvement Project**

## **Background and Frequently Asked Questions**

**September 30, 2014**

### **Background:**

In 2013, the Town of Old Lyme was awarded a Small Town Economic Assistant Program (STEAP) grant for \$478,000 from the State of Connecticut. The grant application included as its primary focus the expansion and renovation of the existing Fred Emerson boathouse. In addition, the grant application included the purchase of adjustable shell rack systems, construction of bathrooms, purchase of new docks, and relocation of the existing basketball court. The Boathouse and Hains Park Improvement Committee (BHPIC) was formed in late 2013 and has been meeting frequently since January 2014 to develop the plans and to oversee the project.

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### **1. What is the history of rowing on Rogers Lake, and how many people are involved?**

Rowing has a history on Rogers Lake since the 1960's, when Fred Emerson first brought rowing to the region. Today, the Lake supports Lyme-Old Lyme High School varsity rowing in the spring, and rowing programs run by Old Lyme Rowing Association throughout the year. OLRA hosts learn to row programs for people of all ages. On busy summer days, over 125 rowers utilize the rowing shells housed in the boathouse.

#### **2. Isn't the boathouse a Region 18 building? Why isn't the district paying for this project?**

Presently, Region 18 owns and maintains the boathouse, on land that is leased from the Town. Ownership of the boathouse is being transferred to the Town to conform to the STEAP grant requirements. The Town of Old Lyme received the STEAP grant and will own the new boathouse, for the benefit of LOLHS rowing programs and the community at large.

#### **3. What other improvements to Hains Park are included in this plan?**

The BHPIC recognized early on that a long-term master plan for Hains Park would be an important part of the project. A thoughtful and exciting master plan for the Park has been drafted. The grant does not provide for full implementation of the master plan, only the boathouse and the immediate area around it. It is the hope of the BHPIC that careful and efficient management of the current STEAP grant funds may pave the way for additional grant money in the future, with improvements to the Park to take place in phases.

#### **4. Why are we tearing down the old building? Can't we just renovate the old one?**

Initially, the BHPIC hoped to be able to maintain much of the existing footings, foundations, and slab on grade. Following careful review of the needs of the rowing programs and detailed development of the new building layout, it became apparent that the reuse of existing foundations and slab was not cost effective due to the cost of cutting, selective demolition, installation of new work, and patching to blend old concrete with new.

## **5. What is happening to the basketball court?**

Following discussion with community leaders, BHPIC members learned that the basketball court is a very important element of the Park. Thus, we have included a new basketball court in the plans. The enlarged footprint of the new boathouse will encroach on the existing court, so the new court will be moved, but will remain adjacent to the new building.

## **6. Why does the building need a second floor?**

The first floor will be primarily used for the storage of rowing shells and other equipment. The proposed second floor space will include an indoor training area for rowing ergometers, and an area for high school coaches and others to conduct educational sessions with the rowers. The BHPIC sees this second floor area as a public space that will be accessible to other community groups. This space will have an entrance separate from the first floor shell storage area.

## **7. Why is the final cost so much more than the STEAP grant amount?**

The STEAP grant application made certain assumptions, thinking that the construction would be an expansion and renovation of the boathouse, rather than a demolition and new construction. Considering the size of the new building, and in light of typical construction costs today, the revised budget is very reasonable. The majority of the cost of the project will still be borne by the STEAP grant money.

## **8. Why does the new boathouse need toilets, since there are already toilets in the Park?**

Following discussion with community leaders, we have learned that it is very desirable to have bathrooms within the boathouse itself. LOLHS rowing starts in March, before the existing Hains Park bathrooms can operate, as they are not heated. Rowing programs continue late into the fall, after the Park bathrooms are shut down for the season. The number of people using the facility, particularly on HS regatta days, supports the need for bathrooms within the building itself. The second floor space is intended as a year round facility, with access to the heated bathrooms and changing rooms.

## **9. What benefits do non-rowers get from this project? How does this benefit the community?**

As noted above, the second floor space will be a year-round resource for rowers and others in the community. The plans call for the purchase of two new 10' x 60' docks that will greatly enhance access to the Lake, as well as safety and esthetics in the waterfront area. The BHPIC has drafted a master plan for Hains Park, with elements of that plan to be implemented in phases in the future. The basketball court will be rebuilt, improved, and relocated.

## **10. The existing building is a bit of an eyesore. Will the new building look better?**

The visual appeal of the new boathouse will be a tremendous improvement over the existing structure, and will be in keeping with the style and materials of other existing Town buildings. Town residents and visitors driving by the Park will be drawn to the esthetics of the new building. While the building will be considerably larger than the existing structure, the boathouse will be located in the same position and will not dominate the Park. The new, attractive boathouse will enhance the waterfront and green spaces in the Park. While the new building will be attractive and well constructed, it will not be a "fancy" building. The BHPIC and the project architect have made every effort to keep the construction costs as reasonable as possible.

## **11. Isn't Blood Street Sculls a private club? Why is the Town supporting the club's activities?**

Old Lyme Rowing Association was formed in the 1980's, with the primary goal of providing financial support, rowing shells, and other equipment for LOLHS varsity rowing programs. OLRA is a 501(c)3

non-profit organization with a volunteer Board. OLRA also runs community learn to row and competitive club programs under the name Blood Street Sculls. All are welcome! OLRA collects program fees for these programs, which are in turn used (along with significant fundraising money) to pay coaches and to purchase rowing shells and equipment. OLRA spends \$20,000-30,000 annually on new shells and equipment. This equipment, once purchased, is then donated to Region 18, for the shared use of LOLHS varsity rowing and OLRA-sponsored rowing programs. The rowing shell inventory currently housed in the present boathouse has an insured value of \$322,000. This equipment was all purchased through the stewardship of OLRA.

**12. Is there any private money involved to support the project?**

OLRA is heading up a fundraising campaign to complement the funds available for the boathouse project. The fundraising goal is \$50,000. These funds may be used as needed to purchase the new docks, to supplement any budgetary shortfalls, and may be earmarked for future phases of Hains Park projects.

**13. Will the Park be closed during the renovations?**

The BHPIC hopes that the construction of the new building can begin in November, with completion in advance of the spring LOLHS varsity rowing season. Other than the rowing programs, Hains Park activities should not be affected.

**14. Who will be responsible for the maintenance of the new building?**

Presently, the Town of Old Lyme maintains the Hains Park grounds, and Region 18 maintains the boathouse building itself. While near-term maintenance costs should be modest, the new boathouse will be owned by the Town. The Town will be responsible for the maintenance of the new building, in collaboration with Region 18 and Old Lyme Rowing Association.

**15. Does the Town of Lyme have any financial responsibility in the project?**

No. The STEAP grant was awarded to the Town of Old Lyme, and the new boathouse will be owned entirely by Old Lyme. While Lyme students row with the LOLHS varsity team, this boathouse project is a Town of Old Lyme community project.

**16. What's the bottom line here? How much is this going to cost the Town?**

Please review the table below to see details on the anticipated costs of the Boathouse and Hains Park project. These numbers are approximate, as competitive bidding on the project has not taken place to date.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Septic Inspection	\$500
NCP Architects / BSC Group	\$44,000
A2/T2 Survey	\$6,000
Boat Racks	\$39,000
Site Work Estimate	\$104,000
Boathouse Labor Estimate	\$490,500
Material Estimate	\$174,000
Contingency	\$25,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$883,000</b>
<b>STEAP Grant</b>	<b>&lt;\$478,000&gt;</b>
<b>Budget Shortfall</b>	<b>\$405,000</b>