

**STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
Thursday February 8, 2024 at 5:00 P.M.  
STONINGTON POLICE HEADQUARTERS  
173 SOUTH BROAD STREET  
PAWCATUCK, CT 06379**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Chairman William Turner, Vice Chairman Patricia Coan  
Secretary Lisa Tepper Bates & Commissioner Richard Balestracci, Commissioner Jessica Mills ( via telephone)  
Chief Jay DelGrosso, Deputy Chief Todd Olson,

**1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Turner called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**2. Remarks of the Public**

No remarks made by the public.

Chairman Turner noted that two candidates would be interviewed by the police commission during the executive session, not one as the agenda noted.

**3. Correspondence**

None

**4. New Business**

**a. April, 2024 BOPC Meeting: Request to change from April 11, 2024 to April 18.2024 \* VOTE NEEDED\***

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the change of date for the April 2024 BOPC meeting, Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Chairman Turner noted the change was made in consideration of April vacation for Stonington Public Schools which is the week of April 8<sup>th</sup> and many people will be out of the area.

**b. St.Michael School Annual 5K Road Race \*VOTE NEEDED\***

Bethany Kennedy and Michele Perkins, Saint Michaels co-directors

The event will be held on November 3, 2024 from 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM at Donahue Park in Pawcatuck. Ms. Perkins stated that there are no changes to this event. Chief DelGrosso noted the same number of officers will be hired as last year.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve St. Michaels Annual 5K Road Race as it's been submitted to the Police Commission subject to the meeting of the town's insurance requirement and any issues the Police Department determine are needed prior to the date of the event, Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**c. Feast of the Assumption Processions \*VOTE NEEDED\***

**Father Dennis Perkins, St. Michael Parish**

Father Perkins was in attendance to represent the St. Michaels parish. The Feast of the Assumption procession is on August 9, 2024 from 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Beginning at the old St. Michaels school parking lot, onto Robinson St, Cherry St, Stillman Ave, River St, Antoinette St, Pauline St, Robinson St, and back to the parking lot at the old St. Michaels School. The second procession is August 11, 2024 beginning at 11:00 AM in front of St. Michaels church, 60 Liberty St Pawcatuck.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve *the Feast of the Assumption procession* as submitted to the Police Commission, subject to the meeting of the town's insurance requirement and any issues the Police Department determine are needed prior to the date of the event, Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**d. Blessing of the Fleet 5K and Processions \*VOTE NEEDED\***

**Michele Crowley, Blessing of the Fleet event**

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve *the Blessing of the Fleet events* as submitted to the Police Commission, subject to the meeting of the town's insurance requirement and any issues the Police Department determine are needed prior to the date of the event, Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**e. Laps 4 Lucy Event \*VOTE NEEDED\***

**Daniel Farrar, Laps 4 Lucy Sponsor/Organizer**

Mr. Farrar noted the event will be held on April 20, 2024, the route will not include Route 1. This will be their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual event, and it was noted they had a good turnout for the 1<sup>st</sup> annual. Proceeds from the event will go to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve *the Laps 4 Lucy event* as submitted to the Police Commission, subject to the meeting of the town's insurance requirement and any issues the Police Department determine are needed prior to the date of the event, Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**f. Cabin Fever Charity Cook-Off \*VOTE NEEDED\***

**Jim Holley, VP Olde Mistick Village Merchant's Association.**

Mr. Holley was in attendance to represent the Olde Mistick Village, noted no changes to the event.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve *the Cabin Fever Charity Cook- Off event* as submitted to the Police Commission, subject to the meeting of the town's insurance requirement and any issues the Police Department determine are needed prior to the date of the event, Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**g. FarmFest Fundraiser Event \*VOTE NEEDED\***

**Jules Parenteau, Event Coordinator**

Jules Parenteau was in attendance to discuss the FarmFest Fundraiser a music festival being held on August 24, 2024 at Highland Homestead off of Clark St in Pawcatuck. He does not expect more than 100 people, and parking at Highland Homestead can accommodate 100 cars, because of this the Chief does

not foresee a problem with parking, traffic, or public safety, he asked they keep in mind the noise and if they think that they are going to have more than 100 people to communicate with the police department to eliminate any surprises. Mr. Parenteau agreed he will be in communication if more people are anticipated. Chief DelGrosso noted no insurance is required as it is being held on private property.

No motion made. Moved to the next agenda. Police commission would like to verify with the Town that a permit is not needed as the event is being held on private property, Highland Homestead in Pawcatuck. As of now there is no concern regarding traffic, parking, or public safety.

**h. William Street @ Route 27, Mystic Proposed Crosswalk \* POSSIBLE ACTION ITEM\***

Owner of Pennywise Consignment Shop, 22 Greenmanville Ave  
Steven & Charlene Bowen, 21 William St  
Ted O'Brien, 20 William St  
Edward Novak, 19 William St  
Benjamin Tamsky, 5 Edgemont St  
Chris Johnson 35 Greenmanville Ave

Residents of Williams St and surrounding roads had previously brought this request in front of the BOPC and it was not approved, however Chief Stewart at the time did ask the State of CT what their opinion was on that. Chief Delgrosso shared the July 25, 2019 letter that the State sent back which stated, that the crosswalk at this time would need to be upgraded to a current department of transportation and Federal guidelines in order to consider the installation of crosswalks, sidewalk, ramps. Detectable warning strips would need to be installed and a terminal for a potential crosswalk would need to run perpendicular to route 27 curblane.

Chief DelGrosso noted that there is an upgrade for route 27, however, he has checked with the Town and the state, and there are currently no plans for upgrades to that corner of route 27 to put a crosswalk in, because of that and since it has already been in front of the BOPC, and the state has given its recommendation, he believes it will be hard to approve and to ask the state the same question when they've already given us the answer, and what would need to be done before they consider it at a state level. He noted there are a number of other crosswalks on route 27 it may be uncomfortable to have to walk to the nearest ones such as Mistuxet Ave, or the Seaport, but they are there and are signal controlled. In his opinion to add another one in such a congested area will just cause more stopping, contributing to the congestion.

Charlene and Steven Bowen, residents of Williams St, were the original submitters of the request. They were in attendance, along with other residents, to advocate for the need of a crosswalk at Williams St. Mr. Bowen stated that he used Google Maps to measure the distance between crosswalks where he found that the mean distance between each crosswalk on Greenmanville Ave is 450 feet, the space between the South Seaport entrance and Mistuxet Ave is 1,200 feet. It should be noted that Commissioner Bates raised question over the mean distance, as the writer noted he did not include the 1,200 ft. between the South Seaport entrance crosswalk and Mistuxet in his calculations, he agreed, the mean distance is not necessarily an accurate representation. Citing the last sentence of the letter from the state that reads, "If the Town decides to pursue the installation of sidewalk ramps, the state would install a crosswalk and corresponding signs". Chairman Turner expressed concerns over adding another crosswalk to route 27 as there are already 14 crosswalks, 3 signalized, this could cause more congestion to an already congested area, and disrupt the traffic flow. Commissioner Bates noted that she found the distance between crosswalks compelling, and if its just a matter of paying for the curb cuts, there is a

cost that would need to be looked in to. Commissioner Balestracci expressed concern over traffic flow, and unknown effects that construction could cause.

Chief DelGrosso noted that the Route 27 upgrades include signal upgrades at Coogan and route 27, and in front of the Seaport. Boathouse Park (which is not yet fully funded), Boutique Hotel at the Seaport, Hotel at the end of Broadway, proposed building next to Henny Penny. None of these are in place as of yet, to be able to know the impacts. They are concerned about events and how they effect traffic flow, specifically I-95 and cars backing up.

Residents expressed concern over the safety of crossing the street without the crosswalk there, and how they find it unfair that they have to go out of their way and back track in order to cross at the nearest crosswalks down the street. Mr. O'Brian commented that he believes what will slow down traffic are the new projects, that have already been approved, and that the curb cuts will not impact traffic. Mr. Tamsky and Mr. Johnson reiterated the safety concern that other residents had.

Commissioner Bates commented that traffic in Mystic is a real concern for safety, and if it's a matter of curb cuts that's a minimal investment to make in order to make that area feel safer for residents. Bates would be in favor of moving towards putting in a crosswalk, and respectfully acknowledged that it is a state road and has its own issues, but it is compelling.

Chairman Turner moved to table discussion for this evening but the BOPC will do its due diligence with the Town to get more information, as the curb cuts and reconfiguration to the sidewalks may be more sizeable than they want to take on at this time, the BOPC will commit to getting that information from the Town and will come back and discuss at a later date.

#### **i. Route 27 Light & Lane Upgrades- Chief DelGrosso \*POSSIBLE ACTION ITEM\***

Chief DelGrosso addressed the commission regarding CT DOT project # 0172053, 1 of 2 projects on route 27, upgrade of signaling and painting of lanes. Chief DelGrosso met with CT DOT because there was a concern that their traffic studies did not accurately reflect traffic during special events, or nice days which draw many people to Mystic. DOT was receptive to listening to the departments concerns and found it important to put together a working group to be able to collect information from residents of Seaport heights neighborhoods, local businesses, and major attractions such as the Aquarium and Seaport. Route 27 is a state road, the town can give suggestions, but the state DOT ultimately makes the decisions.

The working group came up with suggestions that were made to the state DOT to see if they were in scope and positive. DOT came to the department to discuss suggestions and found they were all doable, if the BOPC approves of it, the state will put them forth to their engineers to make sure they work, and are safe. Chief DelGrosso noted that safety incidents are the biggest concern for the department, ensuring officers can do the best they can with enforcement, and getting information to the ones doing any work to ensure it is safe, as many accidents occur on Coogan Blvd and route 1.

Suggestions that were made included a left turn on 95 N while traveling S on route 27 be made into a left turn and straight light. The Seaport has a separate project going on in front of the South Lot, this is a totally separate project, however, they were a part of the working group, and the Seaport suggested that the light in front of the south entrance not be on pedestrian demand, as they believe it would be beneficial for traffic flow for it to be on a timer instead. Commissioner Bates asked about the technology of the lights and if its sophisticated enough to adjust the timing during high traffic time to which the Chief stated the upgraded lights will have the technology to adjust itself. It should also be noted that the project leader for both projects is the same person and they are aware of the safety, and traffic concerns.

Another suggestion is to change the center lane on Coogan Blvd entering route 27 from straight only to right turn on a green arrow, the left-hand turn turns into one lane going North bound on route 27, two right lanes, center one is straight and right turn only on green arrow, and the other is a right turn lane. The hope is that by there being a left hand turn at the signal it will alleviate the traffic that builds up there and cause accidents.

Increase the lighting on Coogan Blvd and route 27, the town has many events in that area and officers have safety concerns over not being seen in the crosswalks, asking DOT to increase the number of lights in that area.

Increase in signage coming off of exit 90, North bound, to indicate you can get to the Olde Mystick Village by going straight. Again, this will help with traffic flow on Route 27.

They have also suggested moving the SEAT bus stop from its current location on route 27 as it stops North bound on the corner of Coogan and in the summer time causes a back up of traffic. The suggestion would be to move it down route 27 so that it does not interfere with the buses route, where it will also be safer for riders to wait.

Chief DelGrosso reiterated that these are just suggestions from the working group, DOT is looking at it in conception to see if all these suggestions fall within the scope of the project and they believe they would all be positive.

Chief DelGrosso requested the Local Traffic Authority/ BOPC's approval to write an official letter to the State of CT DOT to make the suggested changes, emphasizing the fact we'd utilize their traffic study, traffic engineers, and their expertise to decide what works best, with consideration to safety primarily and also traffic flow. Safety is the primary goal, to go along with that Chief DelGrosso noted they've also suggested to add a 4<sup>th</sup> crosswalk at Coogan Blvd where 3 already exist, and are lighted together so it will not impede traffic, and allows people to cross the street at the same time which is safer.

One other suggestion that lays outside of scope is that the island that sits north bound on route 27 if you take a right onto Coogan Blvd., the island becomes difficult with pedestrians crossing the street and cars stopping, specially out of town drivers who are unsure of the right away, asking the island be reconfigured or moved, and proper lanes be installed. This is outside of scope and due to that, this suggestion is not being asked of in consideration of the commission this evening.

The Chief will look into who he needs to speak to regarding that change, and is looking to provide suggestions to the state of CT to see what they think the safest way to move forward is.

Mr. Novak a William St resident commented that the light, North bound on 27 is only a 12 second green light, and traffic backs up because the light is so fast. Chief DelGrosso emphasized how this all effects the traffic flow and the bigger picture and why it is so important that all these things be taken in to consideration to improve traffic flow and safety. Commissioner Bates thanked the Chief for the work that has gone in to these findings and requested the Chief provide a paragraph along with the suggestions that reflects the public process for the record, and hopes the commission will have approval of the letter before it is sent to the state DOT.

Chief DelGrosso asked for permission from the commission to write the letter to the CT DOT

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the chiefs request to write a letter to the CT DOT regarding upgrades to Route 27, Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**j. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit: Beachway Estates, 215 Liberty Street, Pawcatuck**

**\*COMMENTS NEEDED\***

**Sergio Cherenzia, Cherenzia & Associates, 99 Mechanic St, Pawcatuck**

Sergio Cherenzia is the engineer for the project, and was in attendance to discuss the Beachway Estates project. Mr. Cherenzia addressed questions that arose regarding the traffic engineer, Michael Dions, findings and when his traffic counts on Liberty St were done. Mr. Cherenzia stated the traffic counts were done in Spring and Summer, to account for school and summer traffic. He took the most conservative numbers which did not have any material change from his original findings and report. Mr. Dion was unable to attend the meeting this evening, but Mr. Cherenzia stated there were really no changes to his report.

The new plan submitted to planning and zoning includes storm water design changes, which was required by the town engineer, still represents the same number of reductions in units to 102. The south side was opened up to more green space, and sidewalks/walkways to route 2 and along route 2. Unsure if DOT will want a sidewalk, but they would like to create more connectivity along Liberty St. as this area is getting into the more residential part of Liberty St and there are currently no sidewalks on either side of the street in that area. A turn off for buses were incorporated into the design as well, and will be subject to DOT approval.

Mr. Cherenzia noted that they have received comments by a peer reviewing engineer for the town, largely about aquifer protection and storm water management concerns and these concerns are being addressed. Parallel parking in front of units will be reduced and accommodating them on one side of the drive to alleviate the congestion of having cars on both sides. More guest parking has been added at the front near Liberty St. The next meeting with zoning and planning is February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Mr. Cherenzia asked the commission for comments. Chairman Turner asked if there were any changes to the number of affordable housing units, Mr. Cherenzia stated there were not, and the layout stays the same. He stated snow removal and trash pick-up have been a concern, and they have created an area, when not being used recreationally, that can stock pile snow. He noted this will not be able to facilitate all snow and they are working on a snow removal plan for the site. Plans to relocate trash pick-up to rear area. Fire lanes will be created on one side where no parking will be allowed to make room for fire trucks. Commissioner Coan expressed concern with overnight parking and snow storms, Chief DelGrosso agreed with the safety concern over the ability to remove snow adequately. He also expressed concern over the fire lanes, and where they will be. Mr. Cherenzia noted they will be demarcated with a different stamp or painted, he will be in contact with Chief Burns of the Pawcatuck Fire Department to discuss fire lane concerns, plans to address these concerns will be given to both Chief DelGrosso and Burns, and brought back to the commission for review. Commissioner Bates acknowledged and thanked Mr. Cherenzia for taking comments and concerns from the commissions previous meetings and making the necessary changes.

No motions made.

**5. Old Business**

**a. Isham Street Proposal \*POSSIBLE ACTION ITEM\***

Chairman Turner stated that the police commission has had the opportunity over the last month, or more, to hear from concerned citizens on the proposal to make Isham St in Mystic a one-way road, and thanked residents for taking the time to identify the advantages and disadvantages to making it a one-way road. At this time, after reviewing all letters, and testimony, the Chairman brought the proposal to a

vote. Following the commissioners vote there will be no further public comments and asked for a commissioners vote on this proposal.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to vote nay on the Isham St proposal, commissioner Bates seconded the motion keeping Isham St a two-way street. Due to the unknown impacts of the already congested Route 27 and possible impact to neighboring streets. Motion approved.

**b. Broadway Avenue, East Main Street Rotary, Crosswalk concerns \* POSSIBLE ACTION ITEM\***

Chief DelGrosso stated he has questions regarding this, no one was in attendance to present, and no presentations have been made to the commission as of this date. Chief DelGrosso will reach out.

**c. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Application Updates: Pawcatuck Farms**

**6. Traffic**

**7. Approval of Minutes from Thursday, January 11, 2024 Regular Meeting \*VOTE NEEDED\***

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the minutes for the Thursday, January 11, 2024 Regular Meeting as submitted. Motion seconded by commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**8. Report of the Chief of Police**

**a. Budget Report & Budget Commentary for Board of Finance**

Chief DelGrosso discussed the budget, currently on track with 51.9% used of the budget, two lines of concern are Dispatch over time we are over on that because we are down 2 dispatchers, and noted hiring is difficult. Police uniforms budget is over due to having three new officers when the budget reflects one, as well as rising prices. Budget is under as a whole and the Chief is comfortable moving forward. Commissioner Bates requested the salary lines be bundled so there is a simplified version so the largest categories are shown year to date. Chief DelGrosso will try and get a simplified version.

**b. Monthly Report**

**c. Special Events Schedule**

**d. Sergeant Promotional Process**

Chief DelGrosso stated there are currently no open positions, but due to the longevity of the current sergeants it is important to have an active list so that if someone retires there will be an active list. Seven qualified officers applied for the position. Written exams are on February 22, 2024 being proctored by the Law Enforcement Counsel (LEC), on March 7, 2024 there will be oral panels which will also be done by the LEC. On March 14, 2024 applicants will come in front of the BOPC.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the Chiefs Report. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**9. Consent Agenda**

**a. Crosswalk Permits**

**b. Highway Use Permit: Pawcatuck River Duck Race**

**c. Highway Use Permit: Mystic Memorial Day Parade**

**d. Westerly-Pawcatuck Memorial Day Parade Highway Use Permit: 5<sup>th</sup> reminder on Wednesday, February 7, 2024 \* CHAIRMAN SIGNATURE STILL NEEDED\***

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**10. Executive Session**

**a. Interview of Patrol Officer Candidate**

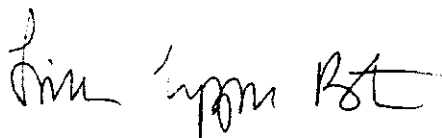
At 6:22 p.m., Commissioner Coan made a motion to adjourn to the executive session, seconded by Commissioner Bates, all in favor, motion approved. Commence executive session.

At 7:18PM Commissioner Bates made a motion to come out of executive session and stated the Police Commission interviewed two police officer applicants and voted to authorize the chief of police to issue #1 Ashley Pope (interviewed remotely) & #2 Samuel Gable (interviewed in-person) a conditional offer of employment. Motion seconded by Commissioner Balestracci, all in favor, motion approved.

**11. Adjourned**

Commissioner Bates made a motion to adjourn at 7:25 PM, motion seconded by Commissioner Balestracci, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Tepper Bates". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lisa" being the most prominent.

Lisa Tepper Bates  
Secretary