

**STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING**

Thursday, August 12, 2021 at 5:00 P.M.

STONINGTON POLICE HEADQUARTERS

173 SOUTH BROAD STREET

PAWCATUCK, CT 06379

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Chairman Robert O'Shaughnessy & Vice Chairman Bob Tabor
Commissioners Robert Elmer & Bill Turner
Chief Darren Stewart & Captain Todd Olson

Absent: Commissioner Lisa Tepper Bates

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman O'Shaughnessy called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy made the following remarks: On July 21st the Mystic Aquarium, in conjunction with the Stonington Police Department, provided a day for the Connecticut Police Chiefs Memorial Foundation and the families of fallen officers to come to the Aquarium and spend the day in Mystic. He thanked the members of the Department who participated, the Chief, Dr. Coan and members of the Aquarium staff. On July 22nd, the Connecticut Chiefs Police Association arranged a kid's camp and each department in the State funded sending a kid to camp. The Stonington Police, in conjunction with the Stonington Police Department's union, funded a kid to go to camp. He thanked the Department and the union for their participation.

2. Remarks of the Public

Steven Louyakis, of New England Food Trucks, asked for his event to be placed on the agenda. Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that the Police Commissioners will add him to the agenda under item **3. New Business**.

3. New Business

a. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Application: Mystic Royal Restaurant *COMMENTS NEEDED*
Sheuli Solaiman, Owner, Mystic Royal Restaurant

Ms. Solaiman informed the Police Commissioners that they are looking to increase their seating to forty-five and obtain a liquor permit. Chairman O'Shaughnessy questioned the number of parking spaces and their locations as shown on Exhibit "C". He also asked how they will direct customers to use the lot behind the building. Ms. Solaiman stated that the parking behind the building is for restaurant employees.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to pass along the following comments to Planning and Zoning; that the Police Commission sees no issues with traffic or safety with this application as presented, however, the Police Commissioners would like clarification of the number of parking spaces. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

b. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Application: Ignazio's Mystic, LLC *COMMENTS NEEDED*
Louis Termini, Owner, Ignazio's Mystic, LLC

Mr. Termini gave a brief history about himself and his former pizza restaurants. He noted that the previous business, Dunkin Donuts, was considered retail. This would need to be changed to restaurant. Commissioner Turner welcomed Mr. Termini to the community.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to pass along the following comments to Planning and Zoning; that the Police Commission sees no issues with traffic, parking or safety with this application as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

c. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Application: 44 Williams Ave., Mystic *COMMENTED NEEDED*
Sergio Cherenzia, Cherenzia & Associates, Ltd

Mr. Cherenzia informed the Police Commission that his client, Candice Georgiadis, has made significant improvements to the property at 44 Williams Ave. They are looking for approval for a change of use for the first floor of the building from retail to a three-room hotel. Mr. Cherenzia presented the Police Commission with building plans. They propose to add a covered porch with a roof deck over the porch. According to Mr. Cherenzia, they will eliminate the parking spaces in front of the building so vehicles will not be backing out onto Route 1. They will still have enough parking spaces as required by the Town after removing those spaces. Vice Chairman Tabor questioned whether they will have adequate parking on-site for the three units and the residents to which Mr. Cherenzia stated that they will. He also commented that the upstairs deck will only be accessible to the residential unit. Commissioner Elmer asked if there are plans for liquor on the premises to which Mr. Cherenzia stated that they may look into getting a license to have a wet bar. Commissioner Turner asked how many parking spaces are available for the hotel? Mr. Cherenzia stated that there are four spaces for the hotel; one space per room and one space for an employee. There are two spaces for the residential component. The Town requires six spaces; however, they are providing nine spaces. Mr. Cherenzia noted that there will be a front lobby area which will probably not be manned. Vice Chairman Tabor thanked Mr. Cherenzia for the added consideration of planning for a sidewalk.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to pass along the following comments to Planning and Zoning; that the Police Commission sees no issues with traffic, parking or safety with this application as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

Chief Stewart commented that all three businesses that just presented are right in the same area and he suggested that it would be beneficial to each of them to all work together. He wishes them all the best.

d. 9/11 Memorial Ride *VOTED NEEDED*

This ride is to be put on by Back the Blue. Ms. Maria Nott is in the process of getting the proper insurance and paperwork.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to approve the 9/11 Memorial Ride, to be held September 11, 2021, as presented, contingent on the Chief receiving the appropriate insurance and subject to the requirements the Administration may deem necessary. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

e. Battle of Stonington 2021 Race *VOTE NEEDED*

Jeff Anderson, Kelley's Pace

Mr. Anderson stated that the Battle of Stonington Race will be held Tuesday, August 24th at 6 p.m. and will be mostly run in the Stonington Borough. They are expecting about one hundred-fifty people. They are using the same route and all proceeds go to the Stonington Free Library. Chief Stewart commented that the race only goes about fifty feet on Town property, the remainder is in the Borough. Mr. Anderson stated that they already received approval from the Borough.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to approve the Battle of Stonington 2021 Race, to be held Tuesday, August 24, 2021, as presented, subject to the requirements the Administration may deem necessary, and upon proof of proper insurance. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

f. Stonington Cross Country 5K *VOTE NEEDED*

Rich Ward, Stonington Recreation Administrator

Mr. Ward informed the Police Commission that this will be the fourth year to run this event since it had to be cancelled last year. This year they will be honoring Mr. Tom McCoy. Chief Stewart questioned whether they need to close down Spellman Dr. to which Mr. Ward stated that they do not. People will only be crossing Spellman Dr. in one location so it is not necessary to close the road.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to approve the Stonington Cross Country 5K, to be held Wednesday, August 18, 2021, as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to add the NE Food Trucks at the Mystic Hilton to the agenda. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

g. NE Food Trucks *VOTE NEEDED*

Steve Louyakis, NE Food Trucks

Anthony Ferreira, NE Food Trucks

Mr. Louyakis informed the Police Commission that they are planning on having twenty food trucks at the Mystic Hilton on Saturday, August 21, 2021, from noon to 7 p.m., free entry. He provided the Police Commissioners with the site layout. There will be a band playing. Chairman O'Shaughnessy asked which entrance to the property will be used? Mr. Louyakis stated that they will be utilizing both entrances, however, the Coogan Blvd. entrance will be used mainly for hotel guests. They will have staff at each entrance and have flaggers with orange vests at the crosswalks. They will block off the food truck area with cones and caution tape. They went over the site layout with the fire department to be sure an emergency vehicle can gain access. Mr. Louyakis noted that the Hilton has a catering license and will be utilizing a beer cart. Chief Stewart recommended that they verify that the Hilton's license extends to serving alcohol outdoors. He also cautioned to them to not allow alcohol to leave the area. Chairman O'Shaughnessy suggested posting "No Alcohol Beyond this Point" signs. Chief Stewart commented that if this event draws a huge crowd, they could require that they hire officers. Commissioner Turner voiced

his concerns with overflow parking. It was noted that there is parking at the Hilton, the Village and at the Aquarium.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to approve the NE Food Trucks at the Mystic Hilton event to be held Saturday, August 21, 2021 from noon to 7 p.m., as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Chief Stewart recommended that they do their best to try and control the alcohol.

4. Old Business

Chairman O'Shaughnessy reminded the Police Commissioners that the date for the September Board of Police Commissioners meeting was changed from Thursday, September 9th to Thursday, September 16th.

5. Traffic

a. Letter Re: "Hidden Driveway" Request, 94 Farmholme Road *VOTED NEEDED*

Julia Leeming, 94 Farmholme Rd., Stonington

John & Marija McCarthy, 94 Farmholme Rd., Stonington

Ms. Leeming and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. McCarthy, are asking for a "Hidden Driveway" sign near 94 Farmholme Rd. They have great difficulty entering and exiting the driveway. Chairman O'Shaughnessy noted that there are a lot of hidden driveway signs and suggested moving the existing sign and changing it to read "Hidden Driveways." There was some discussion on the location for the sign.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to move the "Hidden Driveway" sign to a more appropriate location and change it to read "Hidden Driveways". Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

b. E-Mail Re: "Hidden Driveway" Request North Water Street *VOTE NEEDED*

Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that the Police Commissioners have looked at this location and noted that the issue is with traffic and speed and that a "Hidden Driveway" sign is not appropriate. He further noted that this is a State road and they would need State DOT approval. Chief Stewart stated that they would need permission from State DOT to install speed signs to monitor the area.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to have Chief Stewart respond to the e-mail that has been submitted on request for the "Hidden Driveway" signs and state that the Police Commission did not see this as being appropriate and a reason being that this is a State road. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

c. E-Mail Re: Intersection of Routes 2 and 1

According to Chairman O'Shaughnessy, Ms. Beverly Gibbons sent in a letter suggesting a roundabout for the Route 1 and Route 2 intersection. Chief Stewart commented that this intersection has been under study for fifty to sixty years. At one time there was a traffic light at the intersection but that backed up traffic. It would be a \$1.5 to \$3 million dollar project to put in lights. There is not enough room to do a roundabout. Improvements were made eleven to twelve years ago. Chief Stewart stated that there are more complaints than there are accidents at this intersection. There is no longer traffic flow from Yardney's or Harris coming from Mechanic Street. Chairman O'Shaughnessy commented that all the traffic lights in Town are owned by the State except for the light on Coogan Blvd. by the Aquarium.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to have Chief Stewart respond to Ms. Gibbons e-mail and state that this has been studied and a roundabout is not a feasible option at this intersection. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

d. North Stonington Road Parking

Annette Miner & Family, Owners, Clyde's Cider Mill, N. Stonington Rd., Mystic

Ms. Miner informed the Police Commission of the ongoing efforts of Clyde's Cider Mill in making improvements to the parking situation. She noted that she is working with the First Selectman's Office to use the old school administration building's parking lot. She has approval from her insurance company to use off-site parking for the months of September, October and November, however, she is waiting for the paperwork. Clyde's has made up sandwich boards encouraging people to use that lot for parking. Ms. Miner has been unable to get a response from several limo companies regarding shuttling people from the school administration building lot to Clyde's. She noted that they may look into purchasing their own small transport vehicle in the future. According to Ms. Miner, they have had signs made up stating "All Four Tires Off the Roadway" signs. They have also looked around the property to find extra spaces for vehicles to park on-site. They will have employees park at the school administration building lot. She noted that this is not a perfect solution but they are trying to do what they can. Ms. Miner stated that Clyde's is good for the local economy.

Commissioner Turner commented that the Police Commission wants Clyde's Cider Mill to be successful and they also want the community to be safe. He questioned how Clyde's will encourage people to use the school administration building lot? Ms. Miner stated that they have the sandwich boards and they may hire an attendant. They also plan to post it on social media. Chief Stewart suggested checking to see if the local school bus company, First Student, could provide a shuttle service to and from the school administration building lot. Vice Chairman Tabor echoed Commissioner Turner's comments. He stated that everyone appreciates Clyde's Cider Mill, however, the Police Commission still has an obligation to oversee public safety. Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that he verified with the Town Attorney that anything that happens on the roadway is the Town's responsibility. Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that he is glad that Clyde's is trying to help with the parking situation. Chief Stewart remarked that when using the off-site lot, they should provide transportation. It may be necessary to use caution pedestrians signage.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy suggested keeping this item on next month's agenda so the Police Commission can look at approving the signage and further look at the parking. The Police Commission suggested that Clyde's look into additional transport companies.

e. E-Mail Re: Lantern Hill Bridge Structural Interim Repairs

FYI for the Police Commissioners.

f. Street Closures for Special Events

Chief Stewart suggested clarifying when roads are closed for events. For the upcoming Art Festival, from Saturday a.m. until Sunday after the event, Cottrell Street, Bay Street, Oak Street, Isham Street, Frazier Street, Forsyth Street, Haley Street, Stanton Place and Holmes Street (up to Bay Street) all closed, no parking, open only to local traffic. Signs have been made up by Town Highway and the roads will be marked "Road Closed, No Parking". Signs will be put out on Friday stating no parking after a time to be determined. Church Street, Reynolds Hill Road, School Street, Brown Street will be marked no parking one side of the road.

It should be made clear and placed on the record when there will be road closures for events so that signs can be put up and appropriate enforcement measures can be taken.

g. Temporary "No Parking" During Special Events

Covered in above agenda item **f. Street Closures for Special Events.**

h. Use of Golf Carts During Art Festival *APPROVAL NEEDED*

Chief Stewart recommends the Police Commission allow for golf carts to be used during the Art Festival on roads that are closed.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to approve the use of golf carts during the Art Festival Event. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to put on the record the no parking streets and street closures that the Chief just brought forth (Saturday a.m. until Sunday after the event, Cottrell Street, Bay Street, Oak Street, Isham Street, Frazier Street, Forsyth Street, Haley Street, Stanton Place and Holmes Street (up to Bay Street) all closed, no parking, open only to local traffic. Church Street, Reynolds Hill Road, School Street, Brown Street will be marked no parking one side of the road.) Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

i. Traffic Study: Dunkin Donuts Drive-Thru Stonington, CT

This is the 2006 traffic study that was attached to the Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Application: Ignazio's Mystic, LLC, however, they do not plan to use the existing drive-thru window but will keep it intact. They may use this area for additional parking if necessary.

j. E-Mail Re: Lantern Hill Road Speeding *FYI*

The Police Commission received a letter from June Froh regarding speeding on Lantern Hill Road. Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that the Department is in the process of collecting data from a speed sign that was in this area. He noted that speed signs only work to deter speeding for a limited time. There is a lot of traffic cutting through to the casino on this road.

k. Letter Re: Lantern Hill Road

According to Chief Stewart, this is an FYI for the Police Commissioners. The reclassification of Lantern Hill Road will make the Town eligible for funding.

l. Cottrell Street @ Haley Compact Car Only Sign *VOTED NEEDED*

There have been comments made regarding issues with sightlines coming out of Haley Street onto Cottrell Street. It was suggested that the parking spot just North of Haley Street on Cottrell Street be signed as "Compact Cars Only" to help improve the sightline.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to install a "Compact Car Only" sign for the parking spot north of Haley Street on Cottrell Street. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

6. Approval of Minutes from Thursday, July 8, 2021 Regular Meeting *VOTE NEEDED*

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to approve the minutes for the Thursday, July 8, 2021 Regular Meeting as submitted. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. Discussion: the September Board of Police Commissioners Meeting has been moved to the third Thursday of September (motion made in the June 10, 2021 minutes). End discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

7. Report of the Chief of Police

a. Budget Reports – Old & New Fiscal Years

Chief Stewart commented that the new fiscal year has just begun. The Department gave back \$350,000 to the Town from last years budget. Much of this had to do with recent retirements and salaries.

b. Monthly Report

Chief Stewart noted that summer is here and numbers are up. He stated that there was a medical last Friday where Officer Brito and Officer Cullen used Narcan and were able to save a life.

c. Alarm Report

d. Special Events Schedule

The event schedule is filling up.

e. Bid Waiver for MDT's *VOTE NEEDED*

According to Chief Stewart, this is a request from Lieutenant Schneider for a bid waiver for Glacial Computer. This is necessary to support the body camera installation and he recommends the Police Commission approves the bid waiver for nine MDT's.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to approve a bid waiver for the MDT's to Glacial Computer. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

f. Body Cam Update

Chief Stewart commented that the body cameras are onsite, however, they are not ready to implement them yet. Policy and training still need to be completed.

g. Microwave Link – State Discussion

Chief Stewart informed the Police Commission that he went to Middletown and had a discussion with the State regarding the microwave link. He discussed how this works and the disadvantages the Department has with relying on the fiber link system as the primary system. It would be more beneficial for the microwave link to be the primary system and the fiber link system to be the backup. Chief Stewart is in negotiations with the State and he is also in discussion with the First Selectman's Office to use funding from the CARES Act.

Vice Chairman Tabor noted that, in his tenure which is up in October, the Department, on behalf of the Town of Stonington, has done a lot regarding technology. He requests that the Department puts together a report showing their accomplishments in order to demonstrate the work that has been done to show to the community. He further commends the Department and the Town for all their efforts. Chief Stewart made a comment on how the decision to jump on the State radio system saved the Town of Stonington \$3-5 million dollars. Chief Stewart stated that he appreciates Vice Chairman Tabor's comments and he further discussed the changing and evolving technology and also the technology that is used on the Department's boat.

h. Officers at Academy Update

Chief Stewart stated that the new hires are still commuting to the Academy. This will hit the Overtime Training budget approximately \$3,000 every two weeks. He anticipates going way over in that line item.

Chief Stewart expects the South Carolina transfer, Officer Kyle Miller, to be sworn in on September 7th at 9 a.m.

Chief Stewart commented that ammunition costs are three times what it previously cost.

The Department is looking at more candidates as they still need to hire two more officers. Vice Chairman Tabor commented that he heard a local Police Chief on a radio program soliciting applicants.

Chief Stewart noted there has been an uptick of bad behavior in the Pawcatuck section of town, public drunkenness, homelessness, etc. There have been forty-eight referrals made to the new Community Outreach Specialist Ms. Rushlow and the Chaplains. Some of the issues in Pawcatuck are due to the fact that the shelter in Westerly is at capacity and also the atmosphere in society today. Chief Stewart stated that Ms. Rushlow went out, met with the individuals and offered them help instead of just asking them to leave. The Chaplains are also involved to help. Chief Stewart noted that it is not beneficial to ticket or arrest these individuals. This issue needs to be discussed with Westerly Police, Stonington Police, the Chaplains and Human Services. According to Chief Stewart, the Department has an officer assigned to coordinate once a week with Mobil Outreach. Selectwoman Strunk commented that there is a lot of structural support available to these individuals, they just need someone to guide them. She believes another person may need to be hired to help assist Ms. Rushlow and Human Services.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy commented that it was enlightening seeing the officers interacting with the children at the kid's camp.

The Miss America Parade will be held September 6th in Mystic. Chief Stewart commented that he has no idea what to expect since this is the first time for the event.

8. Consent Agenda

- a. Mystic Art Festival Paperwork**
- b. Letter & Highway Use Permit: Miss America Pageant Parade**
- c. Letter Re: Holy Ghost Processions**
- d. Memo Re: Nice Note**
- e. Letter Re: Donation to Animal Control**

9. Adjourn

At 6:53 p.m., Commissioner Turner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Elmer, all in favor, motion approved. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Robert Elmer
Secretary