

**STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
Thursday, January 9, 2020  
5:00 P.M AT THE STONINGTON POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

**MEETING MINUTES**

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

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

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

Chairman Gourd recognized former Police Commission Chairman Holt who was in attendance for this meeting.

**2. Remarks of Public**

None.

**3. New Business**

**a. Mystic Irish Parade \*VOTE NEEDED\***

Thomas Taber, Owner, Taber Inn, Mystic

Mr. Taber came before the Police Commission seeking approval to hold the 17<sup>th</sup> St. Patrick's Day Parade in Mystic. The parade is planned for Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Chief Stewart noted that they do a great job and the parade draws in anywhere from 25,000-50,000 people. Chairman Gourd asked Chief Stewart if there is any pushback from the community due to road closures to which Chief Stewart stated that this is an event that has been going on for many years and there is plenty of advertising before the event. Mr. Taber assured that this is a family event and businesses are notified as such. Commissioner Turner added that this is a dynamite event.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to approve the Mystic Irish Parade to be held on Sunday, March 22, 2020 as presented, subject to the requirements the Administration may deem necessary, and upon proof of proper insurance. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**b. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Applications: Precious Memories Place, Inc. \*COMMENTS NEEDED\***

Ed Wenke, Project Engineer, Representing Precious Memories Place, Inc.  
Christine Eckersley, Owner, Precious Memories Place, Inc.

Mr. Wenke informed the Police Commission that Precious Memories Place is seeking approval to add three students which requires adding an additional parking space. They are also planning on enclosing a 60sf deck as part of the project. There will be no significant increase in traffic.

Chief Stewart commented that he does not see any issues.

Commissioner Tabor made a motion to pass along the following comments to Planning and Zoning; that it appears to the Police Commission that there are no parking, safety or traffic issues with this application as submitted. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

#### **4. Traffic**

##### **a. E-Mail Re: Aquarion Water Main Improvements in Stonington**

This item is an FYI according to Chief Stewart. Commissioner Turner questioned Chief Stewart on how it is determined if police are needed for traffic. Chief Stewart answered that they may be able to just use flaggers but if it becomes more complicated, they will have to hire officers.

##### **b. Deans Mill Road by School**

Rob Marseglia, Chairman of the K-12 Building Committee

Dan Oliverio, K-12 Building Committee Member

Mr. Marseglia provided photos to the Police Commissioners showing the curb in question. This curb was installed due to the fact that the road was collapsing at the edge. Mr. Marseglia approached Town Highway to do the job, however, their schedule did not permit them to do the work, so the K-12 Building Committee hired French Paving to install the curb. Posts with reflectors have also been installed. Mr. Marseglia proposed working with Town Highway to get on their calendar to have the road paved from the bus loop to this curb, and also, fix the curb at that time.

Commissioner Turner commented that there is a severe transition and this could cause even more of a problem at night. Mr. Marseglia noted that he recently drove there at night and the reflectors are effective. Commissioner Tabor expressed that it is clear there is an issue and he has some concerns. He visited the area and noted that nine out of ten cars shifted to the left, towards the double yellow line. He feels that making the necessary corrections in the spring is good, however, it may be too late. Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy observed that the Police Commission should have been consulted before curbing that narrowed the roadway was installed. Mr. Oliverio had assumed that the paving company would not have narrowed the road. Public Works would have been able to install a two-foot pad and place the curb on top of that pad. Painting the curb will not help when it becomes covered with snow. Chief Stewart claimed that bump outs force people to slow down but if a vehicle strikes the curb, it could cause a roll-over accident. Chief Stewart recommends removing the curbing.

There was some further discussion about removing the curbing and replacing it when the road is repaved so that it does not create a hazard. Mr. Marseglia will reach out to Barbara McKrell. He apologized to the Police Commission as he was unaware that this project needed approval from this Commission.

Chairman Gourd clarified that it is Mr. Marseglia's intention to address Public Works to remove the curbing from the bump out to the driveway apron as soon as possible, then have Public Works replace the curb without narrowing the roadway, when convenient with their schedule. It was also recommended that they add a "Road Narrows" sign, north of Dean's Mill School on the south bound side.

**c. Letter Re: Removal of Crosswalk Sign Removal – Mason’s Island Road \*VOTE NEEDED\***

John Rousseau, 103 Masons Island Rd., Mystic

Mr. Rousseau informed the Police Commission that his property is across the street from the marina and seafood store. His concerns are with people parking in his yard and using the crosswalk to go across to the store. He is requesting the removal of the crosswalk that ends at his property. Vice Chairman O’Shaughnessy agrees that it should be taken out, but also suggests that a crosswalk ahead sign be installed for the crosswalk a little further south. Chief Stewart suggested to Mr. Rousseau that he mark the area as private property, no parking.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to remove the northern crosswalk on Masons Island Road near the causeway. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. Discussion: Chief Stewart noted to also add the crosswalk ahead sign. End Discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

**d. Letter Re: Lantern Hill Road – Out of Control Drivers \*POSSIBLE ACTION\***

June Froh, 160 Lantern Hill Rd., Mystic

Ms. Froh informed the Police Commission that she and her neighbors have seen an increase in reckless driving along Lantern Hill Rd. She obtained signatures from other residents and provided a copy to the Police Commissioners. Ms. Froh noted that she does appreciate the cruiser that has recently been on the road. The stretch south of Marjorie Street to Route 184 is the worst. For example, a motorist passed her neighbor on the left while he was turning left into his driveway. She questioned if there are incentive programs that could be utilized to help monitor this activity.

Chief Stewart noted that speeding fines are harsh and officers sometimes opt to give warnings. He did state that officers have been up in that area and that the speed sign can certainly be put up in the spring. Chief Stewart declared that this is an ongoing problem town-wide. Vice Chairman O’Shaughnessy pointed out that the problem with enforcement is that it only changes one person and the effects only last a certain amount of time. It is very difficult to change people’s behavior. Also, in this area, there is a lot of casino traffic. Vice Chairman O’Shaughnessy suggests putting out the speed sign and having an officer out in the area at peak times when the most offenses occur. Chief Stewart advised that the speed sign will also provide the Department with data. He also suggests Ms. Froh calls the Department when she sees a violation and to get a license plate number. Chief Stewart stated that the only State incentive program is for the purchase of radar equipment. He also commented that infraction revenue goes directly to the State and not to the Department.

Chairman Gourd acknowledged Ms. Froh’s concerns and stated that the Police Commission is sensitive to them and that they will have officers in the area at peak times and will also put up the speed sign in the spring.

**5. Old Business**

**a. Request for “Hidden Driveway” Sign \*TABLED FROM DECEMBER MEETING – POSSIBLE VOTE\***

Paul Baker, 160 Farmholme Rd., Stonington

Mr. Baker informed the Police Commission that he is requesting a “Hidden Driveway” sign on Farmholme in the area of Barnes Rd. Mr. Baker stated that pulling out of his driveway is tricky and it is hard to take a right-hand turn. He has almost been hit multiple times. He did note that the speed sign that was recently down the road was helpful. Commissioner Tabor asked if his driveway could be improved to

allow a right turn to which Mr. Baker stated that a storm drain prevents any modification. Chief Stewart suggested putting in a "Hidden Driveway" sign.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to install "Hidden Driveway" signs on Farmholme Rd. in the vicinity of Barnes Rd. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**b. Discussion on One Way, Stanton Place, Mystic \* TABLED FROM DECEMBER MEETING - POSSIBLE VOTE\***

Chairman Gourd stated that this was brought up briefly at the last meeting in conjunction with the Cottrell St. discussion. He read parts of a letter from a resident on Stanton Place to the Police Commissioners. The resident is in favor of changing Stanton Place to one-way from Cottrell St. to Willow St. Commissioner Tabor commented that this could help minimize the increase in traffic flow headed towards the playground on Washington St.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to approve the request to change Stanton Place from two-way to one-way heading from Cottrell St. to Willow St. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. Discussion: Chief Stewart recommends that this be done when changes are made to Cottrell St. End Discussion. Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy amended the motion that such change in traffic flow from two-way to one-way on Stanton Place is to be done in conjunction with the overall Cottrell St. redesign. Amended motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. All in favor, motion approved.

**c. Old Stonington Road Parking**

Chief Stewart believes that one sign is missing on the south side of the road between the Dog Watch and the Fire Department. He suggests reinstalling the sign. The signs have been in place for a long time. It is essential that the Fire Department has a wide enough avenue to travel.

Chief Stewart recommends reinstalling the "No Parking" sign.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to add the following items to the agenda for approval; 1). more "No Parking" signs to be added on Old Stonington Road in the area of Dog Watch, Mystic; 2). adding a "No Left Turn" sign across from the Village Farm Rd. / Coogan Blvd. intersection; and 3). replacing the two, faded "No Left Turn" signs at the Chuckies exit onto Coogan Blvd. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy informed the Police Commission that he still has concerns with motorists taking a left-hand turn when exiting Village Farm Rd. onto Coogan Blvd. He recommends installing a "No Left Turn" sign on the other side of the road, across from Village Farm Rd. to make motorists more aware. Commissioner Tabor shared with the Police Commission that recently, he witnessed a vehicle with NY plates take a left onto Coogan Blvd. from Village Farm Rd. Commissioner Tabor foresees problems with that intersection. The project's engineer will be installing a raised island to discourage a left-hand turn; however, it may not be enough.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy informed the Police Commission that the "No Left Turn" exit signs at Chuckies onto Coogan Blvd. are all faded. Chief Stewart recommends that they be replaced.

Commissioner O'Shaughnessy made a motion to approve the three signage changes that were added to the agenda as discussed. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Commissioner Elmer voiced his concerns with pedestrians and bicyclists dressed in black at night without reflective clothing. He wanted to know if there was anything that Chief Stewart could do to raise awareness of the hazards this presents. There was some discussion on pedestrian and bicycle safety. Chief Stewart stated they could post reminders on the Department's Facebook page. Commissioner Tabor suggested putting out reminders periodically would be beneficial.

**6. Approval of Minutes from Thursday, December 12, 2019 Regular Meeting \*VOTE NEEDED\***

Commissioner Elmer made a motion to approve the minutes for the Thursday, December 12, 2019 Regular Meeting as written. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**7. Report of the Chief of Police**

**a. Budget Report**

According to Chief Stewart, everything is on track.

**b. Monthly Statistics**

Chief Stewart reported that there were no surprises in the monthly report.

**c. Yearly Stats**

Chief Stewart highlighted that there were three significant domestic events in 2019. The Department has seen an uptick in the seriousness of cases. In the past, the Department had a program that provided follow ups for victims of domestic violence. Chief Stewart informed the Police Commission that he has been in contact with Safe Futures in order to implement a MOU. He further discussed how this would benefit the Department and the community. He also had a meeting with Stonington Human Services Director Leanne Theodore and First Selectwoman Danielle Chesebrough in regard to this topic. Once the program is up and running, Chief Stewart will make sure the program is publicized. It can be advertised in the Human Services newsletter and the local newspapers. Commissioner Turner commended any involvement the Department has with Safe Futures.

**d. Alarm Report**

**e. Special Event Schedule**

**f. Radio Update**

Chief Stewart informed the Police Commission that he has discussed the radio system with the RI EMA. The results were that Rhode Island is planning on moving forward to make the necessary improvements with radio communications between CT and RI.

Chief Stewart also commented that the BDA's are now up and running. The Mystic Aquarium will also be planning on installing a similar system. He also noted that Mr. Lasaracina will possibly be at next month's meeting to discuss his role with the radio system going forward.

**g. Westerly Incident**

Chief Stewart informed the Police Commission that eight Stonington officers responded to the recent incident in Westerly at Babcock Village. The Westerly Town Council will be giving Stonington and other responding Departments commendations next Monday night. This was a very unfortunate situation; however, all the officers did an outstanding job. One lesson learned was the lack of radio communications between RI and CT needs to be improved. It is extremely important for this

Department to be able to talk with RI Departments, according to Chief Stewart. Chief Stewart also noted that the Stonington Chaplains were made available to anyone regarding this incident. Chairman Gourd extended his thanks to all the officers involved.

**h. Fed Case in Borough**

Chief Stewart mentioned that recently an arrest was made by the FBI of a would-be terrorist.

Chief Stewart commented that the plans for Cottrell Street that were presented by Jason Vincent were conceptual plans and that an engineer needs to be consulted before changes begin, so there is more work to be done. Chief Stewart will sign off on the previously discussed parking improvements on Jackson Ave and Willow Street.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to accept the Report of the Chief of Police. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

**8. Consent Agenda**

**a. Thank You Note: Family of Jim Dodd**

**b. Thank You Note: Family of Mel Olsson**

**c. Memos Re: Planning & Zoning Applications**

**d. Letter Re: "No Outlet" Sign**

**e. Letter Re: 2020 Mystic Half Marathon**

**f. Note of Appreciation**

**g. Letter Re: Uniforms – FYI – Old Memorabilia**

Chief Stewart commented that this is just a bit of history for the Police Commissioners. The Stonington Police Department was not established until 1938. Chief Stewart consulted former Chief Erskine and found out that, prior to 1938, there were constables and that the First Selectman was considered Chief of Police.

**h. Letters Re: Duck Race \*FYI\***

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**8. Adjourn**

At 6:39 p.m., Commissioner Turner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Tabor, all in favor, motion approved. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Tabor', is written over a horizontal line.

Bob Tabor  
Secretary