

**STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
Thursday, October 3, 2019  
5:00 P.M AT THE STONINGTON POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

MEETING MINUTES

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

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

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

**2. Remarks of Public**

**a. Thank you to Board of Police Commissioner Chair Ray Trebisacci – Last Monthly Meeting**

Chief Stewart welcomed everyone and stated that Chairman Trebisacci has completed his five-year term. Chief Stewart noted that Chairman Trebisacci was on the Building Committee that approved the Police Department building twenty years ago. Chairman Trebisacci has also been fully behind the radio project, noting that he understands the importance of communication for the Police Department. Chief Stewart highlighted some of what was accomplished during Chairman Trebisacci's time on the Board of Police Commissioners. Chief Stewart thanked Chairman Trebisacci and stated that he has the respect and thanks from all in the Department. Chief Stewart presented Chairman Trebisacci with a hat, coins and a plaque.

Former Police Commissioners Rob Simmons, Suzette Tibus, Patrick Moukawsher and Jim O'Boyle also thanked Chairman Trebisacci for his service and dedication to the Police Department and the Town of Stonington. First Selectman Simmons commented that even though he and Chairman Trebisacci belong to different political parties they both understand what it means to serve the Town of Stonington and make sure our town is safe. Ms. Tibus commented that sometimes it can be difficult to be the head and that Chairman Trebisacci has done well.

Chairman Trebisacci thanked everyone and stated that this has been one of the most rewarding experiences in his life and that they got a lot done together.

**3. Action Items**

**a. 2020 Regular Meeting Schedule \*APPROVAL NEEDED\***

Commissioner O'Shaughnessy made a motion to approve the Board of Police Commissioners Regular Meeting Schedule for 2020 as submitted. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

\*\*At this time Vice Chairman Gourd spoke to those in attendance as to why this meeting was moved from the regularly scheduled date of October 10<sup>th</sup>. The Commission needs a quorum and it was known

ahead of time that the members of the Board of Police Commissioners had a conflict with the regular meeting date so this meeting was rescheduled weeks ago to ensure there would be a quorum.

**b. Planning & Zoning Application: Pequot Trail, LLC \*COMMENTS NEEDED\***

Robert Valenti, 1189 Pequot Trail, LLC

Mr. Valent informed the Police Commission that they are looking for a zone change for Dean's Mill Farm from the existing GBR-130 zone to Agricultural Heritage District (ADH) zone. They plan on preserving the farm, offer equestrian activities and on-site events, and also renovate the 1750's Stanton home.

Chairman Trebisacci commented that the Board of Police Commissioners deal with issues of traffic and public safety. It appears there is plenty of on-site parking. There may be possible issues with access for emergency responders that will need to be addressed. Chief Stewart noted that he has heard back from CT DOT, and, since they are looking to change the zoning from residential to commercial, the State will require permits. There are State regulations on road width, fire lanes and sight lines. Chief Stewart will put Mr. Valenti in contact with State DOT. Chief Stewart further commented that the State requirements will satisfy his own concerns in regard to safety. Commissioner O'Shaughnessy noted that he previously had a concern with the sight lines looking west, however, he is now happy with the improvements they have made.

Vice Chairman Gourd questioned the number of people that will be anticipated for certain events. Mr. Valenti stated that they anticipate 100-150 people for weddings and 200-250 people for fundraiser events. There are 57 parking spaces in a gravel lot and several fields for overflow parking. Vice Chairman Gourd noted that there can be issues with parking in fields, for example "gopher holes" and poor lighting. Mr. Valenti assured that the fields are in great condition and he will make parking safety a priority.

Commissioner O'Shaughnessy made a motion to pass along the following comments to Planning and Zoning; that it appears to the Police Commission that there is adequate on-site parking, that traffic issues are addressed in terms of what has to take place on the premises, and that the project will meet the requirements from State DOT, including an approved fire lane. It was also noted that this will have to come back before the Police Commission so the Commissioners know that these issues have been addressed. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**c. Planning & Zoning Application Update: Mystic Seaport Museum \*COMMENTS NEEDED\***

Chad Frost, Project Leader, Kent + Frost Landscape Architecture  
Ken Wilson, Director of Facilities, Mystic Seaport Museum, LLC  
Dave Lavallo, President, Global Foundation for Ocean Exploration

Mr. Frost informed the Police Commissioners that they are before this Board because there has been a master plan modification and they have submitted a site plan application. There will be one building constructed in the South lot in an area currently used for the storage of timber. This building will house the operations of the Global Foundation for Ocean Exploration which designs, builds, and operates robotic platforms. This will be done in a single phase. There will be a minor modification to the driveway. Vice Chairman Gourd asked how many people will utilize this building to which Mr. Frost stated approximately ten people who are currently at the facility so no additional parking is necessary. The building will not be open to the public and is not a part of the museum experience. Mr. Frost gave a brief description on the design of the building.

Commissioner Elmer made a motion to pass along the following comment to Planning and Zoning; that there does not appear to be any adverse impacts to traffic, parking or public safety. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**d. Planning & Zoning Application: Stonington Housing Authority – Wetlands Permit \*APPLICATION WITHDRAWN – SEE LETTER\***

According to Chief Stewart, this item was withdrawn due to reduction in funding.

**4. Traffic**

**a. Cottrell Street – Proposal for One-Way \*POSSIBLE VOTE\***

Chairman Trebisacci invited Jason Vincent to discuss the proposal for Cottrell Street to become one-way. Mr. Vincent stated that back in February 2019 ideas were explored. They held a forum to come up with ideas to increase parking and help with traffic flow and areas where this could be achieved within the town's control. The idea of changing Cottrell Street to one-way is not a new idea. This goes back to a proposal from 2005, which was withdrawn. At that time, it was proposed that both Cottrell Street and Holmes Street become one-way. According to Mr. Vincent, the approach that is being proposed now is something that can be tested, it is less ridged than the original 2005 proposal. It can be done with paint. There are five options in the proposal. The first option is to do nothing. The other options include Cottrell Street as one-way heading south from Route 1 to Washington Street, each option with their own variations to the parking layout. Mr. Vincent further explained the value of each additional parking space and that it is important to use public spaces more efficiently. He also noted that creating more on street parking will curb the thoughts to tear down the neighborhood fabric in order to create parking lots.

At this time, Chairman Trebisacci announced that questions and discussion will be open to the Police Commissioners first, then he will open the floor to the public. Chairman Trebisacci stated that he will limit comments to thirty minutes and he will cut comments short if they are in regard to the scheduling of this meeting or about the limited notice, since it was obvious there was sufficient notification due to the number of people in attendance. He further noted that it is not necessary for the Police Commission to make a decision on this item at this meeting. The goal of this Commission is to make this an open process.

Commissioner O'Shaughnessy questioned Mr. Vincent about why only one of the options is zoning compliant. Mr. Vincent stated that parking regulations are in place for private properties and that Cottrell Street is a public right of way so it does not follow the same regulations.

Commissioner Tabor thanked Mr. Vincent for his years of service and noted that the Town of Stonington has greatly benefited from him. He then asked what would be the process to implement one of these options on Cottrell Street. Mr. Vincent stated, since zoning regulations are for off street parking and not a public right of way, it is for the local traffic authority to make this decision.

Bill Sternberg, Elm St., Stonington

Mr. Sternberg asked if the Town paid for a traffic study and suggested that if there is going to be a change in the traffic pattern, then a traffic study should be done. Mr. Vincent commented that a traffic study was not done as a part of this analysis. Mr. Vincent further stated that they held a public forum and got opinions. They learned that a north bound turn out of Cottrell is not safe for pedestrians or cyclists. Mr. Vincent also noted that the Board of Finance provided some services to bring in an engineer

consultant to do a design likeness which can be successfully implemented. This project can be thought of as a low-cost intervention that is reversible. Mr. Sternberg made the point that a public hearing needs to be held and he also advocated for an analytical approach based on data, not feelings.

Jim Santos, 5 Haley St., Mystic

Mr. Santos commented that he is normally cheering additional parking, however, he is concerned that making Cottrell Street one-way will push commercial traffic through a neighborhood. He also foresees bottlenecking issues. He is not convinced that gaining five to ten parking spaces is worth it. He further noted that taking a left hand turn out of Willow Street is more difficult than taking a left out of Cottrell Street.

Matt Beaudoin, 2 Washington St., Mystic, Owner - Mystic Knotwork

Mr. Beaudoin remarked that he sees the benefit of making Cottrell Street one way, however, he still has some concerns, specifically at Washington Street. He noted that he has seen people conducting three-point turns on Cottrell Street in order to get to an available parking space on the other side of the street. Mr. Beaudoin has concerns with Groton reducing their parking which will put a strain on parking on the Stonington side.

At this time, Chairman Trebisacci asked Mr. Vincent to comment on the safety issues near the playground on Washington Street. Mr. Vincent noted that the section of Washington Street, the end that intersects with Cottrell Street, would be one way from Cottrell Street to Willow Street. Chairman Trebisacci asked if Mr. Vincent has an idea of how this will affect the comprehensive plan of all of downtown to which Mr. Vincent stated that it is not a lack of planning but a lack of implementation. He further stated that traffic studies conducted in the past have researched both the Groton and Stonington sides of Mystic. The challenge with parking is that most of the parking is private. Mr. Vincent feels that parking should be thought of as a commodity. He briefly discussed some previous ideas involving water taxi services or other transportation services that allow people to park in larger parking areas outside of downtown.

Ben Tamsky, Chairman - Mystic River Park Commission

Mr. Tamsky stated that he was not representing the Mystic River Park Commission at this meeting tonight, as he has not had a discussion about this proposal with that Commission. He questioned why the Board or the Mystic River Park have not been invited into the planning process. Much of Cottrell Street is owned by them and they should be involved in the discussions.

Janis Mink, 18 Williams Ave., Pawcatuck

Ms. Mink used to live on Washington Street so she is familiar with the area. She does not feel that more traffic flow on Washington Street will be a good idea. There are no sidewalks on Washington Street and pedestrians, along with cyclists, use the road. Ms. Mink also questioned what it would look like with all the cars parked along Cottrell Street. Chairman Trebisacci pointed out that one of the options reduces parking on the river side of Cottrell Street. Ms. Mink also stated that she is in favor of bike lanes along Route 1 from the Pawcatuck River to the Mystic River. Her biggest concern is for the pedestrians.

Shauna Lake, 15 Washington St., Mystic

Ms. Lake also noted that there are no sidewalks on Washington Street and that the roads are in poor condition. It is unsafe to walk on Washington Street and motorists speed down this road. There is a lot of stroller traffic headed to the park and playground. Ms. Lake promotes safer paths for walkers and cyclists. She is afraid that this proposal will force more traffic onto Washington Street and Willow Street. Ms. Lake mentioned the idea of speed bumps and possible areas for residents only parking. Mr. Vincent

commented that the condition of Washington Street has been identified as a project to be addressed. Chief Stewart shared his concerns with the installation of speed bumps on any public roadway.

Rod Desmarais, 11 Cottrell St., Mystic

Mr. Desmarais owns 11 Cottrell Street which is a mixed use of residential and commercial. He is supportive of this proposal from a commercial point of view. As a resident, he understands the concerns. He did express his concern with the motorcycle parking spaces in the proposed options. He feels that residents would complain about the noise. It may create a "hang out" and produce constant noise. Mr. Vincent commented that the motorcycle spaces could be used for scooters or for bicycle racks or loading areas or even Uber drop off / pick up. Other ideas could be explored.

Paul Sartor, 12 Jackson Ave., Mystic

Mr. Sartor has lived on Jackson Avenue for thirty-five years. He has concerns with traffic flow with this proposal and also with pedestrian safety. He feels that there are better sightlines pulling out of Cottrell Street onto Route 1 than at Willow Street and Route 1. Mr. Sartor questioned whether the focus should be on tourists or on the quality of life of the residents. He feels that making Cottrell Street one way is a Band-Aid. He supports conducting a traffic study. Mr. Sartor still has concerns with projects like the Smilers Wharf project. This development may not happen today, but what other development could be proposed in the future. Mr. Sartor considers parking on Jackson Avenue as a separate issue.

Chairman Trebisacci turned the meeting back over to the Police Commissioners. Commissioner O'Shaughnessy thinks this item should be tabled in order to receive more public input. Commissioner Tabor questioned the traffic ratings at the Cottrell Street and Route 1 intersection to which Chief Stewart responded that all the intersections downtown have an F rating. According to Chief Stewart, Mystic is a victim of its own success. Vice Chairman Gourd stated that he came into this meeting thinking this proposal increased parking and safety. He had not thought about traffic being pushed into residential neighborhoods. According to Vice Chairman Gourd, this Commission tries to be sensitive to the neighborhoods.

Mr. Vincent stated that he has been discussing with several property owners to see if some private property could be open to public parking. This is still an avenue to investigate as well as charging for parking. Chief Stewart noted that there is constant discussion between Groton and Stonington in order to alleviate parking, traffic and safety issues. He welcomes input on the subject.

Ms. Tibus commends Chairman Trebisacci and the Police Commission for conducting a very respectful meeting and thanked them and Mr. Vincent.

Commissioner O'Shaughnessy made a motion to table this subject to next month's meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

**b. E-Mail Re: Trash Removal Issue – Palmer Street, Pawcatuck \*POSSIBLE VOTE\***

Chief Stewart gave a brief overview of the issues the owner of the multi-tenement home at 7 Palmer St., Pawcatuck is having with regard to a garbage truck getting into the driveway to remove dumpsters located on the property. Chief Stewart recommends painting three feet of the curb yellow. Commissioner O'Shaughnessy noted that he went out to the area and painting three feet of the curb on just the west side of the driveway should be sufficient.

Commissioner O'Shaughnessy made a motion to request Public Works mark three feet of curbing on the west side of the driveway located at 7 Palmer St., Pawcatuck to facilitate trash removal. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**c. E-Mail Re: Parking on Jackson Avenue \*POSSIBLE VOTE\***

Lilli Rebich, 8 Jackson Ave., Mystic (Also representing Taylor Heal, 9 Jackson Ave., Mystic)  
Susan Carpenter, 10 Jackson Ave., Mystic  
Jen Martley, 10 Jackson Ave., Mystic  
Paul Sartor, 12 Jackson Ave., Mystic

Ms. Rebich informed the Police Commission that there are parking issues on Jackson Ave. The street is narrow and it is hard to navigate when there are vehicles parked on both sides of the road. She also noted that this is not only an issue during events, but it is also an issue on weekends especially when there are functions or Masses at St. Patrick's Church. Ms. Carpenter stated that this issue is compounded in the winter when there is snow.

Chairman Trebisacci stated that if a vehicle is blocking a driveway the vehicle can be ticketed or even towed. This is a common issue in the Stonington Borough. Ms. Rebich noted that Mr. Heal cannot get out of his driveway if someone is parked across the street from his driveway. Ms. Martley has had to ask people to move their vehicles in order to get out. Mr. Sartor confirmed that most driveways have a narrow curb cut and are difficult to get in and out of if vehicles are parked right up to the driveways. He suggests painting the curbs five to eight feet on either side of the driveways. Mr. Vincent proposed stripping and designating specific parking spaces to help with the parking issues. Ms. Carpenter noted that other streets in the immediate area have no parking along one side of the street.

Chairman Trebisacci appreciates their concerns and thanked them for coming to this meeting.

This item is continued to next meeting to give the Administration and Planning & Zoning time to go out and look at the area and come up with possible solutions.

**d. E-Mail: Wayfinding Signs – Coogan Boulevard**

Chief Stewart recommends tabling this item until input from the Mystic Aquarium, Mystic Seaport and others in the area is given. Mr. Vincent explained that these signs will be similar to the State of Connecticut attraction signs. These wayfinding signs would help people with directions by identifying the best routes to different attractions in the area such as the Mystic Aquarium, the Olde Mistick Village, Hartford Healthcare and other destinations in Mystic.

There was additional discussion about the scope of the project.

Tabled to a future meeting.

**5. Approval of Minutes from Tuesday, September 3, 2019 Special Meeting \*VOTE NEEDED\***

Commissioner Tabor made a motion to approve the minutes for the Tuesday, September 3, 2019 special meeting as written. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

## **6. Report of the Chief of Police**

### **a. Budget Report**

Provided to the Police Commission.

### **b. Monthly Statistics**

Provided to the Police Commission.

### **c. Alarm Report**

Provided to the Police Commission.

### **d. Special Event Schedule**

Provided to the Police Commission.

### **e. First Responders Certificate**

According to Chief Stewart, this is an FYI for the Police Commissioners.

### **f. K-9 Fundraiser Donation**

There was a \$3100 donation from the K-9 Fundraiser.

### **g. Letter Re: Donation to Animal Control**

There was a \$100 donation to Animal Control.

### **h. Memo Re: Diana DeMarco – 5 Year Anniversary**

### **i. Election of Board of Police Commissioner Officers Next Month \*FYI\***

This is an FYI for the Police Commissioners according to Chief Stewart.

### **j. E-Mail Re: Bulletproof Partnership**

The Department has been awarded \$15,000 from the Bulletproof Vest Partnership. This covers 45-50% of the costs according to Chief Stewart.

### **k. Radio Update**

#### **1. Letter Re: Signal Booster**

Included in the Police Commissioner's packets.

#### **2. FCC Regulation for BDA at Deans Mill School**

According to Chief Stewart, Deans Mill School is not completely connected and he will be conducting another phone conference next week.

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

## **7. Consent Agenda**

### **a. Temporary Liquor Permit Application: Hog Wild for PNC**

### **b. Memo Re: Good Job – Sergeant Morrison & Detective Howard**

### **c. Memo Re: Job Well Done**

### **d. Memo Re: Job Well Done – Officer Hewes & Officer Sousa**

### **e. E-Mail Re: Tour de Force Charity**

**f. Turkey Trot Event**

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

Chairman Trebisacci thanked everyone again.

**8. Adjourn**

At 6:49 p.m., Commissioner Tabor made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner O'Shaughnessy, all in favor, motion approved. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. O'Shaughnessy", written in a cursive style.

Robert O'Shaughnessy  
Secretary