

**STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, December 12, 2019
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.

2. Remarks of Public

None.

3. New Business

Chairman Gourd took the opportunity to inform those in attendance that this coming Saturday, December 14th from 10am-3pm is the Stonington Police Department's Stuff a Cruiser event. He encouraged everyone to bring a toy or canned good to help residents in need. Chairman Gourd also commended the Stonington Police Department for their response and investigation leading to the arrest of the suspect involved in an unfortunate incident resulting in the death of a young mother.

a. 2020 Mystic Half Marathon *VOTE NEEDED*

Chief Stewart informed the Police Commissioners that there are no changes to this event and he sees no issues, however, in the future, they may run into issues when the Perkins Farm development opens. For now, they have plenty of volunteers and they also hire police officers.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to approve the 2020 Mystic Half Marathon to be held on Sunday, May 17, 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. Stonington Harbor Management Plan *REVIEW/VOTE NEEDED*

Jay Spaulding, Chairman, Stonington Harbor Management Commission

Mr. Spaulding informed the Police Commission that they have made changes to incorporate a "Slow, No Wake Zone" ordinance at Sandy Point. He is back before this Commission with the recommended revisions. Once this Commission approves the plan, it will be forwarded to DEEP.

Commissioner Tabor asked what will be expected from the Harbormaster in relation to this plan; what information will the Harbormaster be required to collect in order to pass along to the police so that offenders may be cited. Chief Stewart noted that the Harbormaster may not want to be in the position

of stopping a boat since the Harbormaster has no authority to make an arrest. Mr. Spaulding commented that the Harbormaster is a good witness. Chief Stewart commented that if the Harbormaster can articulate enough information to establish probable cause then the police can take action. Photos or video of the offense may help. Commissioner Tabor cautioned that an undue burden should not be placed on the police. The Harbormaster will continue to work within his means and there will be no change in the expectations of the Harbormaster, according to Mr. Spaulding.

Commissioner Tabor made a motion to approve the Stonington Harbor Management Plan as presented with the understanding that it will be resubmitted to the State for review. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

c. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit & Coastal Area Management Review Applications: 1 Allen Street & 54-56 Williams Avenue, Mystic *COMMENTS NEEDED*

Ellen Bartlett, CLA Engineers, Inc.

Ms. Bartlett presented the Police Commission with the request to demolish the two existing residential buildings and combine two parcels into one. There is no historic significance for the current residential buildings. They will be eliminating the five driveways and creating an entrance at Route 1 and an exit onto Allen Street. Signage will clearly mark the entrance and exit; the parking lot will be clearly lit, and there will be adequate signage for the business. There will be a total of twenty-six parking spaces. The maximum number of employees at one time will be six. The first floor of the newly proposed building will be office space for Coastal Wealth Management and the second floor will have three small apartments.

Chief Stewart read an email from Keith Brynes, Town of Stonington, Director of Planning, which stated that there are no zoning concerns, the plan reduces the number of curb cuts on Williams Ave., it will be one-way traffic in from Williams Ave. and out onto Allen St., and that there is no real increase in expected traffic. Ms. Bartlett noted that they have addressed all of DOT's comments and will be resubmitting this to them once she has Town approvals.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy 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 Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

d. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit & Coastal Area Management Review Applications: Harry Austin Drive & Mason's Island Road, Mystic *COMMENTS NEEDED*

There was no one in attendance for this item. Chief Stewart read an email from Keith Brynes which stated that a medical/professional building was approved in 2012 with modifications that were approved in 2014. There have been slight changes since this was proposed in 2014. The site layout and traffic impacts remain the same, however, there will be some additional parking spaces.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to pass this along to Planning and Zoning with no comment as this was addressed in 2014. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

e. Planning & Zoning Change Map Amendment & Site Plan Applications: 6 Coogan Blvd. & Village Farm Road/Clara Drive, Mystic *COMMENTS NEEDED*

Pete Parent, CME Associates, Inc.

Mr. Parent reviewed with the Police Commission the proposed plans to construct two new hotels at 6 Coogan Blvd. He explained the traffic flow with the Police Commissioners. They are making the necessary modifications to encourage traffic to enter the site from Clara Drive. There will be a right turn only from Village Farm Rd. onto Coogan Blvd. Village Farm Rd. is gated but there is occasional delivery access to McQuade's Marketplace. Commissioner Tabor questioned the secondary access mentioned in the application. Mr. Parent responded that this may have been misstated. Mr. Parent noted that they are working on getting a Clara Dr. address for the site to help encourage traffic to use Clara Dr. There will be plenty of internal signage in the lot to help with traffic flow.

There was some discussion about elevations. Commissioner Tabor noted that it appears that they are asking for a zone change to allow for density implications. Commissioner Tabor asked what other benefits the zone change will give the developer. Mr. Parent stated that it will reduce the setback requirements and allows for two separate uses of the property.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy still has concerns with the site lines looking west while exiting Village Farm Rd. onto Coogan Blvd. Mr. Parent stated there will be posted 25MPH in that area and additional signage, such as "No Left Turn". Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy expressed concerns with the Town owned traffic light at Coogan Blvd. and Clara Dr. and feels that it may need an upgrade. The level of service at that light is currently a B.

Mr. Parent stated that, since the site has over one hundred parking spaces and is over in square footage, comments are needed from the Police Commission and Planning and Zoning before they go to the State for approval.

Commissioner Tabor voiced his concerns with traffic flow that will be generated by the take out restaurant on the site. Mr. Parent stated that most will enter via Village Farm Rd. and if they need to take a left onto Coogan Blvd. they should follow the signage that will direct them out onto Clara Dr. then onto Coogan Blvd. Commissioner Tabor was still concerned that people unfamiliar with the area will take the path of least resistance.

Commissioner Tabor made a motion to pass along the following comments to Planning and Zoning; that there is continued concern about the intersection of Village Farm Rd. at Coogan Blvd. similar to the Police Commissions comments the last time this item was before the Police Commission. Motion seconded by Commissioner O'Shaughnessy. Discussion: Chief Stewart recommends stating that there are no parking or safety issues. The only real concern is the left hand turn out of Village Farm Rd. onto Coogan Blvd., which has been addressed to a certain degree with the traffic island, removing vegetation and re-grading to help improve the site lines. Commissioner Tabor asked if fire trucks and other emergency responders can navigate the site to which Mr. Parent stated that he has passed those comments on to the architects. Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made an amended motion to pass along the following comments to Planning and Zoning; that the Police Commission has no concerns with parking or safety, however, there are continued concerns with the Village Farm Rd. and Coogan Blvd. intersection. Amended motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No further discussion all in favor, motion approved.

Chief Stewart explained to the Stonington High School students in attendance how engineers use math to figure out traffic flow, sight lines and other traffic study data.

4. Traffic

a. Request for "Hidden Driveway" Sign – Farmholme Road*VOTE NEEDED*

No one in attendance. Chief Stewart noted that there are a series of "Hidden Driveway" signs on Farmholme Rd. Commissioner Elmer is not convinced that a sign will make a difference.

Commissioner Tabor made a motion table this item until next meeting. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

b. Letter Re: "No Outlet" Sign Placement – North Broad Street *VOTE NEEDED*

Anthony Miceli, 18 Morgan Street, Pawcatuck

Mr. Miceli informed the Police Commission that he has built a rental house on the property at 22 Morgan Street. He has been having issues with pedestrian traffic cutting through this property from North Broad Street to connect to Morgan Street. This is a liability for him and also a nuisance to his tenant. He would like to construct a fence with an access gate along the rear of the property, however, there is a wooden barrier that will obstruct access to his gate. He was advised by Barbara McKrell to receive permission from the Police Commission to remove the wooden barrier. He plans on adding reflective tape to the fence to make it more visual to motorists on North Broad Street, especially at night.

Commissioner Elmer made a motion to a. install "No Outlet" Sign signs, location at the discretion of the Administration, and b. to authorize Public Works to remove the wooden barrier on North Broad Street. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

c. E-Mail Re: Traffic Investigation Report

Chief Stewart informed the Police Commission that the State of Connecticut will not be putting in a traffic light at the intersection of Route 184, Jeremy Hill Rd. and Taugwonk Rd. They will however be making a series of improvements in that area.

5. Old Business

a. E-Mail Re: Road Safety – Mechanic Street *TABLED FROM NOVEMBER MEETING – POSSIBLE VOTE*
Item tabled.

b. Cottrell Street Traffic – One Way & Parking Proposal *POSSIBLE VOTE*

Chairman Gourd stated:

"At last month's meeting this Commission passed several motions in response to concerns raised by the neighborhood bordered by Cottrell and Washington Streets. These included a request for CIP funding so the Town might install sidewalks on Washington Street to improve pedestrian safety. We also agreed to request \$25,000 in the CIP budget to co-sponsor with the Town of Groton a traffic study to address traffic and parking needs on either side of the Mystic River, and we agreed to ask the owner of property located at the intersection of Willow and Route 1 to cut back the vegetation on their fence to improve sight lines of drivers turning west onto Route 1.

Tonight's agenda item will address another concern raised by residents and business owners for years: that is the lack of parking in Downtown Mystic and the need to install instructional signage for visitors in the area.

There has been extensive public discussion especially over the last several meetings on the subject. The proposal to add additional parking on Cottrell and Washington Streets would provide relief in the near-term while work is done on a collaborative basis with the Town of Groton for a broader based solution.

At this time, I invite members of the public who have not previously spoken on the matter who have something new to say to be recognized and share their thoughts. I will then turn the deliberations over to the Commission and ask for a vote on the matter."

Joan Durant, 22 Jackson Ave., Mystic

Ms. Durant questioned the urgency to change Cottrell Street to one way before hearing the results of the pending traffic study. Chairman Gourd stated that the Police Commission has the opportunity to provide relief for parking now. It can be tried to see how it works. These changes will not be set in stone and if the vision is flawed, changes and revisions can be made. Chairman Gourd noted that it is also necessary to coordinate with Groton. Ms. Durant asked if the addition of twelve parking spaces will solve the parking problems. Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that it is a start. Chief Stewart also noted that there needs to be a comprehensive plan between the Town of Stonington and the Town of Groton. He further stated that there is some private parking that is currently underutilized. Ms. Durant asked if residents will be able to have parking permits, to which Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy responded that he is opposed to resident only parking on public roadways.

Mara Beckwith, Owner, Studio M, 29 Cottrell St.

Ms. Beckwith questioned whether her parking lot will be accessible if Cottrell St. becomes one way. She is concerned that people will bypass her business if they think they cannot access her lot or need to wait in traffic. Chairman Gourd noted that people will be able to go around and access her lot.

Bill Tamsky, Chairman, Mystic River Park Commission

Mr. Tamsky noted that the Chief gave an eloquent message to the students about traffic. He is surprised that the Chief and the Police Commission would make changes without traffic study data. He feels there is no hurry to make changes to Cottrell Street and they should wait until they receive the data from the traffic study.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy thinks this plan should be given a try. Commissioner Elmer concurs. Commissioner Tabor commented that he has heard a number of pros and cons about the change. The commonality with the comments that he has heard is the lack of parking. Parking is the principle issue and this plan allows for some additional parking.

Commissioner Gourd made a motion that on a provisional basis, Cottrell Street in Downtown Mystic be made one way headed south with the following stipulations: First, after two years the traffic flow and parking design will be reexamined by the Board of Police Commissioners taking into consideration traffic and accident data to determine if reversal or a revision is necessary. Second, the overall design of the revised traffic and parking plan shall be in general conformity with option #1A of the September 2019 Feasibility Study prepared by the Town of Stonington with input from Boundaries, LLC providing seven additional parking spaces on Cottrell Street and six additional spaces on Washington Street. Such design option would be modified in part to replace motorcycle parking on the north end of Cottrell Street with

fifteen-minute loading zone parking (from 7am to 5pm). The revised traffic pattern would also make Washington Street one way (eastbound) between Cottrell and Willow Streets. Third, authorize the Chief or his designee to work with the Highway Department and Chamber of Commerce to determine appropriate traffic and wayfinding signage. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy. Discussion: Commissioner Tabor commented that current parking time limits will remain the same. End Discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

1. Discussion on one-Way, Stanton Place, Mystic *POSSIBLE VOTE*

Chief Stewart informed the Police Commission that he just received a request from residents on Stanton Place requesting that if Cottrell Street is to be changed to one way, then Stanton Place should be one way from Cottrell Street to Willow Street. Since the changes to Cottrell Street will not begin until spring, Chief Stewart recommends that this is tabled until the Police Commissioners can go down to the area. Commissioner Tabor agreed to table this but he commented that Stanton Place is narrow with parking on both sides. If it becomes one way it may reduce the amount of traffic funneled down to and around the playground.

Chairman Gourd made a motion to table this item until next meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

6. Approval of Minutes from Thursday, November 14, 2019 Regular Meeting *VOTE NEEDED*

Commissioner Turner made a motion to approve the minutes for the Thursday, November 14, 2019 Regular Meeting as written. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

7. Report of the Chief of Police

a. Budget Report

According to Chief Stewart, everything is moving along and nothing stands out at this time.

b. Monthly Statistics

Chief Stewart noted that the number of medicals continue to go up. The dispatchers still field the calls but officers are no longer automatically dispatched to every medical call.

c. Alarm Report

d. Special Event Schedule

e. CIP Project Request Forms

According to Chief Stewart, these were included in the packet.

f. Operating Budget *VOTE NEEDED*

Chief Stewart recommends the Police Commission mirror the union contract's increase of 2.6% Cost of Living Allowance for non-union employees.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy asked if the Department will hire more reserve officers since they are down from five to three officers. Chief Stewart noted that they may have four reserve officers within the next year. Captain Olson commented that officers are retiring from the State Police so the Department may pick up another reserve officer.

There will be a new Network Engineer position for the Police Department. Chairman Gourd commented that this new position is definitely essential given all the new technologies in the Department.

Commissioner Tabor made a motion to accept the operating budget as proposed with the addition that non-union employees also receive a 2.6% Cost of Living Allowance. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

g. Pedestrian Safety Sign Permit Renewal

According to Chief Stewart, the use of pedestrian safety signs require a permit from the State. The permits were included in the Police Commissioners packet. The signs are used by the crossing guards and one is used and maintained by Mel's Creamery in Downtown Pawcatuck.

h. Radio Update

Chief Stewart noted that Norwich Police is able to talk with Stonington Police via their portables. He further stated that Norwich Police were able to capture our suspect and Stonington was able to communicate with them.

i. Major Cases Update

Chief Stewart stated that they are still working on this case and the Major Crimes will be processing the vehicle.

j. Change in Medical Response/Training Requirements

Chief Stewart informed the Police Commission that the Department is transitioning into a different form of medical training and will be matching up with what is necessary to meet State standards. Detective Howard will be addressing this Commission at next month's meeting. They are trying to find the optimal spot and balance that with the necessary level of training.

k. Resignation of Part Time Animal Control Officer Wescovich

Chief Stewart informed the Police Commission that ACO Wescovich has been with this Department just shy of ten years. She has accepted a position as State of CT ACO. Chief Stewart wishes her well.

Chief Stewart added that there are three officers that will be at the twenty-five-year mark and may be retiring soon. He stated they will be doing some hiring; however, the applicant numbers are down. There was some discussion and speculation as to why numbers are down.

Chief Stewart informed the Police Commission that the State of CT just put out a model policy for pursuits that the Department has to adopt before January 1, 2020. He has not reviewed this policy; however, he recommends the Police Commission adds this item to the agenda and approve this policy modification.

Chairman Gourd made a motion to add an item to the agenda, item **i.** under **Report of the Chief of Police, State of Connecticut Model Policy on Pursuits**. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

i. State of Connecticut Model Policy on Pursuits

There was some discussion about concerns with pursuits. Chief Stewart noted that the Department follows the State's policy now, however, they need to adopt the revisions to that policy. Chief Stewart

noted that he could implement the policy then have the Police Commissioners vote but usually the Police Commission votes first before a policy is implemented.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to approve the State of Connecticut's policy on pursuits to be implemented by January 1, 2020. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

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.

8. Consent Agenda

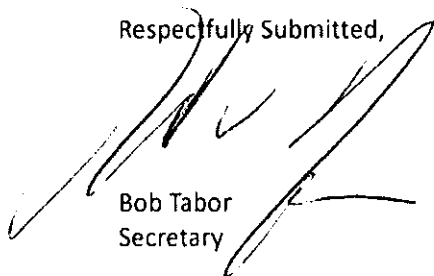
- a. E-Mail Re: US Attorney Press Release
- b. Letter Re: 2020 Kelley's Pace Fun Runs and Races
- c. Letters Re: Donation to Animal Control
- d. Letter Re: Blessing of the Fleet 5K Race
- e. Memo Re: Planning & Zoning Application: My Dog's Place
- f. Letter Re: Stonington Middle School Thanksgiving Celebration
- g. Letter Re: Foliage on Fence – Mystic Pet Shop
- h. Memo Re: Job Well Done

Commissioner Turner made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda. Motion seconded by Vice Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

8. Adjourn

At 6:45 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,



Bob Tabor
Secretary