

**STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING**

Thursday, May 13, 2021 at 5:00 P.M.

STONINGTON POLICE HEADQUARTERS

173 SOUTH BROAD STREET

PAWCATUCK, CT 06379

-AND-

VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING

Dial: 1-408-418-9388

Enter Access Code: 173 916 6725

-OR-

Streaming live on the Town of Stonington's Facebook page

MEETING MINUTES

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

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman O'Shaughnessy called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy informed everyone that the CDC has announced that fully vaccinated persons are not required to wear masks, indoors or outdoors, unless under certain circumstances.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy commented that this week is National Police Week. In-person celebrations for National Police Week in Washington D.C. have been moved to October 13-17th, 2021. Chairman O'Shaughnessy asked for a moment of silence to remember all fallen officers from state, local and federal departments. He thanked the men and women of the Stonington Police Department for their service.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy noted that the Stonington Police Department is investigating a fatal accident last month on Coogan Blvd. This accident is still under investigation; however, he stated that it did not occur at the intersection of Jerry Browne Rd and Coogan Blvd. and the intersection did not play a role in this accident.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy also noted that all Commissions in the Town of Stonington will return to in-person meetings next month. Meetings will be recorded and available to the public on the Town of Stonington website.

2. Remarks of the Public

June Strunk, Stonington Selectwoman, made a comment in honor of Police Week. She stated that every month there are always thank you letters to the officers. The Board of Selectmen would like to gather those letters, congratulations and thank you notes and compile them so they are accessible for the residents to view.

Dave Ryan, 8 Bay Street, Mystic

Mr. Ryan submitted a letter to the Police Commission stating some of his concerns he feels may be problematic with the Art Festival on Bay Street. Chairman O'Shaughnessy entertained his concerns at this time. Mr. Ryan noted that he would like to see a more definite plan from the Greater Mystic Chamber in regard to their proposed use of Bay Street. Chief Stewart commented that members of the Chamber are in attendance to present their plan.

3. New Business

a. Mystic Outdoor Art Festival *VOTE NEEDED*

Bruce Flax, Greater Mystic Chamber

Amanda Arling, Greater Mystic Chamber

Mr. Flax shared a map of the proposed changes to the Art Festival layout. They are proposing taking all the booths off the Groton side of Mystic to open that area up for parking. On the Stonington side, there will be no booths along Route 1 due to the safety issues. The route will be Cottrell Street, Holmes Street, Bay Street and go into the Mystic Seaport. The Chamber has spoken with Peter Armstrong, President of the Mystic Seaport Museum, and Mr. Flax noted that Mr. Armstrong is very receptive to bringing this event into the Seaport. They will also be able to utilize the Seaport parking lots.

Ms. Arling commented that this is the 63rd year for this event. They have taken the feedback from the community, the artists, shop and business owners and the police in order to make this a safer, community focused event. The booths have historically been on Cottrell Street and Holmes Street. The plan should reduce traffic congestion and make it safer for pedestrians. There are no concrete plans to put booths all along Bay Street. The goal is for there to be a minimal impact on Bay Street. According to Ms. Arling, they want a natural flow to connect the Art Festival to the Seaport. Mr. Flax noted that they have visited the residents on Bay Street and some residents have voiced their concerns of people accessing the docks, concerns with emergency vehicles accessing the neighborhood, etc. Mr. Flax concurred with Ms. Arling that there are no intentions of lining Bay Street with booths. Mr. Flax is eager to get input on the layout from both the Police and Fire Departments. Mr. Flax is very open to suggestions and wants to work with everyone. Mr. Flax suggested possibly closing the road to traffic during the Art Festival hours and having parking available to residents elsewhere.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy informed Mr. Flax that he received a letter from Bay Street resident Mr. Ryan. He read the letter to the Police Commission. It discussed that residents were informed of the following changes to the Art Festival, to include Bay Street as part of the route. Such proposed changes are of great concern to the residents. The letter set forth the following stipulations: that Bay Street be used for foot traffic only, with no public parking. Barriers be placed on Isham Street, Oak Street and Holmes Street allowing vehicle access to Bay Street for residents only. Prohibit booths, food concessions and vendors of any kind along Bay Street. Requiring two police officers to patrol the street, on foot, to maintain proper decorum and protect private property and docks. Strategically placed trash barrels that are emptied regularly. This letter was signed by eight residents on Bay Street.

Vice Chairman Tabor stated that he understands why the residents are concerned. Ms. Arling noted that they have historically offered police escorts for residents to access their homes along the route. She stated that it would be easy to do this on Bay Street. Ms. Arling stated that the Chamber simply wants people to be aware that the Art Festival extends from the Seaport to Cottrell Street. Ms. Arling does not think that it would be difficult to meet all the stipulations that Mr. Ryan spelled out in his letter. Mr. Ryan stated that he feels residents would be more susceptible to the plan if they know exactly what will

happen. Ms. Arling asked if she could get a copy of the letter to be able to put a more concrete proposal forward. Vice Chairman Tabor asked if it would put the Chamber at a disadvantage if this Commission has them come back next month after the Chamber meets with the residents of Bay street to iron out these details so the Commissioners would have a better view of the layout next month. Ms. Arling stated that, if necessary, it could wait for a vote next meeting. Chief Stewart recommended trying to meet in the middle since, from a planning point of view, the Chamber had to jump through a lot of hoops to get to this point. Both Groton and Stonington Police are extremely happy with the concept of removing booths from Route 1 and they are in favor of the new layout. Chief Stewart, in part, agrees to everything presented except for the Bay Street portion, which can be worked out prior to the event. The concept is a win for everyone involved. Chairman O'Shaughnessy concurred, not only does the concept help with traffic flow on Route 1 but it also helps with manpower and safety.

Commissioner Bates made a motion to approve the overall concept of the 2021 Mystic Outdoor Art Festival plan that has been submitted, with the contingency that they work out issues with the Bay Street residents, subject to the requirements the Administration may deem necessary, and upon proof of proper insurance. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. Discussion: Commissioner Elmer asked if he is correct in stating that the only issue with the Art Festival is Bay Street, to which Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that he is correct. Commissioner Turner stated that he knows the challenges to organizing the Art Festival and he does not see anything unsurmountable in the Bay Street resident's request. He asked how receptive have artists been to the idea of moving their booths, to which Ms. Arling answered that they have not tackled that issue yet. Chief Stewart asked about live entertainment aspects of the Art Festival to which Mr. Flax answered that there will be a stage inside the Seaport for performing arts and orchestra and there are currently no plans for any live pop rock or country music. No further discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

b. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Application: 29 Old Stonington Road, Stonington
COMMENTS NEEDED

Sergio Cherenzia, Cherenzia & Associates, Ltd.
George Secchiaroli, Applicant & Owner of the Papas Group, Inc.

Mr. Cherenzia shared a map of the site with the Police Commission. The site is located at 29 Old Stonington Rd., the old Sailor Ed property, and he detailed the abutting properties. Mr. Cherenzia's client proposes to renovate the structure and add outdoor vending. He noted that restaurants with outdoor vending are allowed under Special Use Permits. The use of this property has been established as a restaurant, however, adding the outdoor vending requires the special use permit. Mr. Cherenzia displayed the proposed layout of the property. His client intends to clean up the property and noted that the building will not be expanded at all. The parking lot needs to be resealed. According to Mr. Cherenzia, parking spaces for each outdoor vendor has limited them to a total of six outdoor vendors, six spaces plus one for the vendor. The remaining parking is for the restaurant. They are proposing one-hundred seats in the restaurant. Mr. Cherenzia displayed an aerial of the current parking situation. They will be changing the parking layout for a better flow and fixing the existing curbing. Mr. Cherenzia noted that seventy-four spaces are required for the intended use and they will be providing seventy-eight. Mr. Cherenzia also commented on the one-way section of Old Stonington Rd. in regard to traffic flow. He stated that parking is allowed on the roadway on one side of the road and in front of this property. Mr. Cherenzia reiterated that his client will be providing adequate parking for the proposed use. They will be meeting with Quiambaug Fire Department and he hopes to be successful in obtaining the permit for outdoor vending.

Commissioner Turner asked if there is a plan for monitoring the parking situation with overflow from other surrounding businesses? Mr. Cherenzia noted they could put up signage. Vice Chairman Tabor asked if having the vendors and the one-hundred seat restaurant open, if the onsite parking is sustainable, to which Mr. Cherenzia stated that they can accommodate both uses. Vice Chairman Tabor asked what would happen if they decide to increase the seating, to which Mr. Cherenzia stated that they would have to go back to Planning and Zoning. The restaurant hours of operation are 11am-11pm. Outdoor vendors hours would be from 9am-6pm (or until sundown). Mr. Cherenzia noted that possibly during the week this site could have extra parking available since they only plan on having outdoor vendors on weekends. Commissioner Bates spoke in favor of this proposal and she noted that it is good to have a new use for a vacant property. She also appreciates that they will have adequate parking.

Chief Stewart noted that the properties on Old Stonington Rd. need to be able to manage their parking issues. Chief Stewart further noted that if they work together, it can be very successful. He commented that there is a new neighborhood off of Old Stonington Rd. that is not used to having an operating restaurant in that space, and he asked them to be mindful and also to always keep in mind that the Fire Department needs to be able to navigate Old Stonington Rd. Chief Stewart stated that he has no issues with outdoor vending. Chairman O'Shaughnessy commented that there is always the possibility that the Police Commission will need to revisit parking on Old Stonington Rd. Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that, in his opinion, ten employees is a low number for a one-hundred seat restaurant.

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: St. Patrick's Church, Mystic *COMMENTS NEEDED*

Sergio Cherenzia, Cherenzia & Associates, Ltd.

Mr. Cherenzia stated that plans have been submitted by St. Patrick's Church for their site located at 31 and 33-35 East Main St. The application is for a raze and rebuild of the parish center which will connect to the church. There are no proposed changes to the parking lot or the Shamrock House. Mr. Cherenzia discussed the abutting properties. He noted that the Parish Center was constructed in 1908 and is in need of improvement. The proposal is to rebuild the structure in the same foot print. The front of the building is being extended out to line up with the front of the Church. The addition in front will create ADA accessibility and continuity between the structures. Improvements of the walkways have been proposed along with continuity to the Shamrock House. He further explained the layout, hard and softscapes.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy asked what impact the construction will have on East Main St.? Mr. Cherenzia stated that they have not got to that point yet, however, he is assuming it will all be contained in the parking lot. Vice Chairman Tabor asked about the property listing report to which Mr. Cherenzia stated that they will be merging the Shamrock House property with the Church lot. Chief Stewart sees no issues with the proposal, however, he commented that they keep an eye on Route 1 during the construction phase. Commissioner Turner asked about the proposed exterior of the Parish Center to which Mr. Cherenzia stated that there will be shingle siding that will match the Church shingles.

Commissioner Bates 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.

d. Planning & Zoning Application: Mark J. Densmore Living Trust *COMMENTS NEEDED*

Art Hayward, Hayward Holbrook, representing Mark J. Densmore Living Trust

According to Mr. Hayward, they are proposing an office building with office space on the first floor and two residences on the second floor. All parking will be contained on site and they will be using the existing driveway. The working hours in the office space are Monday to Friday. This proposal is not a high traffic generator. Chairman O'Shaughnessy noted there is shared parking currently in that area and he encourages continuing to share parking after hours.

Commissioner Turner 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, however, the Police Commission may need to revisit Old Stonington Rd. in the future depending on what kind of traffic is generated. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Tabor. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

4. Old Business

a. Request for Weekend Flea Market & Farm – 29 Old Stonington Road *TABLED FROM APRIL MEETING*

See above under 3. New Business **b. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Application: 29 Old Stonington Road, Stonington *COMMENTS NEEDED***

5. Traffic

a. Letter Re: Horizontal Alignment Signing Project

FYI for the Police Commission per Chief Stewart.

b. Letter from Citizen on Traffic

Chief Stewart noted that he received a letter from N d'Estang in regard to increased traffic and one from Bill Mitchell in regard to bike lanes on Route 1.

Chief Stewart recommended the Police Commission add "No Outlet" sign on Riverbend Dr. to the agenda. They have seen an increase in traffic with people thinking they can cross over into Groton via Riverbend Dr.

Commissioner Bates made a motion to add the request for a "No Outlet" sign on Riverbend Dr. to the agenda. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Tabor. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

Vice Chairman Tabor made a motion to approve placing a "No Outlet" sign as requested on Riverbend Dr. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

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

Commissioner Elmer made a motion to approve the minutes for the Thursday, April 8, 2021 Regular Meeting as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

7. Report of the Chief of Police

a. Budget Report

According to Chief Stewart, we are 82.7% through the fiscal year and have used 73.2%. The Department is under budget and the bottom line is fiscally healthy.

b. Monthly Statistics

Chief Stewart noted that things are picking up. There has been an increase in suspicious vehicles, pistol permit applications (105 applications so far this year), animal control calls, and accidents including a fatal accident. The Department continues to be busy.

c. Alarm Report

1. Tractor Supply Alarm *POSSIBLE ACTION ITEM*

There have been a number of false alarms at this location. Chief Stewart suggests tabling this item one month to allow them time to respond to the past due notice.

Tabled.

d. Special Events Schedule

e. SBA Lease Assignment and Assumption Agreement Letter

According to Chief Stewart, this is an FYI in regard to equipment on the towers.

f. Hiring Update

Chief Stewart stated that they have given three conditional offers, one did not make it, so they filled it with next person on the list. They are going through the last part of the overall background checks. They should start at the Academy on June 4th. A swearing in ceremony will be held around June 1st. A total of four total CSO's have been hired.

g. Dates Needed for Police Officer Interviews

Chief Stewart stated that there are still two openings and there are lateral officers that need to be interviewed. The Police Commission decided to hold these interviews Tue. May 18th at 5:30 p.m.

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

8. Consent Agenda

a. Letter Re: St. Michael School Road Race & Fun Walk

b. Memo Re: Planning & Zoning Application

c. Memo Re: Christopher High Resignation & Reserve Status

d. Memo Re: Good Job – Officer Cullen

e. E-Mail Re: Liberty Crossing Certificate

f. Letter Re: Crossing Guard Tom McCoy Retirement

g. Letter Re: Donation to Animal Control

Officer Cullen and Detective Sergeant Morrison assisted in the birth of a child on Pequot Trail.

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

9. Executive Session

a. Sergeant Candidates Interview

At 6:35 p.m., Commissioner Bates made a motion to enter into the executive session to interview candidates for the position of Sergeant. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Tabor, all in favor, motion approved.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy announced that the Board of Police Commissioners have come out of Executive Session.

10. Vote on Possible New Sergeant Promotion

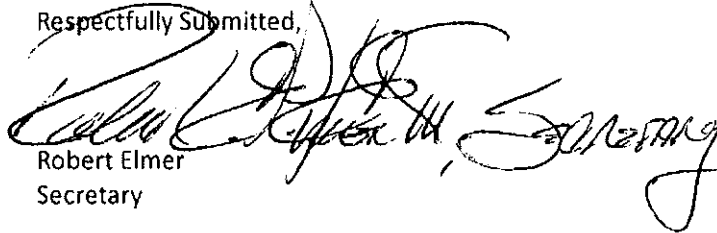
Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that, after interviewing very qualified candidates, the Board of Police Commissioners have made a decision on their promotion of Sergeant.

Commissioner Bates made a motion to promote Matt Capalbo to the Sergeant position. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

11. Adjourn

Commissioner Bates made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Turner all in favor, motion approved. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert Elmer
Secretary