

**STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, April 13, 2017
5:00 P.M AT THE STONINGTON POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Chairman Harry Holt & Vice Chairman Raymond Trebisacci
Commissioners Henri Gourd & Robert O'Shaughnessy
Chief Darren Stewart & Captain Todd Olson

Absent: Commissioner Bob Tabor

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

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

2. Remarks of the Public

None

3. New Business

a. Downtown Pawcatuck Parking

James Lathrop, Owner of Best Energy & Owner 29 West Broad Street
Amanda Nall, Owner Bouges Alley, 11 West Broad Street
Melanie Goggin, Owner Mel's Creamery, 37 West Broad Street
Judd Rosen, Vice President Riverwalk Condominiums, Coggswell Street
Justin Smith, Owner Legends Smoke Shop, 38 West Broad Street
Cat Thibodeau, Owner Modern Barber & Shave, 36 West Broad Street

Mr. Lathrop is an advocate for the growth of Downtown Pawcatuck. His goals are to increase the connection with summer business and downtown, make Downtown Pawcatuck a more attractive destination and increase the population of residents and businesses within walking distance to downtown. Mr. Lathrop also gave a brief overview of his plans to bring in Allied Consulting and Engineering to use the upper floors of his building at 29 West Broad Street as office space. This will bring in 5-6 employees who will patronize the downtown businesses, however he has concerns with parking.

Mr. Lathrop is requesting a parking change. He was met with resistance when he reached out to other business owners with his proposed parking change. Mr. Lathrop is asking for a change to the signage in front of 34 West Broad Street. Most of the parking is 1-2 hours and not all day. This signage was put in 9-10 years ago and he feels that Downtown Pawcatuck has changed since then. He is asking to change the 5 spaces from 34 West Broad Street to Donahue Park to read 8a.m. – 6p.m. Monday to Friday which will allow for on street parking for non-retail purposes. This will expand the use of these spaces which, when Mr. Lathrop conducted his own survey, saw only a 5% use of those spaces. At this time, Mr. Lathrop has no alternative to buy parking spaces on private property or to buy land for this purpose.

Ms. Nall addressed the Commission to express her disagreement to making changes to the existing on-street parking. In 2009 during the Streetscape Project, the downtown business owners worked very hard to make the parking what it is currently. The local businesses support one another. She feels that this plan only benefits Mr. Lathrop. A study of the on-street parking needs to be done during the summer and also on weekends to show an actual picture of the current usage of those spaces. It is necessary to have short term times since most people who use the on-street spaces are in and out of the current business in the area.

Ms. Goggin also has concerns with increasing the parking time limits. The businesses rely on each other. There are not many spaces on the Pawcatuck side and short term parking spaces are a must. People driving from Connecticut into Westerly will not turn around and come back if they cannot find a space. If five spaces are taken away there will be less parking for customers. The business owners have been working together to turn things around and she does not want to see that effort go in the opposite direction. The customer's convenience far outweighs parking availability for herself or her employees. The 8 a.m. parking spaces guarantees parking for specific people since other businesses open later. Ms. Goggin feels that taking away parking is not going to help the businesses.

Mr. Rosen attended this meeting to listen to the comments from the business owners in attendance. He explained the situation of private parking on Coggswell St. They issue parking stickers to the 29 condo owners who register to park in those spaces. There are 50 spaces in the lot. He encourages people to park in the lot. The spaces on the street should be available to the people of Pawcatuck and any customers patronizing the businesses. Mr. Rosen also provided the Commissioners with photos of the area. He further stated that if cars are parked in the spaces in question all day the sightlines are greatly impaired. There are also issues with sightlines at the crosswalk. Mr. Rosen offered Mr. Lathrop spaces in his lot for a reasonable fee and parking agreement.

Mr. Nall, Ms. Nall's father, shared that he feels that there are plenty of parking spaces in the Donahue Park area and also that business owners and employees should not utilize the parking on the street, it should be for customers.

Mr. Smith noted that he is at his business from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Everyday. Just this past Monday he had over 100 customers. The spaces in question are really the only convenient spaces to use to stop into his business. People are in and out all day and if those spaces are occupied all day he will lose customers.

Ms. Thibodeau also has customers that are in and out all day long. She feels that they need to keep the cars moving in and out of those spaces. A parking study needs to be done on busy days, for instance on the weekends and in the summer.

Mr. Lathrop addressed the Commission again. Changing the spots to Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. does not specifically earmark those spaces for his own use. Anyone would be able to park there. He feels that issuing parking passes may be a solution.

Chairman Holt noted that the Commission wants to see the area developed but is happiest when business owners solve these types of problems amongst themselves. Commissioner O'Shaughnessy believes that on street parking should be for public access. Commissioner Gourd's concern is about making public policy to help private business owners. It is incumbent upon owners and employees to park further away so that customers get the prime spaces. Commissioner Gourd would be happy to see a private solution to this problem. Vice Chairman Trebisacci brought up the fact that Mr. Lathrop was planning on buying the building that was recently destroyed in a fire. Parking would have been in the lot adjacent to the building so maybe it still could be used for

the 29 West Broad Street location. He at one time was a business owner in Downtown Westerly and at first, he had a hard time with not being able to park in front of his business but in time realized that the spaces should be for the customers. Vice Chairman Trebisacci appreciates Mr. Rosen's offer. He feels that if those spaces are changed to 8-hour parking and if other people take those spaces there will be a parking war. There will be no guarantee that those spaces will be available for one specific business.

Chairman Holt noted that clearly there needs to be more analysis on the current parking. Chief Stewart also noted that not everyone's take on the issue has been considered. Jason Vincent and the Chamber of Commerce should also be consulted.

Vice Chairman Trebisacci made a motion to table this item to next month in order to give the Commission and the Chief time for further discussion. Motion seconded by Commissioner O'Shaughnessy. All in favor, motion approved.

b. E-Mail Re: Speeding – North Main Street

Shrevie Shepard, Resident 590 North Main Street
Alex Moore, Resident 617 North Main Street
Amanda Lindberg, Resident 560 North Main Street
Breck Perkins, Resident 240 North Main Street
Phil Darrell, Resident 580 North Main Street
Ruth Saunders, Resident 435 North Main Street
Becky Right, Resident 348 North Main Street
Stuart Schwartzenstein, Resident 2 Summit Street

Ms. Shepard as well as her neighbors are worried about speeding and traffic on North Main Street. They are worried about pedestrians, children and cyclists on this road. They came up with some strategies that they forwarded to Chief Stewart. One idea is for electronic speed monitors to be installed like those on the viaduct. Ms. Shepard noted that they have seen a lot of police presence recently.

Chief Stewart noted that North Main Street is a feeder road. The best way to stop speeders is police presence or speed signs. He also pointed out that many people are surprised to find out that people are not travelling as fast as the residents think. In about 50 stops on North Main Street, the fastest speed was 53mph. The trouble with speed signs are that they need to be placed near residences since they are prone to be vandalized. There was some discussion about installing speed signs and Chief Stewart addressed the strategies that the neighbors submitted to him.

Ms. Moore noted that the recent police presence has helped. Ms. Lindberg stated that people are not pressing her to drive faster now there have been police in the area. Mr. Perkins mentioned that there are also problems with large trucks. He would also like to see more police presence on the section of North Main Street south of Route 1. Mr. Darrell informed the Commission that even crossing the street to get the mail is dangerous. He suggests additional signage, possibly "radar enforced" signs. Chief Stewart suggested putting "Drive Like Your Kid Lives Here" signs but people get immune to most signage. Chief Stewart also said that the state traffic commission sets the speed so it cannot be lowered without going to them and there is always the possibility that they could raise the speed limit.

Ms. Saunders thanked the police for increased patrols and she would like to see it continue into the summer. She suggested possibly mentioning the increase in police presence on North Main Street in the paper or on Facebook.

Ms. Right would love her children to have the freedom to use their bicycles on the road but she is afraid they will be hit. She would like to see more signs as well. Chief Stewart noted that because North Main Street is a scenic road they would have to have Planning and Zoning approval to install signs. He suggested that the neighbors elect a spokesperson to contact him with information about sign placement and any concerns.

Mr. Schwartzstein informed the Commission that reflectors on poles and trees are useful in helping prevent accidents and that reflectors embedded in the roadways can be resistant to snow plows. He feels the Commission should give more consideration to reflectors. He also spoke with Barbara McKrell who said there may be some money in the budget for reflectors on the poles and trees.

No Action.

c. Planning & Zoning Text & Map Amendment Application – Heritage Mill Zoning District *COMMENTS NEEDED*

Chief Stewart reminded the Commission of the history with the Velvet Mill and its current popularity. This project will be very similar to the Velvet Mill. He stated that an eye needs to be kept on parking. They need to ensure adequate parking. Once the lot is full, they will need a parking plan.

Vice Chairman Trebisacci noted that presently the plan from Planning and Zoning does not have a traffic effect. If there is an increase in business, there will be an increase in traffic which will need to be addressed by the Commission at that time.

Currently, there is no traffic issue.

d. Mystic Outdoor Art Festival *VOTE NEEDED*

According to Chief Stewart nothing has been presented about this even at this time.

Vice Chairman Trebisacci made a motion to table this item. Motion seconded by Commissioner Gourd. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

e. St. Michael School 5K Road Race & 1 Mile Fun Walk *VOTE NEEDED*

Linda Cunningham, St. Michael School 5K Race Coordinator

Ms. Cunningham informed the Commission that this is the 8th year for the 5K Road Race and 1 Mile Fun Walk. The race has run smoothly in the past. There are no changes, it will be the same course and they expect 125 participants.

Vice Chairman Trebisacci made a motion to approve the 8th Annual St. Michael School 5K Road Race & 1 Mile Fun Walk event held on October 14th as presented upon proof of proper insurance and subject to the requirements the administration and the Chief may deem necessary. Motion seconded by Commissioner O'Shaughnessy. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

f. Mystic YMCA Triathlon *VOTE NEEDED*

Tanner Evak, Ocean Community YMCA

Mr. Evak informed the Commission that there was a slight change to the course. This was suggested by Officer Kerry Manley. Captain Olson noted that the area near Aquarion Water Company was dangerous for crossing

cyclists. The changes made eliminate the two-way traffic cross. The race has run smoothly in the past and the changes that were made address safety and efficiency.

Commissioner O'Shaughnessy made a motion to approve the 32nd Mystic YMCA Triathlon event held on June 4th as well as the changes to the previous course as presented upon proof of proper insurance and subject to the requirements the administration and the Chief may deem necessary. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Trebisacci. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Chief Stewart asked that Mr. Evak do a mailer or an email to notify the neighbors of the current course. Captain Olson noted that the YMCA covers the costs for an increase in officers.

g. Pequot Cyclists Time Trials *VOTE NEEDED*

David Reed, Pequot Cyclists Time Trials Chairman

Mr. Reed informed the Commission that the route is the same as it has been in the past, Wheeler Rd. to Pequot Trail to Al Harvey Rd. to Route 184 and back to Wheeler Rd. Chief Stewart stated that if any issues arise they are always quickly addressed and the time trials run really well. Commissioner O'Shaughnessy asked if signage is used to which Mr. Reed replied that signage is placed on local roads, not on state roads. Commissioner Gourd asked if police presence is required. Police presence is not required.

Commissioner Gourd made a motion to approve the Pequot Cyclists Time Trials series held on Thursdays at 6 p.m. from June 1st to August 24th as presented upon proof of proper insurance and subject to the requirements the administration and the Chief may deem necessary. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Trebisacci. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

h. Brain Injury Alliance Tour of Lights for Thought Event *VOTE NEEDED*

No representative for this event was present at this meeting. According to Chief Stewart, the event has been held in the past and he recommends it is approved.

Vice Chairman Trebisacci made a motion to approve the 8th Annual Brain Injury Alliance Tour of Lights for Thought event held on May 13th as presented upon proof of proper insurance and subject to the requirements the administration and the Chief may deem necessary. Motion seconded by Commissioner O'Shaughnessy. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

4. Old Business

a. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Application UPDATED – Sea Research Foundation *FYI*

Paul Biscuti, Loureiro, Senior Project Manager

Mr. Biscuti informed the Commission that minor revisions were made to the site plan which note a change to architectural details. There is no change to the use or size of the project. Additional drainage and two handicapped spaces were added. The building still will have an 11,000 sqft footprint. The 18,000 sqft total accounts for the mezzanine and the second floor. There was also no change to the traffic study.

The Board of Police Commissioners referred back to their previous comments submitted to Planning and Zoning on this item as recorded on the March 9, 2017 Police Commission Meeting Minutes.

5. Traffic

a. Letter Re: Request for Stop Signs – Stony Brook Road *VOTE NEEDED*

John Flaherty & Marianne Voss, Residents 106 Stony Brook Road

Mr. Flaherty gave the Commission some insight on the concerns he, his wife and his neighbors have with traffic and speeding on Stony Brook Road. He gave the Chief a petition for enforcement that was signed by the residents on Stony Brook Road. This is a narrow road with curves. There are also young children in the area and it is hard to see the bus stops especially when there is foliage on the trees. They have placed five "Drive like Your Kids Live Here" signs up and three have been taken. He feels people are traveling over the 25mph speed limit and that there has been an increase in traffic on the road. He is asking the Commission to consider stop signs to help alleviate some of the issues.

Chief Stewart noted that stop signs are not used to curb speed. They are only used at intersections. It may be possible to put in reflective bus signs like those on Pequot Trail but it will need Planning and Zoning approval since this is a scenic road. It may also be possible to attach "Drive like Your Kid Lives Here" signs on the existing speed limit signs. The road can also be put on the "hot list" for police patrols. Chief Stewart asked if they could give him times that speeding occurs and if there are any specific vehicles that tend to speed down that road.

No action.

b. Letter Re: Traffic Concerns – Haley Street, Mystic *VOTE NEEDED*

William LaValley, Resident 2 Haley Street

Mr. LaValley informed the Commission that Haley Street is being used by delivery trucks and also as a speedway for cars bypassing traffic on Route 1. The street is also in terrible repair. Mr. LaValley is concerned for the children that live on this street. The street is also heavily used by pedestrians. He would like to see the trucks go down Cottrell Street and then onto Washington Street to reach Route 1. It is Mr. LaValley's suggestion that the street be a one-way street westbound.

Chief Stewart noted that DOT determines truck restrictions. There is a possibility of changing the street to be one-way. There is already parking restricted to one side of the street. Chief Stewart stated that input is needed from the neighbors and businesses in the area. Chairman Holt asked that the neighbors and business owners are notified. Vice Chairman Trebisacci stated that a more formalized proposal is necessary. The Commission will have to look at whether or not this is viable and what other residents and business owners think. Captain Olson also stated that the street may need to be used as a two-way street during events. The Fire Department will also have to be contacted about the proposed one-way.

Chairman Holt tabled this item to next month's meeting.

c. E-Mail: DOT Re: Driveway

Chief Stewart informed the Commission that the house next to the Henny Penny in Mystic has been torn down. No site plans have been delivered yet but the upcoming project will create space for new businesses and condos at that location. The building will utilize the existing driveway at Henny Penney and add a driveway exiting onto Washington Street.

d. E-Mail Re: Route 24 Anguilla Bridge Project

According to Chief Stewart, this project will run until November 25, 2018. They plan to take into consideration the Sergio Franchi Event. During construction, they will install a traffic signal and a single lane of travel will be open at all times. During this time period, we will see an increase in traffic on Route 2.

e. E-Mail Re: Wayfinding Sign

Chief Stewart stated that the wayfinding sign, similar to the one in Downtown Mystic, will be placed near the police parking spot in front of the Bess Eaton in Downtown Pawcatuck. This project is being done by the Chamber of Commerce. Chief Stewart recommends this item is approved when it is presented to the Commission.

6. Approval of Minutes from Thursday, March 9, 2017 Regular Meeting *VOTE NEEDED*

Vice Chairman Trebisacci made a motion to approve the minutes for the March 9, 2017 regular meeting as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Gourd. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

7. Report of the Chief of Police

a. Budget Report

Chief Stewart informed the Commission there are three budget line items that have overages. The first is the Building Maintenance account due to the new air conditioning unit, the second is the Maintenance/Operations of Radios and the third is the Outfitting of New Officers. The bottom line is looking good, however, Chief Stewart wanted to make the Board of Police Commissioners and the Board of Finance aware of these expenditures.

There will be an added expense in the Maintenance line item due to the fact that there was flooding in the basement of the building because the sump pump failed. Gun Electric responded and temporarily fixed the old pump until a new one can be installed. There was no equipment damage but a new pump will cost between \$2,500-\$5,000. They will also add a system that will cause a light to come on outside the building if the pump fails.

Chief Stewart stated that we are 71.5% through the fiscal year and have used 67.2% making the Department 4.7% ahead on the budget.

b. Monthly Report

c. Alarm Report

d. Special Event Schedule

e. E-Mail Re: Work at ACO Facility *FYI*

Chief Stewart stated that there was an upgrade to the electrical service that feeds the landfill.

f. Annual Training Report

Lieutenant Peckham's Annual Training Report was also included in the Police Commissioner's packet. Commissioner Gourd referenced the Job Well Done memo regarding Officer Saunders and Sergeant Ritacco. He was very impressed with the level of training the officers have and their great work in deescalating a situation. Chief Stewart noted this was a result of the CIT, Crisis Intervention Training.

g. Service Station Equipment Bid Waiver Request *VOTE NEEDED*

According to Captain Olson, \$16,000 was put in the budget last year to replace the gas pump. The system keeps track of the fuel usage, how much fuel each car uses and manages the fuel distribution. The existing pedestal is rotting away. Service Station Equipment manages the Town Highway's pumps as well. Instead of going out to bid the Department requests a bid waiver.

Commissioner Gourd made a motion to accept the Service Station Equipment Bid Waiver. Motion seconded by Commissioner O'Shaughnessy. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

h. E-Mail Re: Schedule for Budget Town Meeting and Referendum *FYI*

The meeting is next week, Wednesday April 19th.

i. Records Disposal Authorization *VOTE NEEDED*

The physical disposal of old records, set by state statute, needs to be submitted to the First Selectman then signed off by the State Librarian before disposal.

Commissioner O'Shaughnessy made a motion to forward the Records Disposal Authorization Form, as submitted by Lieutenant Peckham on April 12, 2017, to the Office of the First Selectman with the Police Commission's recommendation to have it signed and sent to the State of Connecticut Librarian for approval. Motion seconded by Commissioner Gourd. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

j. Memo Re: Water Damage Basement of Police Department

This item was mentioned briefly under Agenda item 7.a. Budget Report. Chief Stewart further stated that there was some damage to the carpet in the men's locker room, the women's locker room and the fitness room as well as damage to the tile floor in the maintenance room, the computer room and the ACO's office.

k. Letter Re: Probationary Officer James Gilman

This letter was submitted to the Commission as an FYI.

Chief Stewart stated that Ryan Rodgers is now on FTO, Nicholas Long has started at the Academy, Route 1 paving is starting Monday April 17th, there will be electrical work starting on Route 27 under the Route 95 overpass, and the new 911 system is up and running. He also mentioned that every other month Mr. LaSaracina should report his progress. Chief Stewart further stated that one camera was down at Donahue Park, the CSO hiring applications close tomorrow, April 14th and they are starting the interviews for part time dispatchers. Chief Stewart thanked Captain Olson for doing an excellent job while the Chief was away on vacation. Captain Olson has been with the Department for 20 years.

Commissioner Gourd made a motion to accept the Report of the Chief of Police. Motion seconded by Commissioner O'Shaughnessy. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

8. Consent Agenda


- a. **Memo Re: Thank You – Officer Palmer**
- b. **E-Mail Re: Improvements at Mystic Aquarium**
- c. **Letters & Highway Use Permit Re: Good Friday Walk**
- d. **Memo Re: Mutual Aid Agreements**
- e. **Letter Re: Walk with Me 2017**
- f. **Letter Re: Donahue Race**
- g. **Letter Re: Food Truck Rally**
- h. **Letter Re: BAM Event Walk the Walls**
- i. **Beautification Committee Action Plan**
- j. **POSTC Trainee Performance Report**
- k. **Letter from IMC**
- l. **Memo Re: Job Well Done – Officer Saunders & Sergeant Ritacco**
- m. **Letter Re: Our Lady of Fatima Processions**

Vice Chairman Trebisacci made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda. Motion seconded by Commissioner Gourd. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

9. Adjourn

At 7:32 p.m., Commissioner O'Shaughnessy made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Vice Chairman Trebisacci, all in favor, motion approved. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Henri N. Gourd
Secretary