

## TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT

### FARMINGTON CANAL COMMISSION

The Farmington Canal Commission, Town of Hamden, held a Public Information Session in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 6, 2010 to provide information to the public on the construction of a tunnel under Skiff Street.

Commissioners in Attendance: Bill Horowitz, Jennifer Cutrali, Malachi Blandon, Peter Haller, David Schaefer, Barbara Gigliotti, Johanna Becker

Commissioners Absent: Steve Humes, Michael Johnson

Others in Attendance: Bill Davies, Farmington Canal Rails to  
Trails Association  
Tom Balskus, Milone & MacBroom  
Dan Kops, Assistant Town Planner  
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk

Members of Public Present: Jerry Raccio, Property Owner

Mr. Balskus presented drawings, described the tunnel project for the public and commissioners and pointed out the location of the proposed tunnel. A box culvert will connect the north side of the trail to the south side of trail under Skiff Street. Mr. Balskus gave some history of the plans for this section of the trail and said that the federal government gave the Town permission to use the funds left from Phase III for this project. A 10' by 14' box culvert will be installed. Alternate 1 is sidewalk improvements to the bridge over the Wilbur Cross Parkway. Lights and security cameras are proposed inside the tunnel.

Skiff Street will be closed for a short duration to install the box culvert. Detours have been worked out both north and south bound. The northbound detour will send traffic along Dixwell Avenue to Whitney Avenue to a right onto Skiff, a distance of approximately two miles. The southbound detour will send traffic south on Dixwell to Connolly Parkway, to Thornton Street to Whitney Avenue, left on Whitney, a distance of approximately 1.7 miles.

There will be access to all businesses on Skiff Street during construction.

It is anticipated that the road will be closed 1–2 weeks. Mr. Balskus prefers a two week closing to encourage better bids. In a similar project on Route 15, the contractors opened highway and installed a culvert in two weekends. Utilities will be temporarily supported. A water main, gas and electric lines will be located above the box culvert.

The existing easement for the trail has to be modified where the work is being done, and a second easement is required on the south side. A small drainage extension will go under the trail and into the rip rap channel.

Mr. Balskus also showed a drawing of the concrete sidewalk over the bridge, providing a continuous sidewalk on both sides of Skiff Street. This would be added as an alternate. The proposal is for a 5' wide sidewalk. The estimated cost of this project is \$1.2 million all inclusive. This is a federally funded project. Market conditions are favorable for bids.

Mr. Balskus hopes to have all comments back from the CT Department of Transportation by the end of May. All permits must be in place before we go out to bid. Inland Wetland Commission approval and a Special Permit from Planning and Zoning are required. Planning and Zoning will hold a public hearing on the proposal. Mr. Kops said this will be handled as a major amendment of the existing Special Permit.

We hope to be ready to go out to bid in June. Mr. Schaefer mentioned that Phase III required approval from Inland Wetlands and there were no concerns. Mr. Balskus said actual construction costs, a 10% contingency, 20–25% for incidentals, testing, and oversight, should add up to \$1.2 million. The design firm has a separate contract with the Town. Mr. Schaefer described the issue with the development proposed for 100 Skiff Street and the stop light they proposed for their driveway. The developer agreed to give the Town \$100,000 toward the plans. The development project died, and it was fortunate that the Town came up with other funds to pay for the design of the tunnel.

Mr. Schaefer mentioned that using the left over funds was not a given. Senators Dodd and Lieberman, and Congresswoman DeLauro pressed the government to allow us to use the funds remaining from Phase III.

In response to Mr. Horowitz' question, Mr. Balskus said the cameras and lights proposed are vandal resistant. Mr. Schaefer said the lights are designed to be vandal proof and look like the lights in a prison. There is a more expensive method of lighting the walls, which would give a warmer feeling. Lights will be installed, but there is no decision let as to whether the lights will be left on at night.

There were no further questions, and the Public Information Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk