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Mayor

TOWN OF HAMDEN

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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FARMINGTON CANAL COMMISSION

Minutes: The Farmington Canal Commission, Town of Hamden held an informal session on Tuesday, September 7, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the third floor Conference Room, Hamden Government Center. A quorum was not available. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: David Schaefer, Johanna Becker, Bill Horowitz, Malachi Blandon

Others in Attendance: Norm Thetford, FCRTTA
Sarah Clark, Westwoods Civic Association
Dan Kops, Assistant Town Planner
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk

Mr. Schaefer said he and Mr. Kops have been working with DOT to get the Skiff Street underpass project done, but the DOT is in no hurry. They insist we have another meeting with the utilities, and are particularly concerned with the water pipe that crosses Skiff Street. They also wrote a lengthy objection to the sidewalk on the bridge as though it was a new idea. They urged us to break the sidewalk portion away from the tunnel. Mayor Jackson does not want to do that. DOT wants everyone involved (including the DOT, utility companies, Historic Preservation, and the Canal Commission) to sit down together in one room to go over the issues. Mayor Jackson said given our history on Phase III, the bids may be low enough to do the sidewalk under this project. If we can get out to bid in December, we could build in March.

All of the money needed to build is available. The Town is even willing to borrow the money and get reimbursed after completion. We need a construction manager on board. The cost estimate that the state put in for management is huge, and Milone and MacBroom felt it was three to four times more than it will actually cost. The state said the if the Town would pay for the construction manager up front, it would not have to go through the process. That would not be good for the Town, so we will put it out to bid via the Request for Qualification method, where vendors submit their qualifications, but not prices.

The police department wanted some changes on the plan, and they won't put pen to paper until the plans are approved, so there will be an effort to set up that meeting. Cameras and call buttons were added, and lighting was discussed.

Regarding the underpass, the Stop & Shop people are on board. Mr. Schaefer spoke to their bank and explained the situation, and they have agreed to do the easement for \$7,500.

Mr. Schaefer feels we will have to do a lot of work to do regarding maintenance. Branches are overhanging, weeds are growing up close to the trail, and there is a big hole that someone has painted around so people would see it.

Good news - the fences are down on the parking lot behind Peoples Bank. Near Dixwell Avenue, next to Citizens Bank, there is a large new medical building. There is a large parking lot and an entrance to the trail, but several signs saying no parking.

Mr. Bandon mentioned that heading south behind Breugers, there is stone dust on the trail.

Mr. Thetford mentioned that he and Al Gorman spent this afternoon putting up pictures and maps at the lockkeeper's house. They are hoping to have some volunteers there on weekends. There is a bathroom there and a water fountain.

Mr. Horowitz asked if New Haven has made any further plans for the final leg of their trail, and Mr. Thetford replied that they have not.

Mr. Thetford said that Southington is just finishing the the two miles to the Cheshire border. Paving will be done soon. Cheshire has finally reached an agreement with Dalton, and they are trying to work that out. There was discussion on the status of the trail going toward the Massachusetts border.

There is a room at the lockkeepers house for a police sub station. There was at one time an idea to have a caretaker live on the second floor, but the contractor ran out of money and was unable to finish the second floor. There was a plumbing issue and a broken pipe and some flooding, but that has been corrected. There has been no vandalism there.

Sarah Clark introduced herself as a Whitney Avenue resident whose property abuts the trail. She is also working on the traffic calming issue, and they are concerned about the trail crossings at Shepard Avenue, Brooksvale Road and River Road and mentioned the pedestrian cones. Mr. Schaefer said we don't have jurisdiction over that, but the traffic commission does. (yield to pedestrians, or pedestrians crossing) We could make a recommendation to the Traffic Commission. We will bring this up at the next meeting.

Mr. Kops arrived after attending the Legislative Council Meeting. He reported that the Council approved the bid waiver and the changes to the two easements.

Mr. Horowitz expressed some concerns about Westwoods Road and the width it will be once construction is complete. He felt a safety island would be appropriate there. Mr. Schaefer said this is a DOT project. We have tried to have input, but we are beyond that point. It is a State project but Westwoods is a Town road. Ms. Clerk said she attended a DOT meeting and said the project is running late and over budget.

There was discussion on trail maintenance and the painting of mile markers. Do we have the money for the stone dust, and if we do, can we spread it? There was discussion on an Adopt a Mile project where sponsors would raise \$1,000 per year, for example, for maintenance, or Friends of the Farmington Canal Greenway that would sell tee shirts. There is a separate fund for donations for the trail.

Mr. Schaefer said Cheshire and Rails to Trails got sued by someone who fell on the trail.

There was no further business to discuss, and the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk