



TOWN OF HAMDEN OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Mayor

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FARMINGTON CANAL COMMISSION

MINUTES: The Farmington Canal Commission, Town of Hamden held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, July 21, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the Veterans Memorial Building, Brooksvale Park. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Barbara Gigliotti, Peter Haller, Johanna Becker, David Schaefer, Bill Horowitz

Others in Attendance: Bill Davies, Mrs. Davies, Kath Schomaker, Mr. Becker, Dan Kops, Gerry Tobin

1. Call to Order

Following a picnic supper, Mr. Schaefer called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the June 2nd meeting were informal and do not require a vote.

3. Phase I

Mr. Schaefer rode the trail and said it is in excellent condition. He wrote a letter to Parks & Recreation letting them know that. He said there are some minor items to be taken care of. We will need to take care of the stone dust at some point, either by replacing it or putting some dirt up against the pavement in order to keep the pavement from crumbling. The cost of keeping up the stone dust must be determined to see if it is feasible.

Ms. Becker said the mile markers need to be refreshed, and she would like to see a line down the center, since that would help to keep people on one side. Mr. Kops will ask Parks & Recreation if they can extend the mileage markers through the remainder of the trail. Mr. Schaefer also

mentioned that the bollards are missing from the parking lot at Sherman Avenue and at People's Bank.

4. Phase IIA

Ms. Gigliotti did some research, and said nothing was ever filed saying we have x number of parking spaces on the Hoyt property. She said the records show that the Town has the first nine feet of some of the parking spaces. Mr. Schaefer said this may be the basis of a conversation with Mr. Hoyt. Mr. Kops has the information on the property line. Mr. Schaefer said perhaps we should let Mr. Humes work on this.

5. Phase IIB

6. Phase III

Mr. Schaefer said many of us were at the ribbon cutting, with a nice turnout of the Milone & MacBroom staff, state legislators, Legislative Council members, abutting property owners, etc. Mr. Schaefer commended the people who made the decision to use the wildflowers.

Mr. Kops reported on the walk through. There are bumps and cracks caused by Japanese knot weed, which is very expensive to treat, and has already cracked the pavement in the new section.

Mr. Kops' report dated July 21st is attached, with a schedule of local approvals needed and scheduling to take place regarding the tunnel under Skiff Street. There a few items remaining to be done on the trail at a proposed cost of \$35,025.22. Milone & MacBroom feels the cost of these items should be \$29,550. This information will be submitted to the DOT. We are 2.4 percent (\$65,877.50) over the contract price with these changes. Dave Lavorgna did a wonderful job as the eyes and ears, keeping things on track every day. Only the items listed on the change orders are incomplete.

Peter Haller asked if we know who the makers of the materials used in construction are from in case we need to know five years down the road. Mr. Kops said yes. Mr. Schaefer said the bid was \$1 million less than we thought it would be. The contractors and Milone & MacBroom did a great job and we got an excellent result. Mr. Kops said New Haven has had a different experience. The low bidder had left out an item; Fucci challenged that, so they had to rebid. The original low bidder still got the contract. We have roughly \$1.4 million left. Mr. Haller asked if the \$1.4 remaining will shift to the underpass. Mr. Kops said we have it in writing that the funds can be used for the underpass. Mr. Horowitz said Mather is the only street crossing that has no entrance to the trail. He asked if there is anything we can do about that. Mr. Kops spoke to the owner of 380 Mather Street, and he is now interested in changing his project design to part condo and part rental units. Mr. Kops asked if we could put an entrance on his property and he thought it was a great idea.

Mr. Schaefer mentioned the sidewalks on Skiff Street. Mr. Kops spoke to the town engineer who looked at it. You can't put sidewalks on the south side because there is not enough room,

but there is room on the other side. It looks fairly promising for putting in a connecting sidewalk. The path up to Skiff will remain but at some point we anticipate that the stop light will be removed, as the LFE property is developed.

Tunnel

Mr. Schaefer said we talked about a tunnel for years, and moved forward when the development was proposed on the other side of Skiff Street. The developer was to pay us \$100,000 for design fees. We started the design, and the developer backed out of the project, so we had to use our own money for the design. The preliminary design has been submitted to us. There is no lighting or security plan, but the borings have been done, and the utilities are where we thought they were. The tunnel goes through where the cement steps are and is on an angle, so there is no curve and the line of sight is clear. The tunnel is 105' long. The size of the box culvert has been increased to internal dimensions of 14' wide and 10' high. Mr. Kops said they are thinking of putting a stripe down the center of the tunnel. The design was sent to DOT prior to approval by this Commission, as authorized by the Commissioners via email. This doesn't mean that the plan can't be changed. Mr. Kops included the rough schedule in his report. The work can be done without closing Skiff Street, but it will cost more. Construction keeping Skiff Street open will be a change and requires a change in the cost estimate. The cost estimate of the tunnel is \$1.2 million. 20% of the cost has to come from the Town. Skiff Street would have to be closed for two weeks in order to build the tunnel. Mayor Henrici has made the decision not to close Skiff Street for the construction, and that will be communicated to the DOT.

Mr. Horowitz asked about the drainage at the tunnel, and Mr. Kops said the tunnel will be at a slight slant. There will be a catch basin at southern end of tunnel, and it will eventually drain into the wetlands. There is a minimal pitch of 0.56% and a maximum of 4%.

Mr. Horowitz wondered if there could be some type of fencing for 5-10' at each end of the tunnel to help with security. Mr. Schaefer said there will be lights and cameras in the tunnel. There will not be gates. Lights will go off at night. Motion sensors were suggested. Mr. Kops said maybe there would have to be sufficient lighting at night so the police camera will work. LED lights were suggested. There was discussion on graffiti-proofing the walls so they would clean easily.

Ms. Gigliotti made a motion that the Commission make a preliminary endorsement of the preliminary plans subject to the comments noted above and thanking Tom Balskus of Milone and MacBroom for the excellent work. Ms. Becker seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Ms. Gigliotti made a motion to have Mr. Kops move forward on the schedule he has outlined to move the project forward. Mr. Horowitz seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Ms. Tobin made a presentation on a request by Ms. Helene Gold to donate a bench along the trail in memory of her sister and her dog at a location near the large rock near the Todd Street parking lot, which is accessible from her home.

Mr. Haller made a motion that subject to field inspection of the requested location, we will take up Ms. Gold's request to donate a bench to be placed along the Farmington Canal Trail at the September 8th meeting of the Commission. Ms. Gigliotti seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Mr. Schaefer said the RWA sent him a proposal for a display to place along the trail, behind the Shop Rite next to the Home Depot looking out over the detention ponds. Suggestions were made for pictures, diagrams, and fewer words. The sign would be 8' by 4' and would be placed on the hillside, where it would be less accessible to graffiti artists. Ms. Gigliotti said she would like to see it tilted to make it more readable. Mr. Schaefer will send the information to Commissioners for comment. Ms. Gigliotti would like to see an aerial view of the ponds on the sign.

Ms. Schomaker is looking at the public safety issues regarding the trail, and would like to set up a meeting with Hamden and New Haven police and Yale Security. She will meet with Holly Parker, head of transportation at Yale, and Lisa Fernandez of the Farmington Canal Rails to Trails Association, who is also her colleague at Yale. Ms. Schomaker is an active user of the trail. New Haven has passed a Street Smarts program to teach the public about safety.

Ms. Becker made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Haller seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk