

**HAMDEN BOARD OF TRAFFIC AUTHORITY**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF**  
**MARCH 10, 2010**

**Attending:** Raeann Curtis, Reginald Higgins, Elliott Kerzner, Michael Iezzi, Gerald Migliaro, Police Chief Wydra, , Town , Attorney Sue Gruen

**Absent:** Deputy Chief Cappiello

**Call to Order/Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kerzner at 7:00 p.m., Deputy Chief Cappiello not present for the meeting.

**Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Kerzner entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 10, 2010. Under New Business *“The vote was three in favor and one abstain”* and should be unanimous. Mr. Higgins motioned to accept the minutes of the meeting with the correction, seconded by Mr. Iezzi. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

**Department Report**

- a. Review of department activity – Chief Wydra reviewed the report with nothing unusual at this time and noted that the state project for Mt. Carmel. Ave. and West Woods Road is proceeding on schedule. Also the Whitney Ave. signal project is also proceeding with some questions on pole placement.
- b. Items of concern – Nothing at this time.
- c. Review of site plans – Nothing at this time.
- d. Correspondence – items in packet

**Public/Media Comments on Agenda Items**

***Attorney Robert Leitze, 555 Long Wharf Dr., New Haven*** - Attorney Leitze addressed the Commission regarding the reopening of Lake Road. Attorney Leitze reiterated his request from the February meeting that Lake Road be reopened. He noted that the Commission voted to do so at the February meeting and is questioning why it is in question at this time. As stated at past meetings, Lake Road has never been officially discontinued or abandoned, it however was closed for the reconstruction of the Davis Street Bridge in 1988 and not reopened to traffic since then. Mr. Leitze is requesting three things: 1) the Commission direct the Public Works Dept. to remove all impediments on Lake Road, 2) Lake Road be opened North to South from Putnam Ave., to Davis Street, on a “One Way” basis 3) to allow parallel parking based on plan #2 and the recommendation of the Town Engineer that was provided to the Commission at the February meeting.

**Hamden Fire Chief Berardesca, Hamden CT** – Fire Chief Berardesca is in support of opening the road for public safety reasons. The road is presently blocked by bollards, the department does have keys but they are time consuming to open. He visited the area today and did have a problem with the parked vehicles in the area. At this time there are some parking concerns that should the fire department or emergency vehicles need to get to the back of 1199 Whitney Ave. it would be a problem. Fire Chief Berardesca is confident that when the road is opened proper markings will be in place for vehicular parking to avoid any delays in an emergency services.

**Robert Pattison, 26 Augur St.,** - Mr. Pattison is a resident and member of the Whitneyville Civic Association and noted that there was no dialogue on this item at the February meeting from the public. It was on the agenda for discussion and no residents were notified of the meeting. Mr. Pattison noted that all residents in the area are notified in a news letter when the association is working on issues effecting the neighborhood and resented the manner in which this item was handled. Mr. Pattison contacted the Mayor's office requesting a meeting with all parties involved but was never contacted by anyone. The next thing Mr. Pattison knew a discussion took place was voted on but no input from the residents. The WCA is requesting that the Commission vacate their previous decision of opening the road and open this to the public for dialogue and honest input from all the parties.

**Mr. William Fairchild, 80 West Todd St.** – Mr. Fairchild is coming before the Commission requesting signage that had been present before the widening of the road but is no longer in place be installed. He notes the speeding of not only cars but school buses carrying the town's children. The other danger to the residents is retrieving their mail from their mail boxes. He noted that on a regular basis he and his neighbors have to pick up the garbage left in the road. He would like to see a police presence, and some kind of enforcement.

**Mr. Gerald Gigliotti, 44 West Todd St.,** - Mr. Gigliotti is here regarding the problems stated by Mr. Fairchild and is hoping the Commission will be able to help.

**Mr. Gary Robison, 101 Putnam Ave.** – Mr. Robison along with businesses in the area of Lake Road and Whitney Ave. oppose the opening of Lake Road. The businesses feel this at the present the road is two way and if changed to one way it would effect their business. It was noted by Mr. Robison that state funds have been allocated in the last couple of years for the road based on the current conditions, now those conditions will change and the use of the road by the taxpayers will change after the tax dollars have been applied to create the present use of the road.

**Randall Miller, 1175 Whitney Ave.** – Mr. Miller made a presentation of information previously provided in 2006, diagrams showing Lake Ave., and the Town of Meriden CT and not that of Hamden. Mr. Miller feels these documents presented in 2006 were flawed and didn't represent a correct usage of the road either at the height of the morning rush hour or evening rush hour. Mr. Miller along with other residents from his building and other apartments in the immediate area are opposed to the opening of Lake Road. Mr. Miller went on to address the business and how it would impact their patronage, and the traffic flow would be disrupted.

The owner of LePetite Gourmet address the Commission, did not provide a name and address but stated she is opposed to the opening of the road.

**Mrs. Jane Roche**, stating she is an owner of property that backs up to Lake Road and faces Eli St. said she never received any notice regarding anything pertaining to the opening of Lake Road. Mrs. Roche stated that when the road was open there was a considerable amount of vandalism to the vehicles parked on Lake Road and that has not been a problem since the road has been close. She feels the larger issue is the neighborhood is a pedestrian area, people move into the area for that reason and questions why this is about vehicles a few vehicles for an apartment house when the whole neighborhood has perspective walkers. She noted that other towns in essence dismantled portions of their towns for vehicle traffic and are now realizing they need areas such as Whitneyville.

**Mr. Tamberlain Harris, 18 Turner Ave.** – Mr. Harris has been a Hamden resident for twenty years, he is the VP of the Whitneyville Civic Association and is the owner of Your Community Yoga Center at 39 Putnam Ave. Mr. Harris stated that his patrons have to park in the local municipal parking lots and/or bike to his establishment and he is about building communities and encourages his patrons to do this. He noted that in walking from the various parking lots the patrons have to pass the other businesses and thus use them. He noted that the intersection of Putnam and Whitney Avenues have had a number of accidents over the years and feels that as soon as the road is perceived as a cut through even with only a right turn at the end of it, there will be a number of drivers who will turn left anyway. He noted that the curve in the road as you come off Whitney Ave. on to Lake Road is very sharp and feels accidents will happen. He feels that opening the road is bad for the neighborhood. He feels that a proper study and notice to the residents is warranted.

**Lisa Kleintjes Kamento, 114 Carlton St.**- Ms. Kamento is the Traffic Chair for the WCA and stated that the WCA is in the process of preparing a report for the Mayor and that this is one of the issues in the report. She is asking that the Commission take a step back and listen to what the residents are saying and find out the real reason why the Lawyers representing this one building want the road opened and feels this should be an open discussion.

**Peter Villano, State Representative**, resident and member of the WCA. Mr. Villano would like to recommend the Commission listen to the proposal made by Mr. Pattison to vacate the former action and do hold a public forum on this difficult issue. He stated that enough information about what the right public policy decision is and the implications for the town, he doesn't feel a few weeks delay will make a difference but will give everyone the opportunity to review all the facts. He feels a dialogue is necessary for any action, it provides input from all sides and he is recommending the Commission delay any action.

**Ms. Felicia Tencza, 1175 Whitney Ave.** – Ms. Tencza provided a written note with the following summary;

“To open Lake Road only serves the unknown interests of one of seven property owners on Whitney Ave. and that one is Lakewood LLC.

There are no public safety concerns. No one on Lake Road has been denied any police or fire services during the last 22 years that this road has been closed.

To open Lake Road would eliminate a safe and scenic walk-way supported by a State grant – only to be replaced by a speed-way/a cut through street.

To open Lake Road will create a significant environmental issue that impacts an already challenged drinking water supply.

To open Lake Road actually adds traffic to our streets.

Lake Road must remain closed.

You have a choice here. You can choose to succumb to the profit motives and pressures of the owners of Lakewood Apartments. But such a choice saddens me, it saddens me to see that five Traffic Authority members sitting here tonight have the power to rip away from the community a valuable asset. Don't let your legacy to our Town be that you let this asset be destroyed. Better that you use your power to make the correct choice. Keeping Lake Road closed is the best choice, a choice that shows you have listened to the reasons put forth here tonight; good, solid, community-based reasons. I trust that you will do the right think and ensure that quiet, scenic and closed Lake Road stays that way. You can do that tonight.”

**Mr. Robert Brinton, Hamden Town Engineer** – Mr. Brinton provided drawings for review by the Commission members. Mr. Brinton was not familiar with the previous study of 2206. A conceptual plan is not ready at this time but did note that the funds to complete all the work needed on the road would have to be allocated by the Legislative Council, it would also have to be reviewed by the Inland/Wetland Commission and Planning and Zoning because it is a public improvement and requires these measures. Mr. Brinton wanted the Commission and the public to know this will not happen in the immediate future for the reasons stated.

**Ms. Kathleen Schomaker, 22 Lilac Ave.** - Ms. Schomaker is a member of the Legislative Council and a resident and member of the WCA. Ms. Schomaker spoke to the timing of this issue and the ruling by the Commission and how it relates to other things going on in the town and how in her mind it relates to the tight budget. Mayor Jackson is in the process of assessing problematic traffic issues in the southern end of town, existing issues are only going to be compounded if Hamden grows as they implement the newly passed Planning and Zoning regulations. The Traffic Commission will be dealing with traffic implications from the new regulations. The Mayor is implementing an input from residents about problematic traffic situations. The Legislative Council has allocated some capital funds to hire a consultant traffic engineer who can best advise the town on these issues. Ms. Schomaker's concern is that she would like to see that process go forward and unfold in a realistic and coordinated and reasonable way so that this so parking challenge at Lakewood Apartments, the desire for walk-able, bike-able flowing 21 century urban areas, those are all things that should be embraced.

**At this time Attorney Leitze asked if he could make a rebuttal and Chairman Kerzner allowed it.** *In terms of the request for a lot more public input and a lot more hearing on this issue, this is the fourth time this issue has come before the Commission, all the issued have been thoroughly discussed, and the circumstance there is just getting worse and worse everyday, its time for us to request an action on this issue. Requests for further time is just another delay so that this association can continue to use public property as their own little private back yard, that's not appropriate its time to open that road for safety purposes. I would think that the opinion of your public safety personnel would trump other issues. You have heard from the Fire Marshall that in fact the road should be open, that should be a major, major consideration on the part of any party. Third there is no incompatibility between what we are requesting and any future use of the side of that road for bicycles or the future construction of walk way or anything of that nature, which we support will happen, but its not going to happen for a long time and*

*you got a problem now that needs to be addressed. We are not asking that you permit or vote to have this particular plan implemented, we are only asking for three things 1) move the impediments to traffic, 2) and you have to direct the Public Works to do their thing, secondly we got to make sure that when that happens that they go about the process of opening the road north to south on a one-way basis. Now there is some complaints about that's not the appropriate thing, I would hope that marketing this as the professional traffic people who recommended that, their opinion would be far more important than the amateurs you have heard tonight. Finally, allowing the parallel parking is an important thing to do and it is shown clearly on this schematic plan done by your engineering department as being a proper way to alleviate some of the parking problems, so I don't think there's anything incompatible to what we are saying and I think we need to do it".*

### **Old Business**

- a. YMCA Road Race, April 17, 2010 – Deputy Chief Cappiello is not present for the meeting and Mr. Marazzi was to be working with the Deputy Chief on this. Chief Wydra will have Deputy Chief Cappiello provide information for the April 2010 meeting. Mr. Higgins motioned to continue this item for the April meeting, seconded by Mr. Iezzi. ***The motion carried unanimously.***
- b. Waite St. – speed bumps additional information from Chief Wydra – Chairman Kerzner asked Chief Wydra if he had the information requested on accidents in the area. Chief Wydra didn't have the information but will have it for the April 2010 meeting. Mr. Migliaro motioned to continue this item for the April 2010 meeting, seconded by Mr. Higgins. ***The motion carried unanimously.***
- c. Vote for reopening of Lake Road for vehicular traffic – Mr. Higgins questioned the information on the number of cars during the time period. Are the numbers provided a lot or a little and what impact do they make on the area? Someone who did not identify spoke to the question stating that there are 16 or so cars going through the road and that there are two very different scenarios. Right now the only people using the road are going to park on Lake Road to enter their residence and they are going slowly, but it is noted that as soon as you open the road up one way and especially with it one way going south that can bypass the intersection in front of Hamden Hall School in peak hours you will have a large volume of traffic on the road with the additional traffic of people going over to State Street who would normally turn from Putnam Ave., on to Whitney Ave. then make the left at Whitney Ave. and Davis St. Chairman Kerzner noted all the input for and against the opening of the road. He read a letter from Mayor Jackson issued today just prior to the meeting about discussing this matter with the Mayor and a working group. Ms. Curtis asked pertaining to the letter “that the Mayor is saying that he would do this meeting no matter what decision was made this evening”. Chairman Kerzner stated “he doesn't say”. Ms. Curtis then said that in that case, “well then in reading the letter she doesn't want to interpret the Mayor's thoughts, but she don't think its right and she will follow what she believes”, she doesn't like to disagree with the Mayor but reading the first three sentences, she continued that the Mayor's office would like to invite all the Lake Road, Whitney Ave. stake-holders to participate in a working group. Mr. Iezzi at

this time asked the Chairman if Chief Wydra could make a recommendation. Chief Wydra stated he heard a lot of information this evening. He stated that as the Legal Traffic Agent for Hamden and the Commission. As Police Chief he agrees with Chief Berardesca's recommendation that the road be reopened. He stated that comments were made here this evening that were somewhat irresponsible in suggesting that there has not been some sufficient emergency in 22 years. Chief Berardesca and the fire department probably have more interest in the road being opened, they have larger equipment, larger apparatus in the event of some type of fire emergency or mass casualty event there are problems with their ability to access all of these areas, so in his capacity as Police Chief he endorses the road being reopened. He would like to see an independent study by the town, paid for by the town and not a resident, group or business with a personal, political or financial interest and consider the information that has been stated here, everyone is guessing, we don't know the road has not been open and 16 vehicles could be 60 in reality so for him there are a couple of different issues, but as a Police Chief he is saying he thinks the road should be opened, there are public safety issues. There is a letter from the Regional Water Authority and there are a number of other interest here. Chairman Kerzner in reviewing the conceptual maps noted the cost of guard rails could be as much as \$350,000.00. There are a lot of questions to be discussed. Mr. Iezzi motioned that based on the interest of public safety and the recommendation of both the Police and Fire Chief that Lake Road be opened to vehicular traffic and have it one way from Putnam Ave. to Davis St. with the parallel parking on Lake Road according to the map, seconded by Ms. Curtis, the vote was three in favor and one abstain. ***The motion carries.***

#### **New Business**

- a. West Todd St. signage – After a brief discussion Chief Wydra advised the Commission that he will add this to his calendar for enforcement and will take care of replacing the missing signs. Chief Wydra will also contact Public Works about the trash problem as maybe then can check the area on steady basis.

**Open Discussion – Commissioners/Department Heads** – Ms Curtis addressed what a number of residents present said tonight at the meeting about the possibility that a public hearing should have been held. The residents noted that everything came up at the last minute and they were not made aware of it. Ms. Curtis noted that the agendas are not advertised but are posted on the town web site. Ms. Curtis noted that she was sorry she didn't have the opportunity to apologize to the residents but feels that this should be a future discussion on how to best notify the residents of the town of issues that pertain to their area. Chairman Kerzner agrees with her. Town Attorney Gruen noted that the Commission followed the guidelines and that the revote was the correct thing to do.

**Adjournment**

At 8:32 p.m. Mr. Higgins motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Curtis. *The motion carried unanimously.*

*The next regular meeting will be Wednesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010, in the Activity Room, Miller Library Complex 7:00 p.m.*

Recorded by,

Catherine E. Gempka  
Commission Clerk