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TOWN OF HAMDEN

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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FARMINGTON CANAL COMMISSION

Minutes: The Farmington Canal Commission, Town of Hamden held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, January 3, 2012 in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Bill Horowitz, Mike Johnson, Barbara Gigliotti, Kathy Larson, David Schaefer

Commissioners Absent: Johanna Becker, Malachi Blandon

Others in Attendance: Michael Dunlap, Guest
Assistant Town Planner Dan Kops
Commission Clerk Gerry Tobin

Mr. Horowitz introduced guest Michael Dunlap, who commutes to work in New Haven everyday on the Greenway. He is also considering applying to fill one of the vacancies on the Commission.

Mr. Kops went to the council last week to ask for amendments to both Milone & MacBroom contracts. Both were approved at the committee level. One amendment is for \$16,000 for review of shop drawings and pre-construction coordination items. The second one is for \$85,000, of which 80% is reimbursable, for some additional tasks including drainage improvements. This includes work extra hours during the road closure, video surveillance equipment, etc. We still don't have approval for four change orders submitted to the DOT since August. We are at least \$80,000 under budget including the unapproved change orders. We anticipate we will spend \$50,000 out of the \$80,000. Mr. Schaefer said Mr. Kops did a great job managing this project.

Mr. Kops said he spoke to Mr. Balskus today and he indicated that he was looking at the ongoing leak into the tunnel. Because of late seeding, grass has not grown, and there is a lot of gravel in the soil so the water goes through. Mr. Kops will be meeting with Mr. Balskus soon to discuss

alternatives. Mr. Schaefer asked if we can still use grant money as long as the contract is not closed out. Mr. Kops said he sent emails regarding two signs placed in the tunnel warning about icy conditions. There is no news on development activity on the other side of Skiff Street.

The Police Department has not moved in to its new quarters, so they are not monitoring the cameras at this time. However, the video feed is going into the equipment facility in our upper parking lot, and the information is being recorded and will be available if needed.

LoCIP funds should be used to improve the drainage issue north of Sherman Avenue.

A memo from Parks Superintendent Frank Cooper updating the Commission on work being done on the trail is attached.

Ms. Gigliotti drove the trail with Mr. Cooper just before Thanksgiving and reviewed the fence issue and other items. In the area of the Mutual Housing Project, the road goes along next to the trail with about 10' of grass with trees in between. There was a post and rail fence, that the Parks Department said was in their way because they couldn't get a lawn mower into that area other than a hand mower. They took down the posts and the rail. Mr. Schaefer feels that is a problem because of safety and appearance considerations. They did leave the fence at the bend in the road, but once you get to the straightaway, there is no fence. They have the material they took out, and Mr. Cooper wondered if they can use some of the material to repair the broken fencing in the northern sections of the trail.

There was further discussion on decisions being made by the Parks division without input from the Commission. Mr. Schaefer said we should express our concern to them and to the Mayor so this would not become a precedent.

Ms. Gigliotti said a second issue is that with the snowplowing last year, fencing along the parking lots was damaged. In the Stop & Shop parking lot behind TJMaxx, she thinks a low guard rail is missing. Mr. Cooper told her that this is the area where they get the trucks onto the trail. Ms. Gigliotti feels we need a guard rail in that area because cars drive right into the spaces, and it is only 10' before a car could be on the trail. There are a couple of areas where stone dust has been washing out and Parks filled the areas in with pea stone. Mr. Cooper has concerns about the stone dust along the trail. They do not have appropriate equipment for replacing the stone dust. Men have to ride along in a truck and throw the stone dust out of the back. Mr. Cooper plans to talk to Mr. Schultz about what piece of equipment they used put the stone dust down.

Mr. Schaefer recalls that the total cost of the stone dust when we did phases I, II and IIA was \$20,000.

There have been several walkathons on the trail that did not have any approval from anyone, and they spray painted on the trail the starting point, turnaround point, etc. Mr. Schaefer feels we should have rules. If you are having an event along the trail, you should get permission from the Recreation Department. Mr. Kops will talk to Ms. Coleman.

There was discussion on how root bumps should be repaired, the the feeling is probably best way is to repair as they go. Mr. Cooper is trying to get back the \$25,000 line item in the budget to take care of these issues.

There have been lawsuits against the Town by people falling because of potholes. The Town Attorney's Office handles these and then farms them out to the insurance company. The town has some kind of legislative immunity. Dan will check the number of lawsuits and results so we can learn from our experience.

There was discussion on appropriate speed on the trail. Mr. Kops said a bike store is coming just north of Westwoods Road. The owner wants to have a link to the trail. Mr. Kops said he would have to go through the process.

Mr. Schaefer asked if there are plans for the Lock Keepers house in better weather. Mr. Horowitz was not sure, but will find out what the plans are for spring and summer. Mr. Schaefer said if Rails to Trails isn't planning anything, perhaps we could use the RFP process to find a use for this building. There was originally going to be a police substation in there. There are maintenance and repair issues for the building. This will be discussed further at the next meeting (Thursday, February 2nd).

Ms. Gigliotti will mention to Mr. Cooper that the stone dust issue needs to be resolved. She feels that the fence by TJMaxx parking lot should be put back in. Cars are driving directly into the parking spaces there, and if they don't stop, in ten feet they will be on the trail. Ms. Gigliotti thinks in the northern portion of the trail, near a parking lot, the fencing other than the split rail would be okay. Mr. Schaefer said we went through the planning process which included plans for fences, shrubs, etc. These things should not be changed without permission of the Commission. We should communicate to Parks and the Mayor how we feel.

Craig Cesare approached Mr. Kops about the fencing, and Mr. Kops told him the opinion of the Commission was negative, and Commissioners were going to look at it.

Ms. Gigliotti said at the Mutual Housing trail crossing, at the speed bump before the stop sign looking to the left, you see the fence and if you look to the right, you see the dumpster enclosure. You have to pull right up to the stop sign to see if there is anyone on the trail, at which point your bumper is on the trail. She feels that two or three sections of the fence need to go. Mr. Schaefer asked about the location of the dumpster enclosure, which blocks the site line. Mr. Kops said if you stop at the stop sign, you can see to the right, you can't see to the left. Commissioners will look at it. Mr. Dunlap said on his ride every day, especially heading south, trail users can't see the cars approaching the crossing.

Mr. Kops said Mutual Housing has complied with the Commission's conditions of approval.

1. Review Minutes of November 1, 2011

Page 2, third line from top, change then to when; page 2, 7th line from bottom, change Grove to College, next line, change kids to kinds

Ms. Gigliotti made a motion to approve the minutes of November 1st as corrected. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

2. Phase I Update (Mt. Sanford Road to Todd Street)
3. Phase IIA Update (Todd Street to Hamden Hills Drive)

4. Phase IIB Update (Hamden Hills Drive to Connolly Parkway)

5. Phase III Update (Connolly Parkway to New Haven Line)

Mr. Dunlap mentioned broken glass on the trail. He also said near the bus storage area, there is a hill that goes down from the Stop & Shop Plaza, where gravel and dirt washes onto the trail, although it gets cleaned up very promptly. He also mentioned bollards that go missing. He has not noticed any crime or threatening situations along the trail.

6. Old Business

7. New Business

8. Adjournment

Ms. Gigliotti made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Horowitz seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Clerk of the Commission