



Scott D. Jackson
Mayor

TOWN OF HAMDEN

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Hamden Government Center
2750 Dixwell Ave
Hamden, CT 06518
Tel: (203) 287-7100
Fax: (203) 287-7101

FARMINGTON CANAL COMMISSION

MINUTES: The Farmington Canal Commission, Town of Hamden held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, June 5, 2012 in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Malachi Blandon, Johanna Becker, Kathy Larson, David Schaefer, Bill Horowitz, Richard Weiner, Mike Johnson,

Commissioners Excused: Barbara Gigliotti, Mike Dunlap

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

1. Review Minutes of May 9, 2012

Ms. Becker made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 9th meeting. Mr. Horowitz seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Report from Mr. Kops

Mr. Kops received email from Risk Manager Art Giulietti who noted tree roots on the trail near Stop & Shop. Mr. Kops met with Arts Recreation & Culture (ARC) Director Mimsie Coleman and identified the fact that there is no policy at this time for events along the trail. Often the Public Works/Parks and ARC Departments are unaware of events taking place. Ms. Coleman and Mr. Kops agreed that a good approach would be for this Commission to come up with some guidelines which would go to the Parks & Rec Commission. If fees are to be collected, they would have to be approved by the Legislative Council.

Mr. Schaefer and Mr. Kops had information about a skateboarding race along the trail and they had some concerns about safety issues. This raises the question about a policy. Mr. Schaefer thought we would not want profit making activities along the trail. Perhaps non-profit or charitable events could be allowed. Mr. Schaefer was just at a half triathlon on Sunday, run by a large company. Mr. Horowitz felt there would be a distinction if a profit making company was using a park for a picnic. Mr. Schaefer said if someone wants to use the trail exclusively, that

would limit use by others. If exclusive use were not required, that would be another story. Mr. Horowitz feels a graduated response is necessary.

Ms. Becker said the state charges you to park on their land, or for camping, so perhaps one could say if you are going to use the trail in certain ways, you should have to pay. Mr. Weiner said you should not limit the public use for a private use. Mr. Kops asked in the history of the trail, 17 years, how many events have taken place.

Weiner said several weeks ago there was a walk on the trail for a Hamden parochial school, and that was acceptable. A walk for a charity could be allowed as well. We need keep the trail safe for regular users. Ms. Larson said the CERT team might be willing to provide some logistics. Mr. Schaefer would have no problem with regular Town activities. Mr. Blandon said a walk is great, but no wheels. Mr. Schaefer asked Commissioners to drop him an email with ideas. He also asked Mr. Kops to check for policies for other parks.

We should be aware of the law of unexpected consequences.

Mr. Schaefer said we have talked in the past about doing something with the stone dust that is washing away. The Farmington Canal Rails to Trails advocacy group has agreed to raise funds which would be turned over to the Town with the permission of the Legislative Council to purchase stone dust. The Mayor and Public Works Director both agreed that they would appreciate this effort, and Public Works would agree to place the stone dust. They would also kill the weeds as necessary. Other maintenance issues were discussed. Public Works has been mowing every two weeks. They have also identified fencing that needs to be replaced and have requested funds through the capital budget process and believe they are going to get that money. If commissioners see issues on the trail, they should send an email to Mr. Kops and he will relay the information to Public Works. Mr. Schaefer asked about graffiti removal, and Craig Cesare was not aware of the graffiti removal machine, but John Torgesson who has taken over from Frank Cooper was familiar with it.

There are a couple of signs on the trail with the police non-emergency number.

Mr. Horowitz was walking a trail in San Jose where they were marking roots and other problems with colored paint. This is a temporary solution to alert people until the problem is fixed. PW prefers to cut out the area and repave it to correct the problem with roots. Mr. Horowitz said town trucks and snow plows could cause issues. PW said the pavement can last for many years.

When Phase III was being built, and the bridge over Putnam Avenue, the DOT insisted that we check the buttresses to make sure that the new bridge could handle a locomotive. Mr. Weiner asked if Cheshire has a trail commission. Mr. Schaefer said no, and neither does New Haven. Mr. Schaefer passed around a copy of the flyer regarding the stone dust.

Mr. Kops spoke to Ms. Coleman regarding the adopt a mile, which we endorsed at the last meeting. She will discuss this with Public Works.

Ms. Tobin mentioned the new fence put up by Splash car wash.

Mr. Schaefer said Public Works has some concerns about removing the fence at Mutual Housing to improve the sight line, because there is a drop off there. They will have to do something instead of the fence, perhaps a low fence.

2. Phase I Update (Mt. Sanford Road to Todd Street)

Mr. Schaefer asked if Todd Street would be open soon. Mr. Kops said the bridge repair will take six weeks to two months.

3. Phase IIA Update (Todd Street to Hamden Hills Drive)

Mr. Schaefer said it looks like Westwoods Road is just about done. Mr. Kops said there are still a few things left to do like painting the cross walk.

Mr. Bandon spoke to Mrs. Stubbs about a bench in honor of Campbell, and she will help pay for it. People thought it would be a nice tribute to him to have a bench in his honor. What the left over property as a result of moving Westwoods Road is not clear as yet.

Mr. Kops mentioned there is now a bike store north of People's Bank, and the owner is interested in a connection from his property to the trail.

There is no news on the Lockkeeper's house. Mr. Thetford said Al Gorman has moved some furniture in there. There has been some discussion on having the building open on weekends. Mr. Bandon mentioned low hanging limbs. Mr. Weiner mentioned graffiti on the overpass by Hamden Hills Drive.

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

Mr. Schaefer said a lot of the historical markers are damaged or destroyed. We might want to think about getting markers that are more durable and finding the funds to do it.

Mr. Schaefer asked if there were any comments on the Skiff Street underpass. Mr. Weiner said there was a lot of water there Sunday. Mr. Kops said they were going to caulk and seal the joints, and he will check. Mr. Schaefer asked if it a real heavy rain and was it coming from above, or the ends. Mr. Weiner said it was coming from above at the northern end.

Mr. Schaefer said he has had a lot of positive comment.

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

Mr. Kops said he was asked if we were interested in having art/sculpture along the trail. Mr. Schaefer said this is something we dealt with before. To him the biggest problem is maintenance and vandalism. It is better to have nothing than something that is damaged and not fixed. Mr. Kops said anyone who put something out would be aware that there is risk.

Mr. Horowitz mentioned the constant never ending problem with Price Rite and Home Depot. The fence there is attractive, but not designed to stop anything. Mr. Kops will remind Adam Zonas to speak to Home Depot. Mr. Weiner printed out copies of no littering signs that he found on line, which he gave to Mr. Schaefer. Ms. Becker said perhaps Home Depot would have people bring their own bags. It seems that the plastic bags blow around. Litter is more from businesses than trail users.

Ms. Larson heard a comment today about a lot of police calls on the southern end of the trail, but she had no details.

Mr. Schaefer mentioned that Captain Lujick spoke to us last year and said they found after sundown it is a gathering place for young kids, which is different from someone attacking or bothering someone using the trail during the day. Perhaps we can invite Captain Lujick back in the fall.

Mr. Horowitz said some of the trails are starting to use bar codes – you can bring up a page on your phone about that code. It might become common practice and would bring up a description of what you are looking at. Ms. Larson said it has to go to a website. Mr. Thetford said this is in the future. This would be an alternative to a lot of boards with a lot of information.

6. Old Business

7. New Business

8. Adjournment

Mr. Blandon made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Becker 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