



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 at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 3, 2015 in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center The following issues were discussed:

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

Commissioners Absent: Michael Johnson

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

1. Call to Order

Mr. Schaefer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Marie Wilson, representing the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention was a guest this evening. She said this Foundation has held an annual event on the Trail for the past six years. They have called Town offices requesting approvals and were told they didn't need permission because the Trail is a public space. This event is held at the end of September/early October, and this year the event is being planned for the first Sunday in October. Last year their attendance tripled, and they had 900 participants, compared to an average in previous years of 300. Many of the participants registered the day of the walk. The walk starts at the entrance on Sherman Avenue and goes north about 1.5 miles to the pond and resting place, and then participants turn around and walk back. They do not have to cross any streets along the way. It isn't a very long distance, but with that many people on the trail it is very crowded. The worst of the blockage is probably about three hours into the event. Registration is from 11:00 a.m. to noon. The kickoff is at noon, and they start walking at about 12:30 p.m. and crowds are gone about an hour after they finish.

Mr. Schaefer said the Trail commission has taken the view that we like to accommodate charitable organization, but we have never closed the trail to other users. He thinks it is a good idea to let us know in advance to make sure the event is consistent with our policies. It is good

to let the the Police Department know that the event is happening, but the organization has to be responsible for crowd control. Picking places where you have a staging area is important. Suggestions were to start at Putnam Avenue, Skiff Street, or near Home Depot, because there is a lot of parking at these locations. The Sherman Avenue parking lot is quite small. Another idea is to stagger the start of groups of participants. Mr. Schaeffer is not aware of the volume of users at various times of the day. Mr. Blandon mentioned holding the event at the Hamden Middle School. Mr. Horowitz mentioned the former Anthem property in North Haven. Ms. Larson mentioned staging at Town Center Park and going north onto the Trail. Different colored tickets at registration with start times were also suggested. Mr. Schaefer said his daughter did a half marathon at Disney World for JDRF which had 27,000 participants. Mr. Kops mentioned a requirement of no more than a certain number abreast. Ms. Wilson mentioned making a presentation to the Town Center Park Commission. Ms. Tobin suggested she call Julie Smith in the Mayor's Office.

2. Review Minutes of December 2, 2014

Ms. Becker made a motion to approve the minutes of December 2nd. Mr. Anton seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

3. Report from Dan Kops

Mr. Schaefer mentioned a Hamden resident who lives in the northern end of Town, but owns a business in the southern end of Town who reported a group of young people that hang around on the trail after dark. Several of the business owners and residents in the area have told them that the trail is closed after dark, but their response was that there is nothing telling them that. Hamden's parks are actually open from 1/2 hour after sun rise to 1/2 hour before sun set. A suggestion has been made that we post a sign at the south end of the trail with the rules concerning hours of use, no motorized vehicles allowed, maybe speed limits, etc. Mr. Kops spoke to the woman spearheading this and discussed a sign somewhere between the boundary with New Haven and Dudley Street. Mr. Kops was told that these kids were coming along the trail and then scattering off the trail to do breakins. Ms. Larson heard that kids were blocking traffic in the area. Mr. Kops said there will be an application for a substation coming before Planning & Zoning next week right next to the mixed use arts building near Burger King. There has also been talk about installing some emergency phones to help reduce fear. There was a report of a fairly serious crime on the trail at the south end.

Mr. Schaefer said we had Lieutenant Lujic speak at our meeting a couple of years ago, and he feels we should get an update from the Police Department about crimes on the trail. Mr. Kops said he wrote to the deputy chief and spoke to the police chief and has not had a response, but he will see him soon, and request the information. Yale has to notify people if there is a crime on the trail, and there was an episode of men on bicycles attacking other bike riders and stealing their backpacks. On Hamden's portion of the trail there were two girls who robbed a third girl on the trail. It was determined that they knew each other and it was a set up meeting.

Should we put emergency phones in southern Hamden when we don't have them in the northern portion? Mr. Horowitz said why not deal with the issue as needed, not just because we have to deal with the whole trail in the same way. Mr. Kops said there will be two emergency phones, one at the Lock Keeper's House and one at the pending substation. The feeling is that if someone seeks refuge at these places and no staff is on site, they would at least have the phones.

Ms. Larson said when she redid the kiosks, there were rules posted in them. There are two bulletin boards in the northern section and none in the south. New Haven has rules at Science Park and possibly at other locations. Mr. Weiner said if a taxpayer is requesting signage and you don't give it to them, your telling them that you don't care about their problem. There was further discussion on signage. Mr. Schaefer said we haven't had damage or graffiti to our trail signs, but if we do install signs, they have to be damage and graffiti proof. He will call Tom Balskus at Milone and MacBroom to discuss this.

Mr. Horiwitz said the Farmington Canal Rails to Trails Association is always looking to donate funds for the trail. Perhaps if we want to put a kiosk in the southern section like the ones in the northern section, we could come up with a proposal to present to them. Mr. Schaefer said that was a very generous offer, and we will pursue it.

Mr. Kops said he has yet to get Public Works to respond to the issues that were raised last summer and fall about the repairs/capital improvements along the trail with the \$100,000 the Legislative Council gave to the commission.

The repairs to the Treadwell Street Bridge are underway. The Bridge was in sad shape and the State ordered the repairs. The Schultz Company is handling it and it seems to be going well. They have managed to do about half of it without blocking the trail. Mr. Kops said the problem is water coming down into it, causing chunks of concrete to fall.

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

Ms. Becker asked if we are ever going to see the mileage signs repainted. Mr. Schaefer said we will have to do it. In the realm of things Public Works has to do, this would be pretty far down the list. In response to Mr. Anton, Mr. Schaefer said our mileage starts at the Cheshire border and goes south.

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

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

Mr. Anton said a cone was placed by the pot hole he reported at the last meeting.

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

8. Old Business

9. New Business

Mr. Schaefer will give Ms. Larson contact information for John Torgeson, so she can get updates as to whether or not the trail has been plowed.

Mr. Anton asked if there is a standard for how far trees should be from the trail. Shade is good but roots are bad. Mr. Schaefer said the edging that is available for keeping roots from going under pathways is prohibitively expensive. He will get information on the machine that the New Haven Country Club uses to cut roots along their paths.

Mr. Horowitz mentioned that Southington has some state money for its trail and Plainville, which has major problems, is getting some money to come up with a route.

Mr. Anton said how exciting it must have been for the commission during the planning and construction of the trail. Mr. Schaefer mentioned that we have to focus on maintenance and potential connections to other recreational areas such as East Rock Park, the RWA property and Southern Connecticut State University, all of which have been mentioned.

Mr. Kops mentioned the project at 380 Mather Street previously owned by Mr. English. The Tagliatella Family is now involved and there will be a connection from the trail up to Mather Street. 400 apartments are proposed. Mr. Schaefer said Mather Street is a major east/west road, but there are no sidewalks.

Ms. Larson said one of the Facebook followers put up a map including lodging along the trail in MA.

Mr. Horowitz said there has been an obstacle in New Haven with property owners not wanting to give construction easements. He was told those legal problems have been resolved. They hope to go out to bid this year with construction starting in 2016. Mr. Schaefer said that when they get to Grove Street they will have bicycle lanes separated from the roadway but at street level.

Mr. Schaefer explained the agreement we had with New Haven allowing Hamden to use the money from the five-year federal highway appropriation first, as long as we didn't ask for more money after the initial request. We did our portion for \$1 million less than we received and used that to do the tunnel.

Mr. Blandon said the lady at the glass shop on Whitney Avenue agreed to redo two of the sign posts with information under plexiglass that are no longer readable. Mr. Schaefer spoke of the signs they use in Montgomery AL with less information in larger print so they are easier to read.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Larson made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Blandon seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Clerk of the Commission