

***SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
HAMDEN BOARD OF TRAFFIC AUTHORITY***

***Third Floor Conference Room
Hamden Government Center
Wednesday, June 23, 2010
7:00 P.M.***

MINUTES

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. Kerzner, Mr. Migliaro, Mr. Higgins, Mr. Iezzi,
Ms. Curtis

Others in Attendance: Interested Citizens, Town Attorney Gruen, Police
Chief Wydra, Deputy Chief Cappiello, Acting
Clerk Tobin

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mr. Kerzner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and explained the procedures for the meeting. Clerk Tobin called the roll.

2. New Business

a. Skiff St. Beckerman Athletic Center driveway

Chief Wydra reported that he has stepped up enforcement activities in the area of the driveway. A memorandum from Assistant Town Attorney Richard Baltimore was distributed regarding the authority to set the speed limit on a town road, and the authority to designate a school zone. Mr. Kerzner read from the memorandum, which basically states that any change on roadway speed limits and signage has to go to the State Traffic Commission for its approval. The local Traffic Authority has the right to designate school zones. Attorney Baltimore's memorandum is attached and includes information from Connecticut General Statutes §14-212b.

Chief Wydra said there are two properties on Skiff Street in that area that have school related activities. He recommends the board take action. He sees no harm in taking action. Skiff Street has a lot of traffic being an east /west corridor, and the traffic travels at high speeds. He suggested the area between Aces and Beckerman be designated a school zone.

Mr. Iezzi made a motion to place signs in the area designating a school zone, in the area Chief Wydra finds favorable. Ms. Curtis seconded the motion.

The speed from Dixwell Avenue to Whitney Avenue is currently 35 mph. Across the road in North Haven, the speed limit on Skiff Street is posted at 25 mph. Mr. Migliaro questioned the fine applicable in a school zone. Mr. Higgins asked what about complying with North Haven and making it 25 mph. Mr. Kerzner said we have to apply to the State Traffic Commission (STC).

Ms. Curtis said that if you go to the STC it will take months to do, possibly over a year. Mr. Iezzi said the value of the school zone signs is to alert people that those schools are there, and then put up the speed limit signs once approved by the State Traffic Commission. Ms. Gruen asked who is going to make the application.

The vote was unanimous in favor.

Ms. Curtis made a motion that the Traffic Authority make application to the State Traffic Commission for a reduced speed of 25 miles per hour for the designated school zone on Skiff Street. Mr. Higgins seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

b. Skiff Street Underpass/Tunnel – Farmington Canal Greenway

Attorney David Schaefer, Chairman of the Farmington Canal Commission, addressed the Commission. When the trail was initially planned it was just after the bridge was taken down. They originally planned to go over the bridge, and the next plan would be to go under the parkway when the bridge, which was on a state list for replacement, was replaced. The bridge has been repaired and is no longer on the state's unsafe list. Mr. Schaefer said the trail goes along the Merritt and comes up to Skiff Street to the crossing light.

The Town received an application last year for new shopping center at 100 Skiff Street, the former LFE property. The Applicant went to the state and state said they would only give permission for the project if the trail crossing light was eliminated. The shopping center driveway would align with Stop & Shop's driveway. Berkshire Development agreed to pay for the design of the tunnel under Skiff Street. The design was done, but the development fell through at least for now. The trail construction from Hamden High School to the New Haven border was being done. We got earmarked money joint with New Haven, which allowed Hamden to use the funds first because Hamden was ready go go forward and New Haven was not. We told them we needed \$4.4 million, but bids came in \$1 million less. We built Phase III, went back and got permission to use the remaining funds with the help of Rosa DeLauro and Joe Lieberman. We designed the tunnel with two options, one to close one lane at a time, the other is to close Skiff Street for two weeks to complete construction. It was \$1 million more to keep one lane open during construction due to shoring up and utilities, etc. Mayor Jackson made the decision to put in the request to close Skiff Street in this area for two weeks. The original plans had two detour routes, with alerts to citizens two weeks ahead. There would be access to all businesses on Skiff Street during construction. One detour would be through Connolly Parkway, and the other from Dixwell Avenue to Whitney Avenue. At a Planning & Zoning meeting there was concern expressed about traffic in Spring Glen. Planning & Zoning approved the project and it is ready to go to the Legislative Council. Mr. Schaefer was at the meeting to ask permission to close a portion of the road. Utilities do not have to be moved. The precast concrete culvert gets slid into place. The Town is revising the plans to only request the Dixwell to Whitney Avenue detour. The Town is making every effort to do one detour route if the state permits. If they require two routes, we will urge them to allow one route. Final plans will be going to the state in the next couple of weeks. The project will go out to bid in August, and construction will start in October. The concern is, with the budget crisis in the state and federal governments, the funds might not be available in the future. This project will provides jobs and a safer recreational resource. The trail is extremely popular, and Hamden's most used

recreational facility. The trail is now a commuter route that goes all the way to the Yale campus. Ms. Curtis asked what happens if the construction goes on for more than two weeks. Mr. Schaefer responded that the contract will require that the job be completed in two weeks or there would be penalties.

John Morrison, a member of the executive board of the Spring Glen Civic Association. He said there are two schools in the area with kids walking from several directions, and also Hamden High School on the other side of Connolly Parkway. He wants to see detour signs and police authority on school mornings. He said you can't stop people from cutting through streets in Spring Glen to get to New Haven and suggested police monitoring traffic.

Mr. Iezzi asked where he wanted the police stationed. Mr. Morrison said where streets converge near Connolly Parkway, and at the overpass, and at Skiff Street directing people north. Mr. Higgins asked how many officers and what time frame would he suggest. Mr. Morrison responded two officers from 7:00 to 8:30 a.m. and 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. for the two week period. Attorney Schaefer believes the only money in the budget would be for safety personnel at the construction site. Police would not have the money in their budget, but perhaps they could get some help.

Elaine Dove, president of the Spring Glen Civic Association presented the information to the Association at its annual meeting on June 2nd. They expressed concerns regarding traffic going through Spring Glen. Members are in favor of the project with the stipulation that speed humps be installed on the streets going from Norris through Woodlawn. She spoke to Mayor Jackson and understands that this is a possibility. She agrees with Mr. Morrison on police presence.

Mr. Iezzi asked if speed bumps were worked into project budget. Ms. Dove said no, they would be from a different source.

Mary McKeon, 53 Thornton Street, lives on the corner by Bedford Street. They walk the neighborhood with their dogs. Many people blow the stop signs. They have tractor trailers going down the street. We need to find a way to remove the tractor trailers from the streets in Spring Glen on a daily basis, not just for the two week period.

David Hennigan, Council Representative of 64 Waite Street said he would appreciate it if the Police Chief could figure out by the next council meetings what the cost would be for the police presence and where the funds would be allocated from. He would also like to see someone figure out what the humps would cost.

Mr. Iezzi said permission for placing anything on the street rests with this commission, not the Council. Mr. Hennigan agreed

Mr. Roscow of 127 Woodlawn Street, vice chair of the Planning Commission, and speaking as a resident, said the streets in Spring Glen are cut through streets, and many of their streets are already used to get back and forth to Dixwell Avenue. They have a 25 mph speed zone, and people are well over double that. People park on both sides of the road. Many of these streets are one way in part, and there are bigger problem when high school gets out. He would like to see there just be one detour designated. The reality is even designating and putting police

officers at the location probably won't dissuade people from cutting through. He said the speed humps on Waite Street seem to work.

Mr. Morrison said the trucks used to try to cut through Connolly Parkway, but the overpass is low and sometime tractors get wedged underneath. Trucks should be sent north. Concerns were raised at P&Z, but they approved the project with no stipulations. Everyone wants to support making the trail safe.

Attorney Schaefer said that a similar tunnel was installed under both sides of the Merritt Parkway and that was completed in six days. He does not know what the penalties are for not completing the process within the two week period. Every business will still have access, but not all the way through. All businesses have been notified. S&S is donating the required easements across their property for access to the trail. Notification will be given a significant time in advance. Signs will go up giving the dates of closing, a couple of weeks prior

Mr. Iezzi asked regarding the funding of speed humps and police officers, is that in our jurisdiction. Mr. Kerzner said that this committee has no fiscal authority. Traffic makes the decision based on safety. Mr. Kerzner said humps are a danger to drivers, and what happens in winter with the plows? He is interested in getting money to supplement police activity for patrolmen and a car. It is up to the Legislative Council that has to say okay, we have to allocate funds to ensure public safety.

Mr. Migliaro said the speed humps on Waite Street were never brought before this commission. Mr. Kerzner said the signage is also illegal, referring to Waite Street. Mr. Roscow said those humps are designed to allow snow plowing.

Mr. Kerzner said the Farmington Canal Project needs an approval. We have people with salient points regarding speed, the detour, police issues, safety issues, the safety of children in the neighborhood. Chief Wydra said most of the discussion is not about the project. Chief Wydra is concerned regarding lighting at the construction sight at night and on weekends. Mr. Schaefer said there is schematic detail of the signage, barricades, and warning lights that are going to be put up. The design engineers are Milone and MacBroom, and Tom Balskus is the lead.

Chief Wydra received a document from Dan Kops on 5/25 pertaining to the camera. That is the only information he has received.

Mr. Iezzi made a motion to approve the Skiff Street Underpass with the stipulation that Chief Wydra will be point man and the plan must meet his qualified approval to continue. Mr. Migliaro added that only one detour from Dixwell Avenue to Whitney Avenue will be authorized. Mr. Higgins seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

c. Hasan Islamic Center 2nd Annual Health Fair August 14, 2010

Shahid Abdul Kareem Hasan, director of public relations of the Hasan Islamic Center addressed the Board. He is asking for permission to have a portion of Easton, Alstrum, and Cherry Ann Streets blocked from traffic on Saturday, August 14, 2010 from 8:00 a.m. To 4:00 p.m. While the main portion of the fair will be held inside their facility and in their parking lot, he is

concerned for the safety of people attending. Residents in the community have been made aware of the fair. They had the same event two years ago, and had one police office participating in the event. Police presence is a good idea. The traffic Authority approved their event two years ago. Officer Glifort attended two years ago and Hasan believes he is coming back this year.

Chief Wydra said he is always in favor of these events, but Easton and Alstrum are heavily traveled. Mr. Hasan said they won't have anything on the streets. Tables, etc. will be in their parking lot. Chief Wydra asked if fire apparatus and ambulances will be able to get through. Mr. Hasan replied yes. yes.

Mr. Iezzi made a motion to approve the Hasan Islamic Center's 2nd annual health fare to be held on August 14, 2010. Mr. Higgins seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

3. Open Discussion – Commissioners/Department Heads
None

4. Adjournment

Ms. Curtis made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Higgins seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Acting Clerk