

Hamden Board of Traffic Authority Minutes of the Meeting of June 9, 2010

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

Others in Attendance: Town Attorney Sue Gruen
Police Chief Thomas Wydra
Deputy Chief John Cappiello

Commissioners Absent: Raeann Curtis (excused)

Mr. Kerzner explained the procedures for the meeting.

1. Call to Order – Roll Call

1. Mr. Kerzner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Acting Clerk Tobin called the roll.

2. Acceptance of the minutes of the May 12, 2010 Meeting

Mr. Migliaro made a motion to accept the minutes of May 12, 2010. Mr. Higgins seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

3. Department Report

a. Review of Department Activity

Chief Wydra reported that two major projects continue at Westwoods Road and Whitney Avenue, and the Whitney Avenue Traffic Signal. The report is attached herewith.

b. Items of concern – none reported

c. Review of site plans – no site plans to review

d. Correspondence

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Letters from Molly Teplitzky, regarding the entrance to the Beckerman Athletic Center at Skiff Street, and Abdul Majid Karim Hasan Islamic Center, regarding their Health Awareness Advisory Council – both letters are attached.

4. Public/Media comments on agenda items

Molly Teplitzky of 39 Maplevale Drive, Woodbridge, addressed the Commission. She is a student at Hamden Hall and just received her learners permit. She will be driving to school, and commented on the high traffic speed on Skiff Street and the fact there are other student facilities in the area. She would like to see the area designated a school zone with a 25 mph speed limit. There has been one bike/automobile accident at this driveway.

Mr. Kerzner mentioned that making a left turn into Beckerman is an illegal left turn. Bikers and cars have to respect each other. This issue will be discussed under new business.

Elaine Dove Spring Glen Civic Association mentioned the closing of Skiff Street for the construction of an underpass for the Farmington Canal Greenway crossing. Mr. Kerzner replied that that item was not on the agenda.

David Schaefer, Chairman of the Farmington Canal Commission was in attendance and said he apologized, but he thought it was going to be on the agenda.

Mr. Schaefer said the item that would be before the Board is time sensitive, and he hopes to bring it to the Legislative Council for final approval at the end of June, early July meeting cycle.

Mr. Kerzner said the Traffic Authority normally does not meet in July, but a Special Meeting could be called.

5. Old Business

a. Putnam Avenue Bike Lane

Chief Wydra said he has spoken to Mayor Jackson a few times regarding this subject, including this afternoon. The Mayor said there is funding available should the Board decide to approve the project. The paint alone may cost in the area of \$10,000. They have to put the traffic technician in the same room with the person from Milone and MacBroom that drafted the plan. He recommends approval contingent on final approval by the Town in collaboration with Milone and MacBroom. The professionals should meet and iron out the details. Mr. Higgins asked Chief Wydra if he could see any possibility of unseen developments popping up, and Chief Wydra said no. The Chief sees no reason not to approve the plan with appropriate contingencies. Mr. Kerzner asked what can of worms might this open up in the rest of the Town. Town Attorney Gruen asked if this needs an §8-24 review, asking the Planning & Zoning Commission to approve a municipal improvement for consistency with the Plan of Development of the Town. This might answer further questions.

Attorney Gruen explained that improvements to a right of way would require approval by the Legislative Council as well as the Traffic Authority, and as part of the process it would be

referred to P&Z for an opinion, and P&Z would then make a recommendation to the Legislative Council. Wydra said they put paint on the road all the time. There was further discussion.

Mr. Iezzi made a motion to approve the Putnam Avenue Bike Lane based on the contingency that Milone and MacBroom and the traffic technician get together to settle outstanding issues. Mr. Migliaro seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

6. New Business

a. Skiff Street Beckerman Athletic Center Driveway

Mr. Kerzner said the Board has heard testimony from Ms. Teplitzky. He said there are speed limit signs of 35 mph at the Whitney Avenue and Dixwell Avenue intersections with Skiff Street. There are no school zone signs as there are in other parts of town. Cars traveling eastbound come at a rapid clip but he can't be specific about the speed. He feels Ms. Teplitzky's letter has merit, and he would like to see this transpire.

Mr. Higgins asked Chief Wydra if he had any comments. Chief Wydra said we would need more evidence as to accidents or speed over a period of time. Mr. Kerzner said this might have to go to the State Traffic Commission. There are ACES facilities on Skiff Street, in addition to the athletic center. Attorney Gruen said we can research and get back to the Chief and the Board. Mr. Iezzi said speed and accidents are mentioned in the letter, and he feels consideration should be given to this request. Chief Wydra said his Department could check for definitive data on speed and accidents, and also to see if signs were approved in the past for this area.

Mr. Higgins made a motion to continue this item to the next meeting. Mr. Migliaro seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Mr. Higgins asked if ACES has approached this commission.

b. Hasan Islamic Center Health Fair August 14th

There was no one in the audience to speak to this issue. There is a letter in the file. The Hasan Islamic Center came before this Board last year for a road closure for some activity. Chief Wydra said an event was held there on June 5th.

Mr. Higgins made a motion to continue this item to the next meeting. Mr. Migliaro seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

7. Open Discussion – Commissioners/Department Heads

Assistant Town Planner Dan Kops asked permission to present material for the next month's meeting regarding the underpass for the Farmington Canal Trail. He presented six copies of the letter and the plan for review at the next meeting of the Board. Mr. Kops will mail a copy to Ms. Curtis.

Mr. Schaefer asked to make a brief presentation on the tunnel under Skiff Street. He said the underpass is being designed because the State Traffic Commission told the Farmington Canal Commission they cannot keep their stop light and crosswalk if the property at 100 Skiff is developed in the future. The property owner that was planning to develop a shopping center at that location agreed to pay for engineering work to see if a tunnel was feasible. Because the project never went forward, the Town found other funds to design the tunnel. There will be no impact on utilities. The Town requested permission to use Federal money left over from Phase III, (\$1million). After some discussion they said yes, but the money might not be their forever. This is a shovel ready project and the State is interested in moving forward now, but we are not sure what might happen in the future. Planning and Zoning has approved this project, the required easements are in place, and the project is going before the Zoning Board of Appeals on June 17th. Hopefully it will go to the Legislative Council at end of this month and be in the ground October or early November. Keeping Skiff Street open during construction would cost approximately an additional \$1 million, so the Commission is asking for permission to close Skiff Street for up to two weeks (by construction contract) during construction. All businesses will have access to their properties. The tunnel will be built immediately west of the Merritt Parkway.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Iezzi made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Migliaro seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Acting Clerk