



TOWN OF HAMDEN

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Scott D. Jackson
Mayor

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Dear Neighbor:

The history of the Woodin Street fence is long, complex and emotional. A half century ago, the City of New Haven chose an abandoned pig farm as a geographically secluded area to build low-income housing. What was a secluded area for New Haven was simultaneously Hamden's backyard. Crime, poverty, drug abuse, segregation and sub-standard education led to one of the poorest and most dangerous places in our region in which to live, or live near.

Over the years, a series of fences were erected on the site. In recent years, the housing projects have been demolished and a new, mixed income development is being constructed. As part of this project, the New Haven Housing Authority requested the removal of the fence to improve transportation circulation.

Over the last few years, the Woodin Street neighborhood has been forceful in communicating its desire to keep the fence standing. I committed to listening to the neighborhood's concerns. As your Mayor, I have prided myself on being a guardian of an open and public process, along with checks and balances. It was my intention to have this controversial issue go through a full public forum process, with numerous opportunities for stakeholder input which would include Town Commissions and the Legislative Council.

Unfortunately, circumstances have changed.

On Tuesday, the New Haven Housing Authority will begin removing portions of the Woodin Street fence. Unbeknownst to Hamden until very recently, preparation for a civil rights legal action recently initiated by the New Haven Housing Authority revealed that the fence is actually built on property owned by the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven. Furthermore, the Housing Authority has sought permission from the Federal Government to file a lawsuit against the Town of Hamden. This past week, the legal facts of the case were developed in a mediation session conducted by the Civil Rights Division of the United States Attorney's Office. Legal representation from the Town of Hamden, the New Haven Housing Authority, the U.S. Justice Department and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development were all present.

To reiterate, the fence is owned by the New Haven Housing Authority – we do not have any authority to prevent the Housing Authority from taking down a fence on their property. Despite this reality, the following is clear: neither Hamden nor New Haven will tolerate a return to the

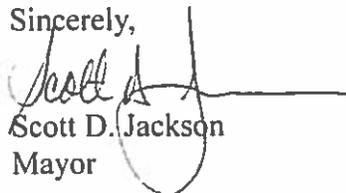
problems of old. Moving forward we will work in every way possible to address the concerns of our citizens most directly affected.

To this point, we will act.

- 1) Starting Tuesday, Hamden will launch an expanded community bike patrol, which will focus on the Woodin Street area neighborhood. The police officers assigned will be available to discuss your concerns, give information and provide an immediate and visible public safety presence.
- 2) In addition, a Police Sub-Station, manned by both Hamden and New Haven Police Officers, will be established on-site and provide significantly enhanced long-term police presence.
- 3) To address the concerns of additional traffic, speed and pedestrian safety, the Town will begin implementing traffic calming road, sidewalk and cross-walk improvements designed to improve Woodin Street's overall safety and slow traffic. Improvements may include enhanced signage, the installation of speed humps, better quality crosswalks and the installation of speed compliance units.

While I know many of you will not be happy to receive this news, I feel it is important that you hear it from me first and get the whole story. These are the hard facts with which we have been presented. I have worked to listen to and support your concerns and will continue to work tirelessly to take active measures to ensure the safety and quality of life in your neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Scott D. Jackson
Mayor