



# TOWN OF HAMDEN

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Center**

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**Curt Balzano Leng**

**Mayor**

MINUTES: The Farmington Canal Commission, Town of Hamden, held a Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 21, 2021 in the Veterans Building at Brooksvale Park. The following topics were discussed.

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. Mallory, Mr. Schaefer, Mr. Anton, Mr. Reger, Mr. Horowitz, Ms. Maloney, Mr. Radcliffe

Commissioners Excused: Ms. Sharma

Others in Attendance: Ms. Bannish of the New Haven & Northampton Canal Greenway Alliance, Ms. Tobin, Commission Clerk

### **1. Call to Order**

Introduction of Guest Christy Bannish, NHNCG Alliance volunteer, to discuss the unified greenway name - New Haven and Northampton Canal Greenway

Ms. Bannish explained that the NHNCG (New Haven Northampton Canal Greenway) Alliance is asking for letters of support from the towns in Connecticut and Massachusetts approving a unified name for the trails in locations along the Greenway, which will eventually extend to Boston. The State of Connecticut is looking at a map of all the trails. The Alliance assures that towns would not have to change their existing signage and that there would be no costs or jurisdictional issues, only a unified name. New Haven Northampton Canal Greenway logo signs would be placed at locations along the trails involved. Their signs would be small and show the interconnected trail. She mentioned that the East Coast Greenway does not encompass our Farmington Canal Heritage Trail because it cuts off at Simsbury. Unified trail maps would be the next step.

Mr. Schaefer mentioned there is a lot of history with the Farmington Canal and the railroad. He would like to see a one page description of what this proposal is and what it isn't. The Alliance must not have any jurisdiction of what happens on our trail. Mr. Mallory suggested their sign should say "this trail is part of the New Haven Northampton Canal Greenway". Hamden was the first town in Connecticut to complete its portion of the trail, and our ten mile section is the longest stretch of the trail in the state. To be part of the larger trail, Ms. Schaefer wants assurances that we will not be affected by any decisions made by the Alliance. Ms. Bannish commented that the Alliance's goal is to promote the trail. She produced a two page letter dated July 22, 2021 showing the benefits of a larger trail network and said that seven branch rail trail groups that make up the Alliance have agreed on this proposal. The umbrella name will be used in addition to the continued use of the section names, with the benefit of gaining recognition as part of a much larger greenway network. Mr. Schaefer remarked that he would like to see a list

of benefits, those things that are going to happen and those things that are not going to happen. He wants assurance that there will be no legal, financial or other implications to our Hamden portion of the trail.

Mr. Schaefer mentioned that our trail was built with Federal Highway funds and explained the process for our new Commissioners.

2. Review Minutes of June 1, 2021

**Ms. Maloney made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2021 meeting. Mr. Reger seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

3. Report from Matt Davis

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

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

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

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

8. Old Business

Mr. Schaefer mentioned that the Town has done some reorganizing and has incorporated the Planning & Zoning Department with the Economic Development Department. Mr. Davis is still our designated liaison.

Mr. Schaefer explained the Freedom of Information requirements to Commissioners. If a quorum of Commission members is involved in a conversation whether in person or on line, or telephone, that conversation must be available to the public under the FOI. If two or three members get together to prepare information, or other items related to Commission business that will be presented to the Commission as a whole, that does not fall under FOI. Mr. Schaefer brought up the survey as an example. Commissioners must vote on it and because we are an advisory Commission, we must get permission from the Town to send it out.

Mr. Schaefer also advised the Commission regarding the letters sent out to the Mayor and other members of Town government. We voted on doing that. There was continued discussion. There were some revisions to the potential survey, making a couple of adjustments to section identifiers. A notice that people's personal information will not be used without individual permission will be added. Results will be tabulated and used as a whole. Once approval is received from the Town, the survey will go out via Survey Monkey and handouts. After thirty days, responses will be tabulated.

**Mr. Schaefer asked for a motion. Ms. Maloney made a motion to approve the survey as revised. Mr. Horowitz seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Mr. Schaefer brought up the issue of safety. He send a letter to Craig Cesare, Director of Public

Works regarding the cutting back of the brush at intersections, and Mr. Cesare agreed that would be taken care of. He also sent a letter to the Traffic Commission, which is staffed by the Police Department. The Chief's Secretary, Soroya Antonini reported that the Commission met on July 12<sup>th</sup> and this item would be on the agenda, not for action, but to raise the concern. Police Chief Sullivan went out to investigate and recommended new signage and tree trimming. The next meeting of the Traffic Commission will take place on August 9<sup>th</sup> via zoom. On the Town's website, go to the Hamden Traffic Commission where there will be a link for the agenda for that meeting. Some more expensive things may need to be done, such as flashing lights, etc.

Mr. Schaefer also wrote a letter to the Mayor to see if he objected to us reaching out to Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro regarding funds for the trail. Earmarks were done away with years ago, but have been brought back. Each congress person can put forward a list of projects for funding. Congresswoman DeLauro's list had an Ansonia bridge on it. They need a new bridge to redevelop an old copper processing plant. All of our trail funds have come through the Federal Government. We have the Mayor's support. He suggests Mr. Schaefer reach out to Ms DeLauro's staff person. Earmarks have to be listed publicly. Mr. Radcliffe mentioned that we can use the responses from the survey to determine how any funding could be used. There was further discussion. Mr. Schaefer feels we need \$100,000 each year for at least five years. He spoke to Finance Director Scott Jackson regarding the amount in the capital budget that would be set aside for the trail. Mr. Jackson explained that the rating is due July 27<sup>th</sup>, and then the capital budget can be prepared, as the ratings will determine what the Town can borrow.

#### 9. New Business

Mr. Horowitz said he would save this discussion for the next meeting, but he feels speed on the trail is a growing problem. Mr. Reger mentioned that he will be out of town from September 8<sup>th</sup> to October 12<sup>th</sup>, but if needed for a quorum for the September meeting, he could call in to the meeting.

#### 10. Adjournment

**There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Schaefer asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Mallory so moved. Ms. Maloney seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.**

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gerry Tobin, Clerk of the Commission