



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING HELD TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2017
TOWN HALL SOUTH CONFERENCE ROOM
3 MAIN STREET, NEWTOWN

**These minutes are not finalized until approved
At the next regularly scheduled meeting.*

PRESENT: Dan Rosenthal, Virgil Procaccini, Andy Sachs, Vice-Chairman Brian Budd, and Chairman Joel Faxon

ABSENT: none

ALSO PRESENT: Chief James Viadero, Captain Chris Vanghele, Chris Hottois part owner of 33 Main Street and partner in Flint Ridge Development 1 member of the press, and 11 members of the public

Chairman Faxon called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Robert Hall, 5 Nettleton Avenue, asked what was being done at the intersection here, particularly at the bridge over the brook where there appears to be a road. Chief Viadero stated that the road was merely an access point for construction. Mr. Hall asked if there was a map. The Chief noted there should be one on file with the Town.

Mike Guman, Main Street, told Commissioners he was there with regard to the plans for the Flag Pole intersection. He noted that one part of the plan shows additional parking in front of his neighbor's house across the street. Mr. Guman said he didn't think that was an ideal situation.

Charles Zukowski, 4 Cornfield Ridge, asked if there was public participation during the discussion regarding the Main Street Pedestrian Traffic Study. Chairman Faxon noted that there might be and indicated there was also a point at the end of the meeting for public participation. The Chairman stated that they would be going over the plan again that evening.

Mr. Zukowski said he goes by the intersection a lot when he walks with his wife. He suggested that for them walking on the West Street part of the intersection is the most dangerous because there is really no place to walk like there is on the rest of Main Street where there are sidewalks. Mr. Zukowski suggested that with the new proposed parking behind the Meeting House the Board should consider putting sidewalks along West Street.

Deborah Zukowski, 4 Cornfield Ridge, said she agreed as she walks with him. She noted that there is a hedge near the corner on West Street that forces them to walk in the middle of the lane to be seen. Mrs. Zukowski stated that the new owners of the property were trying to keep the hedge in good standing. She told the Board that a man trimming the hedge had seen a woman walking a child through a yard to avoid walking on the road to get the bus. Mrs. Zukowski suggested that side of the road should be addressed further.

Sherry Bermingham, 42 Main Street, stated she was disturbed about the plan's proposed parking in front of the residence. She questioned how the property owner would feel about this. Mrs.

Birmingham suggested that all the people parking on Main Street were the staff of the restaurant and suggested that residents shouldn't have to suffer because of the staff. She added that Jean St. Jean had assured them the staff would park by the bank and behind the old Town Hall but Mrs. Birmingham said that wasn't happening.

John Birmingham, 42 Main Street, told the Board that it would be productive to have a sign for public parking by the old Town Hall.

Charlie Gardner, 17 Walnut Tree Hill Road, indicated he had just moved into the area and indicated the additional parking would increase the width of the pavement which didn't seem to be along with the protocol of the plan. He added that the parking behind the Meeting House would be dangerous. Mr. Gardner noted that the plan suggests there is insufficient parking but he told the Board that after normal business hours there is an abundance of parking on Main Street.

Paul Mangiafico, 15 Kent Road, former Chairman of the Board of Police Commissioners, stated that when the Main Street Streetscape Project was originally presented in February there was barely anyone there. He suggested that it was unfortunate that no one present was at that meeting; and he suggested that the Board present the project again. Mr. Mangiafico indicated that he was involved with the situation over the past few years and it wasn't easy to correct. He believed that they should never endanger pedestrians because of the geometry of an intersection. Mr. Mangiafico added that there was always a great difficulty reaching an accord between moving traffic safely and continuing to maintain the ambiance of Main Street. He said he recalled a resident suggesting several years ago that a traffic light up the road just north of the old Town Hall to put a break in traffic allowing vehicles to cross through the intersection more easily. Mr. Mangiafico added that people were opposed to the light. He said he was very impressed with the Main Street Streetscape Project presentation. Mr. Mangiafico said it appears to have a solution which appeals to everyone – slowing traffic while keeping the appearance of Main Street – and he is very pleased with that. He suggested it might take some tweaking but the plan was fundamentally good. Mr. Mangiafico added that this was a decades old problem and he encouraged the Board to approve that concept because it keeps the ambiance and controls traffic.

POLICE UNION PARTICIPATION: none

CONSIDERATION AND ACTION ON THE MINUTES: March 7, 2017:

Vice-Chairman Budd moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting March 7, 2017.

Commissioner Rosenthal seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Viadero reported that it had been a very busy two weeks while he was away. He told Commissioners that Captain Vanghele did a great job. He informed the Board that there had been a serious accident over the weekend. The Chief indicated that a suspect in another Town was being pursued and collided with another vehicle in Newtown head-on. He said that the suspect's vehicle literally split in half. Chief Viadero commended Officer Schoen for saving the suspects life. Chairman Faxon thanked Officer Schoen for the job he did. He noted that this was a situation where the positive – saving a life, outweighs the negative – the fact he was a fleeing suspect. The Chairman also commended Officer Schoen for a job well done and added that he reflects well upon the men and women of the Department. Pipe Bombs Discovered – Chief Viadero reported that an individual had discovered pipe bombs under his car. He said that the detective bureau along with the State and FBI were involved in the investigation. The chief added that they were hoping to make an arrest very soon. Man Killed Working On Car – The Chief Viadero told Commissioners that on Sunday a man was killed when the car he was working on fell off its jack and pinned him underneath. Captain and the Council – The Chief stated that Captain Vanghele did a phenomenal job in his absence addressing the Legislative

Council with regards to the budget. New Furniture – Chief Viadero indicated that they were trying to clean up the building to make room for the new furniture. New Computer Program – Chief Viadero praised Lieutenant Kullgren for the work he did developing a new program which provides better information updates to the department's computers and laptops in the patrol vehicles. Health and Wellness Training – The Chief noted that Sgt. Ruszczyk was working with Hearts 911 to launch a training program in May. He added that the health and wellness class teach officers how to deal with stress. New Recruit Status – Chief Viadero reported that due to some delays, the department's newest recruit, Julio, is sitting on the bench at the moment with regard to training at the academy. He said hopefully he will start Monday. Correspondence – The Chief said the Department received a thank you letter from the DC Metro Police regarding its officers' assistance down there during the Presidential Inauguration.

CAPTAIN'S REPORT: Captain Vanghele indicated that the only items he had to report were for the Executive Session.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion on Referendum for New Building – Chief Viadero suggested that everyone is following the details in *The Bee*. He stated that the Capital Improvement Plan developed by the Legislative Council suggests that \$300,000 will be needed for the design and implementation and then two years after that \$5 million for the first year and \$5 million for the second year will be needed for the building. The Chief said that the Council would like voters to attend a referendum. He said he wanted to assure voters and the Board that the initial design was not going to cost \$300,000 but rather only about \$50,000 as the rest of the total cost would be getting it out to build. Chief Viadero stated that the new building would be up on the Fairfield Hills Campus. He said that there was a 12 step plan needed and the department was already on step 5. Chief Viadero stated that the Department has expressed what its need is for a new building and has done its due diligence. He added that it was now going to the voters. The Chief added that they have no intention of spending \$300,000 for the initial design.

Commissioner Rosenthal suggested putting a letter in the paper speaking to the project between now and the referendum on April 25.

Chairman Faxon said that it was unfortunate that the amount (\$300,000) put in there doesn't represent the methodology to what is being done. He noted that if were it to be done over you would have to know the amounts. The Chairman suggested that in order to prepare the initial proposal there should be a line item to spend a small amount on so voters would have material to make a decision. Chairman Faxon said that unfortunately they don't run the Council so they couldn't make that suggestion.

The Chairman said he hoped voters would understand this was very preliminary and added that the new building is totally needed and that the present building was inadequate.

Chairman Faxon suggested that it was a little backwards the way things were going with regards to the initial amount necessary.

OLD BUSINESS:

Main Street Pedestrian Traffic Study, Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc – Chairman Faxon informed the Board and those in attendance that Mr. Hottois would show his presentation again. The initial presentation was made during the Board of Police Commissioner's regular meeting February 7, 2017.

Mr. Hottois presented the Main Street Streetscape Project which was completed July 12, 2016. He stated that the project came out of a study done by the Board of Police Commissioners in 2005. He noted the Flag Pole intersection has been studied extensively. Mr. Hottois indicated that this was not a traffic study. It was a study done to help improve the situation. He said it's the

in the center of town, a residential active borough community and cultural hub. Mr. Hottois noted that Main Street has very endearing attributes with its Liberty Pole, Meeting House and Town Hall.

-Challenges and Risks-

Road Design – Mr. Hottois stated that the road design prioritizes vehicles and its long wide design facilitates large volume of traffic at a high rate of speed. He noted that the crosswalks were long, visibility was poor, and with the high vehicle speeds the community east and west of Main Street is bifurcated. In addition he said it encourages commercial and commuter traffic and negatively impacts property values.

Meeting House – Mr. Hottois noted that at the Meeting House there is no parking, no designated loading and unloading, and it's historic. He noted that the Meeting House can hold up to 200 people and when it has events it impacts his establishment.

Mr. Hottois said that these are the challenges and risks he is trying to address with this concept.

-Concept Benefits-

Using a projector, Mr. Hottois showed an aerial view of the existing conditions and then showed them the same view with an over-lay of the proposed concept. The concept gave those in attendance a chance to see the highlights of the project - curb extensions, crosswalk refuge islands, and textured medians and road shoulders.

Mr. Hottois suggested this project was a low impact solution to preserve the historic nature of Main Street.

Mr. Hottois also showed the benefits to pedestrian traffic as well as high visibility crosswalks and signage.

-Parking Ideas at the Meeting House-

Mr. Hottois explained that their idea for the meeting house is to have more on street parking with angled pull-in spaces where appropriate which would calm vehicle speeds. He noted that the incremental parking would facilitate Meeting House events. Mr. Hottois highlighted the four proposed parking spaces in the rear of the meeting house as well as the four proposed parking spaces in front of the Dana Holcombe House. He suggested there could be parking put in front of Newtown Savings and in front of 33 Main Street. In addition he showed two concepts for the space in front of the Meeting House – Concept A with parking spaces and Concept B with a front loading and unloading zone.

-Turning Radiuses at Flag Pole-

Mr. Hottois showed the turning radius of a WB-62 Tractor Trailer Truck at the Flag Pole intersection using the proposed concept.

The presentation was complete at 7:30 pm and Chairman Faxon opened the floor to questions.

Mr. Hall asked Mr. Hottois if the bump outs design would force southbound traffic into a single lane and Mr. Hottois said yes. Mr. Hall suggested that there was no reason this couldn't be done now.

Mrs. Zukowski suggested that Mr. Hottois walk that corner where the suggested four spots should be. She said if there is a way to take care of that corner on West Street and extend the side walk it would help but she suggested they would have an issue with the hedge. Mrs. Zukowski also suggested Mr. Hottois see now what people say about the house when its night and the lights come in as cars pull into the proposed parking spaces. She said a hedge between the house and the parking spaces might help. Mr. Hottois stated that this plan was very preliminary. Mrs. Zukowski suggested that he consider a visual shield to the cover those headlights.

Mrs. Bermingham said she did not like it as a neighbor specially having all those cars backing out onto Main Street.

Chairman Faxon thanked everyone for their input. He said that when the CT DOT makes its decisions they want the communities input. The Chairman noted that the Board of Police Commissioners provides the local data regarding traffic matters. He said he believes this is an

unsafe intersection but there are ways to make it safer. Chairman Faxon indicated that traffic lights were not wanted and said the Board is trying to maximize the safe passage of pedestrians, vehicles and bicycles while keeping the ambiance of the area.

Mrs. Zukowski said they worked hard to get the speed of Wasserman way up to 40 mph. She said they should reduce that area on Main Street to 25 mph, adding that Google calculates the fastest route and that would make Wasserman Way the fastest.

Mr. Hottois said that the design's features were to slow traffic down. He said if they reduce traffic to 30 mph they will see a 20% reduction of the current speeds now.

Commissioner Rosenthal indicated that Vice-Chairman Budd, Chief Viadero, and he went up to the State a year ago. He said the State had old traffic data which didn't support the State doing anything. Commissioner Rosenthal stated that they sent more data recently. With regards to State involvement, the Commissioner Rosenthal noted that the State has no money and doesn't want to do anything unless it's publically supported. He said his biggest concern is keeping the traffic in line on the southbound side but said he does struggle with taking private property for parking.

Mr. Hottois said he was just trying to propose an alternate and said he appreciates the opportunity to be there.

Vice-Chairman Budd said he thinks this is something the DOT would support.

Chairman Faxon suggested that another meeting between the CT DOT and the Sub-Committee be set up and that the sub-committee reports back with their beliefs and thoughts.

Vice-Chairman suggested that it wasn't necessary to vote on it because they were only presenting an idea not voting on anything.

Once again Chairman Faxon thanked everyone for coming and the residents attending left the meeting at 7:55 pm.

CORRESPONDENCE: Previously referenced DC Metro Police letter.

COMMISSIONER'S PARTICIPATION:

Commissioner Rosenthal indicated that a resident had expressed concern about the signage before the construction on the bridge on Meadow Brook near the intersection of Route 25. Chief Viadero said he could put signage up. Commissioner Rosenthal stated they needed advance signage.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: none

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Commissioner Budd moved to go into Executive Session at 7:56 pm under section 1-200 6a and 6 c for the to discuss employment of security personnel and invited Chief Viadero and Captain Vanghele to attend. Vice-Chairman Budd seconded and the motion unanimously carried.

At this time the clerk left the meeting.

Commissioners came out of Executive Session at 8:32 pm and Commissioner Rosenthal moved to adjourn. Vice-Chairman Budd seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Ted Swigart, Clerk