

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL POLICE COMMISSION MEETING
of
Tuesday, July 11, 2017**

Commissioners Present: Joseph Savino, Chairman
Charles Knoche, Secretary
Marianne Coffin
George Kain
Thomas Reynolds

Also Present: Chief John Roche

These minutes are an overview of the meeting; not a verbatim text.

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by Chairman Savino.

Agenda Item #1 – Agenda Review

Chairman Savino asked the Commissioners if anyone had any adjustments to the agenda; there were none.

Chairman Savino stated that there would be an Executive Session for personnel matters following the Public Session.

Agenda Item #2 Minutes

Chairman Savino requested a motion to accept the minutes of the June 8, 2017 Police Commission meeting. Commissioner Coffin motioned to accept; Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion.

All in favor

Minutes of June 8, 2017 accepted as written.

Agenda Item #3a Commission Voice Mail

Commissioner Knoche stated that he had new voice mail messages.

Rowland Lane

A resident of Rowland Lane requested a crosswalk installation from Rowland Lane to East Ridge Road and stated that there were two special needs youths who would be using this crosswalk (one in a wheelchair).

After some discussion, the Commissioners agreed that this mid-block location does not fit the requirements for a crosswalk.

Chief Roche will contact the individual who requested the crosswalk.

Ledges Road

A resident on Ledges Road stated that it is difficult to enter and exit his driveway as he cannot see coming out (needs to enter the road with caution) and the driveway cannot be seen when driving until you are there. To enter his driveway, he puts on his signal well in advance in an effort to alert the driver behind him but drivers still tend to tailgate.

Commissioner Kain suggested the possibility of obtaining permission from the property owners opposite this residence to install a mirror which would provide a view of the road on exit (homeowner would be responsible to purchase and install a mirror). Commissioner Kain recommended that the Traffic Officer review this area for any possible safety measures.

The Commissioners feel that this blind driveway is not in the purview of the Commission but Chief Roche will contact the homeowner to discuss the issue.

Agenda Item #3b Commission Written Correspondence

Ridgefield Recreation Center

Chief Roche stated that he received a letter from a resident regarding the safety hazard existing across from the Ridgefield Recreation Center on Danbury Road. The current roadway has an unauthorized dirt pass lane on the right shoulder, heading toward Danbury. This lane has been created by vehicles not wanting to wait behind cars trying to make a left into the recreation center.

As stated in this resident's letter, he wanted to make a left from the recreation center onto Danbury Road (towards Route 7) and drivers courteously stopped and waved him out. As he was entering the Danbury-bound lane, one car pulled from behind the stopped vehicle, entered the unauthorized 'shoulder', and almost created a multiple car collision.

The resident is requesting that this 'shoulder' be closed off to keep all vehicles on the paved road.

The Commissioners discussed this issue and Chief Roche stated that he realizes that this 'shoulder' was created to alleviate traffic back-up but drivers are required to observe the rules of the road. Commissioner Coffin stated that contrary to observation made by resident involved, this is not a bridge-related problem. This gateway was being used before the bridge was started. The Commissioners agreed that this is a State road and a State responsibility. They are in favor of requesting the State to address this situation and make it impossible for cars to find a way around any waiting car.

Chief Roche will follow up with the State on this matter and in the meantime, Officers will be directed to be alert to this area and if they see a back-up, assist with traffic flow.

Poplar Road

A resident of Poplar Road sent a letter requesting assistance with the traffic congestion and speeding which is creating a safety hazard on Poplar Road which had many blind hills, curves and hidden driveways. The resident cites the use of phone technology – WAZE – sends drivers onto Poplar Road and has created a high-speed short cut during peak hours. The resident suggested proactive measures to include:

1. Restrict traffic on 'cut-through' streets at peak hours.
This is not feasible as we cannot interrupt traffic flow in residential areas.
2. Install *Stop* signs at regular intervals on roadway.
Stop signs cannot be used to control speed.
3. Install speed bumps.
Speed bumps are not used to regulate road traffic.

Chief Roche will send a letter to this resident.

Pedestrian Crosswalks

Chief Roche informed the Commissioners that he received an email from the State with notification that the State is undertaking a new project to reduce pedestrian fatalities by improving crosswalk visibility with enhanced signing and pavement markings. Chief Roche stated that he will notify the State that the Town of Ridgefield will partake in this project. A list of the uncontrolled crossing locations within the Town of Ridgefield will be forwarded to the State.

Schlumberger Property

Chief Roche informed the Commissioners that he received plans for the improvements to the existing theater located on the Schlumberger property. Chief Roche stated that there is a public hearing slated for this project on July 18th.

Chief Roche stated that as far as traffic issues, the current plan is to connect the existing driveways at Old Quarry Road which will create a circular drive. There will be no change to the driveway on Sunset Lane which is for emergency vehicle use only.

Agenda Item #4 Chief's Report

Sign Report

- Installed a *25mph Speed Limit* sign on Hamilton Road.
- Installed two *25mph Speed Limit* signs on Remington Road.
- Replaced a *Stop Ahead* sign on Remington Road.
- Installed a *Curve Ahead* sign at 6 Old West Mountain Road.
- Installed a *Stop* sign and *Stop Ahead* sign on Tackora Trail.
- Replaced damaged *Stop* sign at Florida Road and Florida Hill Road.

512 Bennetts Farm Road - requesting speed bumps due to increase in traffic/speeding.

Chief Roche contacted this resident and left a message stating that speed bumps are not an approved option for roadways. The Ridgefield Police Department will conduct radar speed enforcement and schedule the speed trailer for this area.

Main Street Crosswalk – concerns about seeing near-miss pedestrian accidents when using this crosswalk (440 Main Street).

Chief Roche contacted this resident and stated that the Ridgefield Police Department will conduct a Public Relations campaign for the Main St mid-block crosswalk and that the State's Main Street Project includes signs and improvements to the crosswalk.

Old West Mountain Road

A resident at 44 Old West Mountain Road submitted a request that signage be installed in the area of Old West Mountain Road near Barrack Hill Road. The resident is concerned about the speed of vehicles on the road and the limited sight lines at the driveway.

This area was checked by the highway department and they stated that there is not much they can do to improve this area. There is a stone wall that is on the property line and the Town has about a 10' right-of-way. Any work the Town could do in that 10' would not improve the sight line. The resident could make improvements in the stone wall.

Traffic Sign Officer Caswell also reviewed this area. He suggested that the homeowner could pursue installing a mirror across the street from his driveway to improve visibility (permission would be needed from the property owner to install the mirror; the homeowner would be responsible for installing and purchasing the mirror). Officer Caswell also stated that the signage traveling North is adequate. He would recommend that *Dangerous Curve* signs and a *20mph* speed advisory sign be installed in the southbound direction. Officer Caswell also made note of the fact that *Hidden Driveway* signs are not recognized by the State.

Training - May 2017:

- Det. Romero attended Conducting Homicide Investigations in Milford.
- Major Brown attended an Officer Wellness Presentation in Berlin, Ct.
- Det. Romero and Det. DuBord attended Identity Theft training in West Hartford.
- Lt. Platt attended New Driver's License Document Train the Trainer at POSTC.
- Entire Department attended training on Building Search/Rescue Task Force which was a combined training exercise with the Ridgefield Fire Department.

Training - June 2017:

- Lt. Smith attended the CT EMS Expo at Mohegan Sun.
- Captain Comstock attended OSHA Training at WCSU.
- Det. Caswell attended Image Clarification and Processing in Maryland.
- Major Brown, Captain Comstock and Captain Kreitz attended the New

England FBI Conference in Rhode Island.

- Det. DuBord, Det. Caswell and P.O. VanWattum attended Basic Digital Photography for Law Enforcement in Newtown.
- Lt. Fowler attended NG-911 Training in New Haven.

Community Policing / Public Relations - May 2017:

- Chief Roche, Captain Kreitz and SRO Luis attended the Branchville Elementary School DARE Graduation which was instructed by SRO Giglio.
- Captain Terzian and Sgt. Clarke attended an Evening of Prayer at the Keeler Tavern.
- Annual GRADD Ceremony was held at Town Hall.
- SRO Luis attended a Youth Coalition meeting.
- Annual Police Memorial Service was held at The Lounsbury House.
- Chief Roche, Captain Kreitz, Lt. Platt, Sgt. Durling, SRO Luis, Det. Romero, P.O. Ryan, P. O. VanWattum and P.O. DiFalco participated in the Peace with Police Event at the Ridgefield Boys and Girls Club. The event was part of the Boys and Girls Keystone Club's national project aimed at improving relationships between the police and teens through mutual understanding. This event will now be held annually.
- P.O. Siebert gave a tour of HQ to a 2nd grade class.
- The Citizen Police Academy graduation was held – 18 members of the community took part in this year's class.
- Three car seats were installed in May.

Community Policing / Public Relations - June 2017:

- P.O. Seibert gave a tour of Headquarters to a group of pre-schoolers.
- 'FROYO with 5-0' event, in partnership with Peachwave, which was organized by P.O. DiFalco. Lt. Raines, Sgt. Durling, P.O. Murray, SRO Giglio, P.O. VanWattum and P.O. DiFalco represented our Department at the event.
- Special Olympics Torch Run. Major Brown, Captain Terzian, Captain Kreitz, Lt. Gates, Lt. Raines, Lt. Fowler, Sgt. Gogola, Det. Romero, SRO Giglio, P.O. Browning and P.O. Mulvihill participated in the event.
- Lt. Smith gave a child a ride to school (raffle winner from 'FROYO with the 5-0').
- Nine car seats were installed in June.

Frozen Position

Chief Roche notified the Commissioners that the resignation of P.O. Boulware has resulted in a frozen position by the Town. Chief Roche explained that there will be a Town-wide hiring freeze until the State budget is passed. Chief Roche stated that he will continue to conduct the testing process while the freeze is in place.

Department Statistics:

Chief Roche highlighted the statistics for June 2017, a total of 1,571 incidents, to include: 65 Alarms, 23 Medical Assists, 26 Check Wellbeing calls, 11 Radar details, 476 motor vehicle enforcement violations, 7 Smart Trailer deployments and 73 Motor Vehicle Accidents. There were five (5) K-9 assists for the month of June.

Radio System

Chief Roche reported to the Commissioners that the new radio system test is complete and went well. Chief Roche stated that coverage from inside and outside buildings was tested with positive results; Officers commented on the clarity of the transmissions. Chief Roche stated that we will move to digital mode on July 26th when we will have personnel at HQ to take us live.

Agenda Item #5 – No new business**Agenda Item #6a**Bailey Avenue

This item is a continuation from June where Chief Roche stated that he had assisted in measuring out and placing cones at the proposed four parking spaces for Bailey Avenue in order to get a visual of what it would look like. Due to objections to this proposal and a question about the parking time limit on Main Street, the Commissioners decided to address this issue again this month.

Chief Roche stated that he contacted the Town Parking Authority and was informed that the parking on Main Street is mostly two hour parking; the exception would be from Neumann Realty to Deborah Ann's which is 1 hour parking. Lot times in front of businesses range from 1 hour to 90 minutes. The Parking Authority stated that 1 hour parking on the proposed Bailey Avenue spaces would be good. The Parking Authority also suggested using one of the four proposed parking spaces on Bailey Avenue as a handicapped spot. The Commissioners were not on board with this suggestion as the probability of having to cross the street would create a safety issue.

Commissioner Savino stated that the positive regarding the parking proposal is that the Town would pick up four more spaces.

Chief Roche stated that he was thinking about 15 minutes parking for the two spots by Subway and 1 or 2 hour parking for the two spots by Turkey Ridge. In response to Commissioner Kain's concern about trucks making a right onto Bailey Avenue, Chief Roche stated that the State had sent a scheme with measurements outlining the feasibility for tractor trailers to make the right-hand turn.

Commissioner Kain stated he is still completely against this proposal. He cited the fact that if all is perfect, things will go well. What will happen when people decide to pull in and park anywhere there is a space and cars are also parked

on both sides of the street, trucks will definitely have a problem and he believes the fire department will experience issues.

Commissioner Reynolds stated that he is not on board with this idea and questioned what the benefit would be to do this. Chief Roche stated that it would be extra parking to benefit businesses.

Commissioners Kain and Knoche are not in favor of this proposal due to safety issues for trucks, illegal parking in the spaces not marked as legitimate spots and potential issue for fire trucks.

Commissioner Coffin stated that parking is a big issue in Town and suggested that enforcement of parking violations on Bailey Avenue begin now so drivers adhere to the rules. Commissioner Coffin also suggested that we implement the proposed spaces on a trial basis and if it does not work, remove them. Chief Roche stated that once implemented, it would be hard to go back so he would not be in favor of that suggestion.

Commissioner Reynolds stated that by creating parking spaces, trucks would have no place to unload – where do they go to unload?

Due to open-ended questions and lack of agreement on this topic, the Commissioners will postpone this item as the start date for the project is not until 2019. The Commissioners agreed with this postponement.

Agenda Item #6b - Juvenile Review Board

No update at this time.

Agenda Item #6c - I-84 Project

A public meeting on this project will be held at WestConn on July 13th.

Agenda Item #6d – Summer Schedule

After reviewing current items and having no pressing issues, Commissioner Kain motioned to cancel the August meeting; seconded by Commissioner Coffin.

All in Favor

August Police Commission meeting cancelled.

Agenda Item #6e – Police HQ Renovation/Expansion

No update at this time.

Commissioner Reynolds motioned to adjourn Public Session; seconded by Commissioner Kain.

Public Session adjourned at 7:18pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Knoche
Secretary

**MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE
SPECIAL POLICE COMMISSION MEETING
of
Tuesday July 11, 2017**

Commissioners Present: Joseph Savino, Chairman
Charles Knoche, Secretary
Marianne Coffin
George Kain
Thomas Reynolds

Also Present: Chief John Roche

Executive Session commenced at 7:18pm.

Executive Session adjourned at 7:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Knoche
Secretary