

MINUTES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING
of
Monday, January 9, 2017

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

Also Present: Chief John Roche
Major Stephen Brown

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Chairman Savino.

Agenda Review

Chairman Savino asked the Commissioners for a motion to change the order of the Agenda and bring Agenda Items 5 c) Main Street Renovation Project and 6 e) Bailey Avenue to the beginning of the Agenda along with 5 b) Old West Mountain Road. Commissioner Kain motioned to approve the move; Commissioner Knoche seconded the motion.

All in Favor

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

Agenda Items #5c Main Street and 6e Bailey Avenue

Captain Terzian, who was present at the December 8th meeting regarding this project, reported to the Commissioners that a fourth plan had been submitted for Main Street improvements. Captain Terzian stated that this plan had mixed reviews with residents and business owners sharing their concerns about the reduction in parking spaces (9 to 11 spots) and the impact on a few trees which would be necessary to complete the proposal in Concept Four – widening the roadway.

Captain Terzian stated that the State is eager to accommodate the wishes of the Town and will take the comments from the meeting on Concept Four and review them with the comments from the previous concepts to try to come up with a solution that would work best for the Town.

The Commissioners were able to view photos of the proposed updates - Concept Four introduces two medians on Main Street in front of the existing alleyways which Chief Roche guessed were placed there to prevent left-hand turns into the alleyways, thereby, keeping the traffic flowing. Chief Roche also stated that he likes the proposed recessed parking on Main Street as it would eliminate the need for drivers to open their car doors in the line of traffic – it would create a buffer which again would keep traffic flowing.

Captain Terzian stated that a resident suggested the use of police officers to

regulate the traffic during rush hours. Captain Terzian stated that he informed them at the meeting that this is not an option as the department does not have the manpower or resources to fulfill that request. He suggested an alternative - that the Town hire Traffic Agents for this specific purpose.

Captain Terzian stated that the topic of Bailey Avenue was approached also and the possibility of closing it off. Captain Terzian stated that this is 100% not an option as this road is needed for emergency use access. Captain Terzian stated that he was very specific in stating that he doubted the Police Commission would even consider closing Bailey Avenue.

Commissioner Reynolds asked if the alleyways on Main Street were privately owned and if the State could limit access to them. Commissioner Coffin stated that she likes the synchronization of the lights and making turn lanes. Everyone agreed with the realignment of Prospect Street with the CVS parking lot.

In response to Commissioner Kain's question as to the Commission drafting a letter stating their opposition to closing Bailey Avenue, Chief Roche stated that this has not been formerly proposed and would have to go through the Commission as the Legal Traffic Authority.

Captain Terzian stated that there will be another meeting on January 25th in Berlin, Ct. where the State will present their thoughts after reviewing all the comments from Concepts One-Four. Captain Terzian stated that the State is willing to work to help keep Ridgefield the village it is.

Agenda Item #2

Chairman Savino requested a motion to accept the minutes of the December 8, 2016 Police Commission meeting. Commissioner Reynolds motioned to accept the minutes; Commissioner Coffin seconded the motion.

Minutes of the December 8, 2016 Police Commission meeting accepted as written.

Agenda Item #3a Commission Voice Mail

This will be addressed at the February meeting.

Chairman Savino stated that he had an inquiry about an item that the Commission has open regarding improvements to South Salem Road/Cedar Lane. Chief Roche stated that he had forwarded this item to the State for their feedback but has not heard from them. He will contact them again to see if there are any updates and will report same to the Commission at the February meeting.

Agenda Item #3b Commission Correspondence

Chairman Savino signed off on a Highway Use Permit for the Battle of Ridgefield Re-enactment to be held on April 29, 2017. This will now be forwarded to the State for review and approval.

Agenda Item #5b Old West Mountain Road ⁺⁺

⁺⁺ Commissioner Reynolds recused himself from this discussion.

The Commission acknowledged Nick Gil who was present at the meeting and stated that he is opposed to this development.

Chief Roche stated that Mountainside, an extended residence care facility for addiction treatment, is proposing approval to allow their facility be located at 162 Old West Mountain Rd, merging with the land parcel located at 150 Old West Mountain Rd. This facility (secondary care facility, no dispensing of medication) would be specifically for high functioning adults who are in treatment for an addiction problem. This facility would be staffed 24 hours per day, seven days a week with an average of thirteen employees covering daily shifts for seventeen clients.

As the Legal Traffic Authority for Ridgefield, the Police Commission has to discuss the traffic study submitted with the proposal which stated that the traffic volume to be generated by the proposed facility will be very low and the area roadway would be capable of handling the minimal amount of new vehicular trips generated by the facility. The submitted traffic study stated that clients would be prohibited from bringing their vehicles to the facility and they would be driven to Mountainside by the staff and picked up upon discharge; the facility would accommodate one admission/discharge per day and not more than two visitors per day on weekends so there would be minimal additional vehicular traffic.

The facility would have one existing primary access driveway and two existing service driveways which would be used for deliveries, refuse pick-up, emergency entrance/exit. Their traffic study concludes that the development would not impact the area.

Chief Roche stated that he does not know if the data supplied in the traffic study reflects the current conditions in the area and also introduced the fact that this would generate additional police presence for patrols and as First Responders. Chief Roche also stated that he would like a better idea as to what usage the service driveways would get – how many maintenance vehicles, outside deliveries, contract services would be needed.

Commissioner Coffin stated that she feels the study downplays the traffic issues, impact on the area and use of police resources. She would like more information.

Commissioner Savino stated that his concerns are in the internal proposal of seventeen units – room for expansion?, sight lines from driveway, counts for

employees, Special Permit request.

Commissioner Knoche stated that he feels there will be more vehicular traffic than noted in the traffic study.

Commissioner Kain stated that he does not see any issue with the impact on the police department at this time but he has some concerns and since he has been out-of-town, he would like additional, current information. He would also like time to review the traffic study. If Commissioner Kain had to make a decision tonight, he would vote no.

Nick Gill emphasized the fact that although the proposal states 17 units, the zoning compliance states 3 beds per acre; the development will have 13.6 contiguous acres – how do we know it will be 17 units and not 40?

The traffic study was conducted when West Mountain Road was being repaved which would alter the normal traffic counts.

This is a high-end spa with on-site chef, laundry, etc.

Old West Mountain Road and West Mountain Roads are tricky roads to travel with sight limitations. Winter driving can be a bear with ice and snow.

What will be the impact on the wells in the area?

Chief Roche stated that the next meeting for this project with Planning & Zoning is February 7th and he does not know if they could get an extension in order for the Commission to complete their review of current data.

Commissioner Savino stated that we have to realize how big this really is. He stated that there was a land use attorney that spoke at the public hearing and Commissioner Savino requested Chief Roche to see if he could obtain the list of 7-9 points presented by him at that meeting as he feels it would be of benefit to the Commissioners who did not hear it.

++ Commissioner Reynolds rejoined the meeting.

Agenda Item #4 Chief's Report

Correspondence

A thank you letter was received from Chief Crosby of the Wilton Police Department for P.O. Murray and K-9 Loki for their assistance on November 29, 2016.

A thank you letter was received for Sgt. Clarke and P.O. Hartling from a resident for their help with a car stuck in the snow.

Statistics

Chief Roche stated that the incident total for the month of December 2016 was 1,923.

During the month, the Department responded to 82 Alarms, 26 Medical Assists, 19 Check Well-beings, 15 Foot Patrol details, 4 DUI arrests, completed 10 radar details, issued 536 Motor Vehicle Enforcement violations, investigated 58 Motor Vehicle Accidents, and initiated 31 Public Relation contacts. There was 1 K-9 assist for the month of December.

Sign Report

- Replace two *Stop* signs at Peaceable Hill Road and Peaceable Ridge.
- Remove the *Stop Ahead* sign on Bryon Avenue.
- Replaced the *Stop* sign at Florida Road/Florida Hill Road.
- Installed two multiple *Curve* signs on Limestone Road.
- Replaced *25mph* speed limit and *School Bus Stop Ahead* signs on Old Sib Road.

A resident of Great Hill Road submitted a request for signage in the area of Great Hill Road and Limestone Road due to safety concerns about vehicle speeds and the curves in the road at this location.

Traffic Sign Officer Caswell surveyed the areas of Danbury Road/ Limestone Road and Great Hill Road/Limestone Road. Officer Caswell reported that he feels there is adequate speed signage (25mph) existing in these areas but did recommend the installation of 'curve' signs in both directions along with periodic radar enforcement. Commissioner Savino will contact the resident to inform him of the Commission's action.

Traffic Signal

Chief Roche informed the Commission that the State DOT will be installing a new traffic signal at Danbury Road/ Prospect Street. Chief Roche and First Selectman Marconi approved of this update.

Tri-Board Meeting

Chief Roche reported to the Commissioners that he attended a Tri-Board meeting (Board of Education, Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance) on December 13, 2016. There was discussion of the budget and the new State guidelines that there be a cap of 2.5% in order to retain State funding with no penalties.

Rube Goldberg Competition

Chief Roche reported to the Commissioners that he attended the "Rube Goldberg" competition at Scotts Ridge Middle School on December 19, 2016. He participated as a judge and reviewed all the entries submitted. He stated that he enjoyed his part in this and seeing the inventiveness of the projects.

Crime Prevention

- SRO Giglio and SRO Luis: Kids and Cops at the Boys and Girls Club.
- Chief Roche, Major Brown, Capt. Terzian, Capt. Comstock, and Capt. Kreitz attended a Domestic Violence breakfast hosted on by ARC. The invitation was extended by First Selectman Marconi.
- Capt. Kreitz presented a safety talk and showed a cruiser at a local childcare facility.
- P.O. VanWattum conducted a tour of Headquarters, presented a safety talk and showed a cruiser to a group of youths.
- A total of 5 (five) car seats were inspected/installed in the month of December.

Training Report

- Lt. Platt and Sgt. Durling attended a Pedestrian/Bicycle Crash Investigation class in Milford, Ct.
- P.O. Boulware and P.O. Geller attended Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) training at Ridgefield Fire Headquarters.
- Dispatcher Falzolgher and Dispatcher Bott attended Understanding Domestic Violence for Police Telecommunications Personnel.
- Lt. Fowler, Det. Papstein and P.O. VanWattum attended Rescue Task Force training in New Hampshire.
- P.O. Ryan and P.O. Shimko attended Drug Interdiction and Conducting Complete Traffic Stops at POSTC.

Commissioner Kain requested that Chief Roche include any training from the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association in this report in the future such as the Fair and Impartial Policing training which was attended by Chief Roche, Major Brown, Captains Terzian, Comstock, Kreitz and Commissioner Kain.

Agenda Item #5a Old Quarry Road
55 Old Quarry Road

Chief Roche stated that there has been no formal application submitted yet. This is a proposed 86-unit, three story assisted living and memory care building – the Solana Ridgefield. Chief Roche stated that a traffic study was completed for a previous project at this location and the traffic volume for this project is less (-51 from 71) so they can use the existing traffic study. If anything formal is received, Chief Roche will review same with Commissioner Savino.

Agenda Item #5d Chief's Goals 2017 Sub-Committee

Chairman Savino stated that a sub-committee would be needed to set goals for Chief Roche for 2017. Commissioner Reynolds volunteered to be on the committee and Commissioner Kain stated that he would be glad to serve.

Chief Roche will be in touch with Commissioners Reynolds and Kain with some suggestions and past goals for their review and feedback.

All in Favor

Agenda Item #6a, b, Cedar Lane, West Lane

Chief Roche reported to the Commission that there were no new updates received from the Connecticut DOT on the Cedar Lane at Route 35, or West Lane. He will reach out to the DOT engineer again.

Agenda Item #6c Depot Road

Chief Roche reported to the Commission that the Town is trying to get funding from the State for infrastructure improvements in the Branchville Section. Chief Roche stated that he drafted a letter in support of the Town's efforts to provide a safe environment for its residents.

Depot Road changes: close off crossover at Depot Road over the railroad tracks. If closed, it will affect businesses – take Portland Avenue accessway and move, create 'T' intersection at Portland Avenue which will allow fire truck access, light at Portland Avenue, remove left hand turn signal at Rt 102.

Agenda Item #6d Operating Budget

Chief Roche had delivered a draft of the 2017-18 budget to the Commissioners for their vote at tonight's meeting. Chief Roche stated that the highlights of his budget include: 2.26% increase, frozen positions from 2008 noted on line items, training line item increased by \$10,000 (bias training), request for three marked vehicles and one unmarked vehicle, contractual obligations increase, uniform line item increase.

Commissioner Reynolds verified that the Power DMS is a maintenance cost. Commissioner Coffin questioned where the money would come from if there was a uniform change. Chief Roche stated it would have to come from the budget – phased in.

Commissioner Kain motioned to accept the budget as presented;
Commissioner Coffin seconded the motion.

All in Favor

2017-18 Operating Budget for the Ridgefield Police Department, IT, and the Canine Shelter approved as submitted.

Agenda Item #6e Bailey Avenue

Covered under Main St at the beginning of the meeting.

Agenda Item #6f Uniform Update

At the November meeting, this item was tabled until January 2017. Chief Roche stated that he contacted the uniform vendor but has not had anything sent to him yet. When he receives the items, he will meet with Officer Daly to discuss this issue.

Commissioner Reynolds motioned to adjourn Public Session to Executive Session with Chief Roche and Major Brown; Commissioner Coffin seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Public Session of the Police Commission Meeting adjourned at 7:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Knoche
Secretary

**MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE
POLICE COMMISSION MEETING**

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

Also Present: Chief John Roche
Major Stephen Brown

Executive Session called to order at 7:37pm.

Executive Session adjourned at 7:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Knoche
Secretary