

MINUTES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING
of
Thursday March 8, 2018

Commissioners Present: Charles Knoche, Chairman
George Kain, Secretary
Marianne Coffin
Joseph Savino
Absent: Stephen Saloom
Also Present: Chief John Roche

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman Knoche.

Agenda Review

Chairman Knoche asked if there would be any changes to the Agenda; there were none.

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

Agenda Item #2 Commission Minutes

Chairman Knoche requested a motion to accept the minutes of the February 8, 2018 Police Commission meeting. Commissioner Coffin motioned to accept the minutes; Commissioner Kain seconded the motion. Commissioner Savino abstained from voting as he was not present at the February meeting; Chairman Knoche voted affirmative for the minutes.

Minutes of the February 8, 2018 Police Commission meeting accepted as written.

Agenda Item #3a Commission Voice Mail

Commissioner Kain stated that there were no new voice mail messages.

Agenda Item #3b Commission Correspondence

Chairman Knoche stated that the State of Connecticut DOT placed an announcement in the paper alerting those interested of a public informational meeting regarding the State project of intersection improvement on Main Street. The meeting will be held on March 22, 2018 in the Town Hall Annex beginning at 6:30pm.

Chairman Knoche stated that an email was sent to the Town website requesting a traffic light be installed at Route 35 and Route 33 (the fountain). The Commissioners discussed the feasibility of this request and Commissioner Coffin stated that drivers need to be patient at this intersection – they need to wait (even if people are honking at them) until it is clear for them to enter the intersection. This may take a few minutes but the traffic does break for entry. Chief Roche stated that he has requested the assistance of Rep. John Frey in researching the background of the fountain and if it was placed on the National Registry of Historic Places. Chief Roche will update the Commissioners when he

receives correspondence from Rep. Frey.

The resident who raised this concern was notified that the Police Commission is reviewing his request.

Agenda Item #4 Chief's Report

Chief Roche informed the Commissioners that, fulfilling one of his annual goals, he will attend an FBI Leadership Conference from July 21 – July 24.

Fair and Impartial Policing

Chief Roche reminded the Commissioners that the Fair and Impartial Policing class will be taking place at Headquarters on March 13, 2018.

Statistics

Chief Roche stated that the incident total for the month of February was 1,415 with five (5) K-9 assists.

During the month, the Department responded to 52 Alarms, 21 Medical Assists, investigated 53 Motor Vehicle Accidents, assisted with 15 Disabled Vehicles, fingerprinted 14 applicants, issued 443 Motor Vehicle Enforcement violations, performed 16 radar details, issued 2 Controlled Substance violations, conducted 41 Public Relations events (visiting businesses, etc.), and processed 6 Pistol Permit applicants.

Traffic/Sign Report

Reported to the Commission by Traffic Sign Officer Caswell:

Rockwell Road

A survey of the area was conducted on 1/31/18. Officer Caswell recommends additional *Curve Ahead* signs be installed as well as two additional *Speed* limit signs; one for each direction. Officer Caswell reported that he made several passes through the area in both directions with his cruiser. Due to the curve of the road and topography of the area, he was unable to exceed 32 miles per hour while safely negotiating the length of Rockwell Road. The Commissioners agreed with Officer Caswell's recommendations.

The resident who raised this concern will be updated.

81 West Mountain Road

A request was submitted by a resident at this address for a Hidden Driveway sign. Officer Caswell reported that the State no longer recognizes this type of sign. It is the State's position that it is the responsibility of the homeowner to safely negotiate the entrance/exit from a driveway.

The resident who raised this concern will be updated.

North Street and Maple Shade Road

A resident had expressed a concern regarding the visibility of the signage at this intersection.

Officer Caswell reported that he reviewed this area and a request will be submitted to Town Highway to trim the hedges blocking the visibility of the signs when the weather breaks. Officer Caswell also stated that reflective strips will be installed on the sign posts to help increase the visibility of the signs. The Commissioners agreed with Officer Caswell's stated updates. The resident who raised this concern will be updated.

Danbury Road onto Grove Street - Prospect Street onto Main Street

A resident requested No turn on Red signs be placed at these intersections as a hazard to pedestrians currently exists at these locations.

Officer Caswell stated that a request has been sent to the State DOT to conduct a survey of these intersections and provide solutions to the traffic issues in these areas, specifically the *No Turn on Red* signs.

Referred to State DOT. The resident who raised this concern will be updated.

Prospect St/Grove Street/East Ridge Road Cross Walks

Improvement to these areas for pedestrian safety was requested by a resident.

Officer Caswell reported that a survey of the area was conducted on 2/9/2018 and he agrees that the intersections pose traffic and pedestrian challenges.

Officer Caswell reported that pedestrian traffic is difficult to observe due to the fact that a driver has to pay attention to vehicular traffic negotiating the intersection, coming from three different directions, in addition to the foot traffic. A vehicle turning left from East Ridge Road and then making an immediate right onto Grove Street has a difficult time noticing pedestrians attempting to cross at Grove Street.

To a lesser degree the same is true for traffic traveling East on Prospect Street where it is difficult to see pedestrians crossing at Prospect Street and East Ridge Road.

Officer Caswell recommends that a flashing crosswalk sign, similar to those installed on the West Conn campus grounds. These would be an advantage over a flashing traffic light because this type of signage would draw attention to the intersection only when a pedestrian is attempting to cross the street. This may also be a solution for the crosswalk at the intersection of East Ridge Road and Branchville Road as there are visibility issues at that intersection as well.

The Commissioners discussed this suggestion and agreed that this may be a cost-prohibitive solution as the Town would be responsible for such an install at a cost of at least \$20,000.

Chief Roche suggested installing pedestrian crosswalk signage but the Commissioners did not know if that would be enough to alert drivers. The Commissioners agreed to take some time to drive by these areas, review them and try to brainstorm some improvement solutions for pedestrian safety. The Commissioners will keep this open and address it again in April.

Right Turn on Red at Stop & Shop

In response to Commissioner Coffin's suggestion to allow a right on red at the plaza exit, Chief Roche stated that he researched this issue. Chief Roche stated that this request had been addressed by the Commission previously and there was justified objection from the businesses on Danbury Road, adjacent to Copps Hill Plaza, who suffered monetary loss as drivers found it difficult to exit onto Danbury Road due to the constant stream of traffic coming from Copps Hill Plaza; it causes a safety hazard.

Danbury Road/Ethan Allen Highway

State DOT stated that correspondence was received regarding a safety issue at this intersection with the right turn only lane.

Officer Caswell reported that a request had been placed with the State in 2016 to survey the intersection to see if additional signage could be installed to avoid confusion over the right turn only lane. The State responded by placing an additional sign and painting an additional arrow 50 feet north of the existing sign. Officer Caswell stated that another request will be submitted for another survey to be conducted to come up with additional solutions.

DOT Traffic Response

Chief Roche stated that he had received communication from the State DOT regarding some of our traffic issues:

- 1) Danbury Rd/Ethan Allen Highway – State DOT will install new signage to alert drivers of the right turn only lane by the gas station.
- 2) East Ridge Road/Branchville Road & North Salem Road/Mamasasco Road: State DOT will improve the crosswalks at the above locations.

Community Policing/Public Relations Report – January

- Det. Romero and Det. DuBord spoke and gave a demonstration regarding Crime Scene Processing to a Cub Scout troop. P.O. Murray and K-9 Loki presented a K-9 demonstration also.
- Capt. Kreitz and Major McGran (ret.) gave a presentation on counterfeit currency at the Prospector Theater.
- Capt. Kreitz met with a local house of worship over security measures.
- SRO Luis attended the Parent Circle Meeting.
- Chief Roche and Capt. Kreitz attended the Farmingville Elementary School DARE Graduation which was instructed by SRO Giglio.
- Capt. Kreitz filmed a Public Service Announcement on securing your vehicles at the Prospector Theater.
- A total of three car seats were installed/checked in January.

Training Report: January

- Sgt. Clarke, P.O. Gjodesen, P.O. Seibert and P.O. Tinsley attended Recertification training at WCSU.
- Half of the Department attended Fair and Impartial Policing instructed at HQ by Attorney Eric Daigle.

Community Policing/Public Relations Report – February

- Capt. Kreitz met with a local house of worship regarding security measures.
- Capt. Kreitz attended and spoke with a group of residents about setting up a neighborhood watch.
- P.O. Gjodesen presented a safety talk and showed the police cruiser at Jesse Lee Day School (two separate days).
- A total of eight child passenger restraint systems were checked/installed during February.

Training Report: February

- Second half of the department attended Fair and Impartial Policing instructed at HQ by Attorney Eric Daigle.
- Det. Ryan attended Basic Photography in Weston.
- Lt. Platt, Sgt. Brown, P.O. Caswell, Disp. Supv. Browning attended Recertification training at WCSU.
- P.O. DiFalco attended Vehicle Interdiction at POSTC.

Correspondence

A letter was received from Police Chief Salvatore of the Monroe Police Department thanking Officer Shawn Murray and K-9 Loki for their assistance with a building and student parking lot search for contraband.

Swearing-In

Chief Roche stated that the Department will be swearing in their new candidate on March 26, 2018 at 10:00am in the Department's Training Room.

Chief Roche also stated to the Commissioners that he was given the go-ahead to hire another officer and he will start the employment process for the next candidate from the Eligibility List.

Safest City

Chief Roche noted to the Commissioners that a new list ranking the 100 safest cities in America was published. Ridgefield was ranked Number One as the safest city in the country – Kudos to the Police and Police Commission!

Agenda Item #5a – Eligibility List

The current Eligibility List, established in November, will expire in April.

The Commissioners agreed to extend the current Eligibility List for six months.

The list will now be in place until October 2018.

Commissioner Kain motioned to extend the current Eligibility List; Commissioner Savino seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Eligibility List extended until October 2018.

Agenda Item #6a - St. Mary Crosswalk

Chief Roche reported to the Commission that he received updated plans for the installation of a crosswalk from St. Mary Church to the west side of (St. Mary School) of High Ridge Avenue.

Chief Roche stated that the new plan (which was passed around to the Commissioners) placed the crosswalk at the intersection of High Ridge Avenue and Catoonah Street, the hedges lining the sidewalk on High Ridge Avenue across from the Church will be moved and the existing utility pole (which is clipped on the top from tractor trailers) will be brought to the attention of Eversource (possible replacement). Chief Roche stated that the existing sidewalk will be continued from the South side to the North side on High Ridge Avenue so that those who use the new crosswalk from St. Mary will be able to walk either left or right. Chief Roche stated that this new plan offers clear visibility for drivers to see anyone in the crosswalk.

Commissioner Kain motioned to accept the revised crosswalk plan; seconded by Commissioner Coffin.

All in Favor

St. Mary Proposed Crosswalk accepted as submitted.

Commissioner Kain motioned to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:03pm; Commissioner Savino seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Public Meeting adjourned at 8:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,

George Kain
Secretary

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

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

Absent: Stephen Saloom

Also Present: Chief John Roche

Executive Session commenced at 8:03pm.

Executive Session adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

George Kain
Secretary