

MINUTES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

**Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 7:00p.m.
Town Hall Annex, Meeting Room #2
66 Prospect Street**

Anyone requiring special accommodations due to disability is asked to contact Headquarters at 438-6531 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Commissioners Present: John Frey, Chairman
Issy Caporale, Secretary
Marianne Coffin
Sharon Dornfeld
Ralph Money

Also Present: Chief Jeff Kreitz
Major Shawn Platt

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by Chairman Frey

1. Crosswalk Art Presentation by Alisa Trachtenberg

In front of a full house Alisa Trachtenberg thanked everyone for coming. She is looking for the approval from the Police Commission to have a Pride Crosswalk painted in town. She wants safety for LGBTQ+ community and everyone that lives in Ridgefield. Along with a slide presentation, Alisa stated she called towns that have pride crosswalks to get their opinions. Everyone stated it has been well received, no problems, motorists are paying more attention to the crosswalk and it beautifies the town. She would like to see both crosswalks at the intersection of Governor Street and East Ridge Road painted stating it is a high visible area.

Alisa stated to the Police Commission this crosswalk would emit physical safety, functional safety and emotional safety. Her mission is to educate people. She stated that Ridgefield is an inclusive, and welcoming community.

Chief Kreitz thanked everyone for coming to the meeting; noting

the large amount in attendance. Chief Kreitz stated he supports everyone. However, he stated his job is to protect the safety of the residents of Ridgefield. Referring to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) for guidance, it states crosswalks are to be specific in color and does not allow for what is proposed. Chief Kreitz stated he is not an expert, or engineer; however, he has knowledge. Chief Kreitz states these rules should continue to be followed to protect the residents of Ridgefield as stated by the MUTCD which is the latest version to date and specifies the standards for roadway markings.

2. Public Comment

Most of the public that spoke were in favor of the crosswalk. They commended Alisa on a thorough presentation. A few people had concerns over safety. Some of the public that spoke were Angela of Branchville Road, Nathan of Bryon Avenue, Jeremy of Ridgefield, Susan of Branchville Road, Ben of Danbury Road, Rev. Dr. Whitney of Main Street, Barb from Madeline Drive, Scott from Hulda Lane, Rebecca from High Ridge Avenue, Shelly from Acre Lane, Mike from Main Street, Sean from Ramapoo Road, John of Danbury Road, Mike from Main Street, Marion from Silver Hill Road, Robin from Lakeside Drive, Sophia from Island Hill Avenue, Angela from Farmingville Road, Chris from Nod Road, Denise from Main Street, Pat from Main Street, Bob from Prospect Street, Gloria from High Ridge Avenue, Kirk from Prospect Ridge, Pat from Main Street, resident from Governor Street, Chris from Ivy Hill Road, Sean from Barrack Hill Road and Lisa from Sherwood Road to name a few. Out of all that spoke, 23 were in favor of having a pride crosswalk and 6 were not.

Some of the people that spoke against felt there was another way to show support rather than by a crosswalk. Something that's not risky like painting a park bench, or the gazebo.

3. Vote

Chairperson Frey requested a motion to discuss the agenda topic at-hand among the Board of Police Commissioners. Commissioner Money made the follow three-part motion, seconded by Commissioner Caporale:

MOTION:

1. Be it resolved that the Ridgefield Board of Police Commissioners approve the pride crosswalk as presented this evening; **Vote – Not in favor 2-3** (Opposed: Frey, Coffin Dornfeld)

Chairman Frey stated he reached out to DOT. He supports everyone 100%. Doesn't want to lose federal money. There are a lot of crosswalks in town but not on town roads.

Commissioner Caporale stated she respects Chief Kreitz being a rule follower and she being in the Military she had to follow rules and always followed the rules. But sometimes rules can be bent if it does not hurt anyone or anything. Doesn't feel we should deny this. People see the brightness and it will make a big difference.

Commissioner Coffin stated we should follow rules. Why a crosswalk? Doesn't have years of safety.

2. Be it further resolved that the Police Commission request the Board of Selectpersons to discuss and put in place guidelines, policies, and procedures for any future requests for crosswalk-related projects, and that due consideration be made for potential prohibitions for requests from hate groups and organizations affiliated with violence and/or terror; **Vote – Not in favor 2-3** (Opposed: Frey, Coffin Dornfeld)
3. Be it further resolved that this Board of Police Commissioners respects, appreciates, and values all who spoke tonight, at last week's Commission meeting, and at the recent Board of Selectperson's meeting; you are community. **Vote - Approved Unanimous**

Commissioner Money further stated that, once the motion is seconded, he would be open to friendly amendments. Commissioner Caporale seconded the motion and Chairman Frey called for discussion.

Commissioner Dornfeld requested a friendly procedural amendment: that the motion on the table be taken in three parts. Commissioners Money and Caporale accepted the friendly amendment.

It was decided that the third part of the motion would be taken up first, followed by the first part of the motion, and then the second part of the motion.

Chairman Frey asked if there was any discussion regarding the third part of the motion. There was no discussion and a vote was taken and it passed unanimously. Approved.

Commissioner Dornfeld made a motion to approve Ridgefield Pride's application to paint a crosswalk in rainbow colors with the following conditions:

1. The crosswalk location shall be the existing crosswalk at the southwest end of the circular driveway serving the East Ridge Road side of the building known as the Old High School.
2. The colored areas shall be painted entirely within the white lines of the existing crosswalk.
3. Solid colors only may be used.
4. Only colored paint comparable in quality (as determined by the Highway Department) to the type of white paint used by the Town to mark crosswalks will be used.
5. No expense shall accrue to the Town. The Ridgefield Pride representatives shall be responsible to repaint the colored areas when faded and at least with the same frequency used by the Town to repaint the crosswalks at the nearby corners of East Ridge Road and Governor Street.
6. This approval will expire on September 30, 2028 unless renewed.

Commissioner Money seconded the motion.

The motion carried 4-1. (Opposed: Coffin)

Commissioner Dornfeld made a motion that the Police Commission send a communication to the Board of Selectmen to consider enacting regulations for consideration of possible future applications to alter existing crosswalks. Commissioner Money seconded the motion.

The motion carried 4-1. (Opposed: Coffin)

Commissioner Money made a motion to adjourn the Police Commission Special Meeting at 9:35pm. Commissioner Caporale seconded the motion.

All in Favor

The motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Money made a motion to adjourn the Police Commission Meeting at 9:35pm. Commissioner Caporale seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously,

Respectfully Submitted,

Issy Caporale
Police Commission Secretary