Councilman Nocera opened the Public Works & Facilities Commission meeting at 6:30 P.M. Councilman Nocera requested a motion to approve the minutes dated December 8, 2021. Councilman McKeon made the motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ford and passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS: Maria Holzberg called in to propose the possibility of adding a horticultural division to public works. She explained that Patsy Mylchreest and Sheila Poitras tended 26 gardens over the summer. With the expansion of the park system, the expertise of people who understand plant care would be beneficial. Landscaping needs to be maintained. This could also be an opportunity to develop a relationship with the UConn agricultural department, and possibly get an intern. Additionally, there could be an opportunity for Vo-Ag students. This year the parks looked great. Patsy Mylchreest and Sheila Poitras did a great job. Garden club could still be involved. Also, if the commission members have input, it would be good if the pedestrian bridge over Route 9 could be wide enough to have a garden on each side. Patsy Mylchreest called in and thanked Maria Holzberg for supporting the gardening cause. Giving an overview, she explained that efforts were focused on creating public spaces of respite, and beauty for the community. Also, monitoring and maintaining public gardens. The goal being to enhance existing gardens with new material, replace plants that had not worked well, and create a few new areas. The existing garden at Harbor Park was expanded. Planting took place in the tunnel, creating a beautiful oasis. Planters were taken care of at Remington Rand, prior to Rosa Delauro’s visit. With the plans for the riverfront, and speaking as a member of the garden club, there isn’t enough manpower within the parks division. With the maintenance of city ball fields, extra manpower from the parks department is limited. Based on knowledge of plants, adding a horticulturalist would be beneficial. With a small budget, additional expenses were covered by Public
Works, and from the budget of Joe Samolis. A full report, including photos, is available for review. She thanked the Commission for any consideration that can be given to the proposal for a horticulture division. Councilman Nocera stated that serious consideration would be given.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Connecticut Tree Protective Association Annual Meeting - Chris Holden - This is a program for tree wardens to continue their education and earn credits. A motion to approve Chris Holden’s attendance was made by Councilman Pessina, and seconded by Councilman McKeon. The motion was approved unanimously.

b. SLR Westlake Park Feasibility Study - Proposal - Chris Holden - Westlake Park has been taken over by the City. The proposal is to work with SLR to conduct an initial phase feasibility study to look at concepts for the park. The study would include collecting data to evaluate the site, determine where there are wetlands, and where on the property would be good for different types of development. After reviewing prices, SLR’s proposal of $17,000.00 is reasonable. Councilman McKeon asked if this was put out to bid, and was it a state contract. Chris Holden stated that it was not put out to bid. SLR did the Pat Kidney project and is currently working on the Vets Park project. They are familiar with the master plan, and what the City is looking for as far as park development. In the past, firms have been invited to submit qualifications for projects, and are chosen based on qualifications. Councilman Pessina inquired if there is a timing issue, so that they can get started in the spring? Chris Holden explained that the duration is 6 months to a year, depending on when the feasibility study begins. Councilman McKeon proposed using the process of Request for Qualifications. Councilman Nocera stated transparency is important. This project would be 2 years out, but hopefully sooner. The plan is to spend the 21st century parks bond, over a 10 year period. Currently half of the funds have been expended, at 5 years in. Councilman Pessina stated this is a good bench mark to review other companies. It was concurred that qualifications are as important as low bid. Chris Holden will move forward with RFQ for the next agenda. A motion to send specifications to the department to have RFQ done was made by Councilman McKeon, and seconded by Councilman Pessina. The motion was approved unanimously.

c. New fencing and scoreboard for the field behind Beman – Councilman Nocera explained that when Pat Kidney field was configured, the baseball field served as a multipurpose field, which was difficult. Irrigation for the middle school sized soccer field is completed. The soccer field will be multi use for school during the day, and available weekends and evenings for the community. Approval is needed to take the money out of the 21st century parks bond to pay for the fencing and the scoreboard. Invoices or proposals should be available at the next meeting, and will be going to state bid. There were no questions.
Budget – Chris Holden explained that the Mayor has released the budget for next year. A couple of things that are being considered are a flat budget, and trying to find co-efficiencies. The co-efficiencies would possibly be with other departments or other cities. Potentially, equipment that is used less, could be co-purchased, or rented from, other cities. Also, a wish lists of items that might help the department run more efficiently, or make improvements to the community, will be compiled. If anyone has suggestions please contact Chris. Councilman Pessina stated that the Mayor is on the right track. If departments could collaborate to make large purchases together, for example trucks, possibly money can be saved.

OLD BUSINESS:

a. Recreation Center Update- Moving ahead with the project. Notice to proceed has been given as of January 27, 2022. Roofing material is readily available. Roof can be started as soon as materials are received. Paul Pizzo reports that reflective roof can be installed in January or February and then the solar panels can be installed. First job meeting is February 1st. Coordination among contractors will take place, they will all be invited to attend the job meeting. Plans for the mechanics have been submitted for review. Preliminary design has been completed. Will be meeting with Cathy Lechowicz to review plan. A budget should be developed by the next meeting. Exterior work being bid now. Councilman Nocera recommended having a stand up meeting at the Recreation Center, in a month or so. Cathy Lechowicz added that Eldon from IT stopped by, and technology should be included in the February 1st meeting. Councilman Nocera stated that additional fiber work has to be done, other than what O & G ordered. Additional problems will be discussed next month.

b. Veterans Pool and Splash Pad Update – Chris Holden and Mike Doherty are meeting weekly now. Mike Doherty reported that for Veterans pool the update is similar to last time. He is working through details with Eversource for the transformer location. Working with pool designer to get the package submitted by the end of this month so it can be submitted to the State DPH. Met with architect to review finishes and materials to coordinate site work with building. There should be an update next week. New rendering of splash pad will be given to Cathy for a final check. Documents should be submitted to the City so that it can be bid in late February or March. A meeting will be scheduled with purchasing department. Occupancy date is projected for fall 2022, and it is not anticipated that the pool will be in use then. The pool should be ready by spring of 2023. Councilman Pessina requested that the rendering for the splash pad be shared with the committee.

c. Harbor Park Boardwalk Update – Mike Doherty reported that all of the railing is in place. The walkway can be used. There are issues with the gates, and those will be resolved, so that the gates can be locked. A semi-final punch list has recently been created, with nothing major on it. There are some sections of sidewalk that will need repair. Councilman Nocera clarified
that concrete work will be done in the spring, for the 9 bench pads. Councilman McKeon questioned what will be done with the area that has a culvert. Mike Doherty clarified that a grate will be used that is ADA compliant, and pedestrian friendly. A bridge is a possibility, there are many things to be considered. Stamped concrete will need to be maintained carefully during the winter months. Councilman Pessina inquired about the fence for 80 Harbor Drive. Are the bathrooms part of the contractor’s responsibility? Those are not in the scope for Gerber Contracting. Chris Holden said bathrooms will go out to bid for 3 locations. Bid should be going out for quotes in the next month. Bathrooms at Harbor Park were redone when the skating rink was installed. Bathrooms may be relocated in the future.

d. Multiuse Trail Update- Chris Holden shared that the land swap was approved at the Board of Education meeting on January 11, 2022. Mike Doherty reported that they are moving forward with the routing of it. He has a request in to Heritage Consultants, an archeological and cultural consulting firm. This request is for Phase 1a and 1b, as the State has requested a review of that segment of woods, based on the potential for Native American settlements there.

Additionally, Mike Doherty received the Jackson Street pedestrian bridge survey. He will forward the pdf to Chris Holden this week. The bulk of it is done, but permitting will take time.

e. Saybrook Road Update- Chris Holden has received the final design, it is approved by the river cog. The design has been forwarded to DOT for approval, waiting for the notice to bid. If it goes out to bid in February, there is a potential for spring/summer construction. The budget, authorized by the state, is updated to approximately four million dollars.

Additional Updates-Chris Holden:

*Community Activities Grant Application- Submitted in the fall for a sidewalk to connect the West Street communities with the park. It was rejected in round one. However, the State has inquired to see if there is still a request. It’s just shy of $600,000.00 for construction. The plan would be to tie in West Street to the Butternut Hollow Park with sidewalks. Additionally, including parking lot improvements and prefab bathrooms. Several years ago a plan was in place with DEP to relocate the geese. Unfortunately, it was not successful. Councilman Pessina inquired about the use of the coyotes to deter the geese.

*Shooting Range- Trying to move forward with the FBI. A sound study was conducted. The FBI has concerns with lead exposure issues. Re-evaluating to meet the requirements of the noise ordinance.

*MS4 Project- City was sued by Save The Sound, because of the storm water plan. There is a plan now, and the City is registered. Work is being done on annual reports. A few years of reporting were missed. Work that
was required has been done, but it was not documented or submitted to the State. Some of those issues are street sweeping and cleaning out catch basins. The City performs fairly extensive street sweeping annually, which is another one of the components. Working on coming into compliance with those requirements. An outside attorney, who is an expert in the areas of environmental and storm water issues, has been hired to assist with the action.

*Trail behind Transfer Station*- John Hall and Trevor Davis recently proposed a name that refers to dumping area/garbage heap. Will work with historical society to see if there is any input for the name. Will try to do a more formal request for the name. Careful consideration should be given to the name.


g. December 2021 Building Permits- The Public Works & Facilities Commission reviewed the monthly report. Building permit income is currently close to the budgeted amount. There is a lot of building activity in town.

OTHER:

a. December 2021 Monthly Report- Highway Division- Multiple storms in recent weeks, some back to back, combined with a reduced work force, due to job openings, illnesses and injuries have contributed to the use of overtime. Staff from sanitation, water and sewer, parks and mechanics all assisted with the storms. This combined effort resulted in the coverage of every route. There were two double time days of overtime. Approximately 16% of town aid money has been used, not including the most recent storm.

b. December 2021 Monthly Report-Parks Division – Channel 3 has clips of parks division staff, including one of Troy Flannery with a great quote that “snow is just water with attitude.”

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

Chris Holden thanked Rohan Manning, Acting Deputy Director of Public Works, for all of his help and support to date. Liz Cyranowicz retired January 7, 2022. Commission members expressed their compliments, and thanks to Chris Holden and Rohan Manning for their work during this transition time. As there was no further discussion, a motion was made to end the meeting by Councilman McKeon. The motion was seconded by Councilman Pessina and approved unanimously. The Public Works & Facilities Commission meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.