Councilman Nocera opened the Public Works & Facilities Commission meeting at 6:30 p.m. Councilman Nocera requested a motion to approve the minutes dated January 12, 2022. Councilman McKeon moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilman Darnell Ford, and passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS: John Hall, representing The Jonah Center For Earth & Art, spoke in regard to several items. First, he is in favor of including the words Midden Panorama in the name for the landfill trail. He explained the meaning of the word Midden, and has led groups to the top of the landfill to experience the view. Second, from his personal perspective, he agrees with the closing of Lyceum Road. He believes that closing the road to vehicle traffic, and allowing for pedestrians and bicycles, adds positive value and creates a greenway or little park. He stated this far outweighs any inconvenience or minor temporary objection. Third, he is in favor of anything that will move the process along for the Newfield Corridor multi-use trail. He is in favor of engaging in a process where all sections of the trail can be investigated and worked on. He fully supports getting other sections of the trail surveyed and identifying wetlands. He thanked the Commission members for the opportunity to speak.

Jane Harris did not choose to speak on agenda items.

CORRESPONDENCE: Email from Deb Shapiro, City Historian. Chris Holden explained that she was contacted about the naming of the landfill trail. The email was read into the record, and in it, she concurs with the suggested name including the word Midden as it has historical meaning.
NEW BUSINESS:

a. Landfill Trail Naming – Midden Trail at Keating Enterprise Park - Chris Holden stated that the word Panorama should be added, so that the name reads “Midden Panorama.” Councilman Darnell Ford moved to approve the name “The Midden Panorama Trail at Keating Enterprise Park.” The motion was seconded by Councilman McKeon. It was discussed that this name was the most supported, over all other suggestions. The motion passed unanimously. Councilman Nocera thanked John Hall and his team for their work on this.

b. Community Connectivity Grant – Butternut Park – Chris Holden reported that the grant was recently approved. He shared an overview of the plans, and one plan was included in the package. The plan is to connect West Street and adjacent neighborhoods, so that people can walk to the park. A loop trail will go around the pond, where the fishing derby is held each year. This will enhance the area. Safety near the playground was discussed because it is adjacent to the main access to City Yard. Part of the project will be looking at relocating Thomas Street. This will allow the creation of a larger lot to address supply and demand of the area. A more permanent prefab bathroom can possibly be added at the time of construction. Official financing letter has not been received yet. Sidewalk will need to be adjusted to be ADA compliant. Bridge is already installed, and wetlands permit is in place, for the trail. The grant is $580,000.00, with some funding coming from the parks bond, to cover costs beyond the grant. There will be plantings to deter children from going toward the road. John Hall questioned if the cost of the relocation of Thomas Street would be covered by the grant. Chris Holden confirmed that it is part of the estimate for the project.

c. Lyceum Road Options – Chris Holden reported receiving numerous complaints about the condition of the road. He shared a picture that shows the poor condition of the road. He believes that it was an old farm road that was paved. The road is very low, there is a lot of water, poor drainage and flooding issues. This makes it very hard to maintain. The Middlesex Land Trust owns the property on both sides of the road. If the road were abandoned, or closed by some other mechanism, with vehicular traffic stopped, it would allow for more of a park like setting to be created. This could allow for a better wildlife corridor going through. A Parcel Map was shared showing Lyceum Road, and adjacent roads. Chris Holden has met with The Middlesex Land Trust, South Fire District, the Police Department Traffic Division, and the Mayor’s Office to get input from everyone. Lyceum Road connects with Chamberlain Hill Road and Millbrook Road. Wilcox Road is within a half mile of Lyceum Road. Wilcox Road was recently reconstructed, is in really good condition, and has a good culvert that doesn’t have issues. In terms of primary travel, none of the parties consulted had any issue with abandoning Lyceum Road. There are no abutting residential properties on Lyceum Road that would need access to their properties. No one is being hurt in that manner. Evaluation of what can be done, as far as either removing asphalt, creating a walking path that includes ADA access, and potentially a wildlife viewing platform continues. There is the possibility of adding walking bridges across the stream that goes through the road, so that people can still walk and enjoy the area but stop vehicular traffic through there. Lyceum Road is an example of what happens to roads. In order
to repair this road, filling in the potholes is just not enough. To reconstruct the road, several feet of gravel would have to be put in to allow the water a place to go. The cost of improvements would be fairly high. Additionally, regardless of the cost to improve the road, the potential environmental enhancements would drive the reason to abandon the road. Councilman Nocera questioned people visiting a farm in the area. Chris Holden explained there are no farms on Lyceum Road. Farms in the area are located on Wilcox Road and Millbrook Road. Manes in Motion is located on Millbrook Road. The land on either side of Lyceum Road is undeveloped. At a minimum, Chris Holden recommends closing the road immediately, so that there is no further potential for damage to vehicles. To maintain the road at this point, full repairs would be costly. If the road is closed, an evaluation could be done to determine what would ultimately happen on the road. Chris Holden would appreciate participation from anyone that would like to be involved in planning meetings. Councilman Nocera has personally seen that Lyceum Road is in a low lying area. The area would take an incredible amount of fill to put in a proper road, which in his opinion, is not what is needed. Councilman McKeon moved to close Lyceum Road. The motion was seconded by Councilman Darnell Ford, and passed unanimously.

d. Rockfall Grant – Refill not Landfill – Kim O’Rourke reported that a grant has been awarded by the Rockfall Foundation. The grant is for a program to communicate with the public to encourage more people to use reusable coffee containers instead of a disposable one. All communities in Connecticut are facing a trash disposal crisis. This will hopefully escalate the conversation on reuse, and normalize that behavior so it’s not different to bring in your own mug. This will also save coffee shops money by not having to give out as many cups. This is one step forward in starting that conversation. Hopefully, it opens the door for other reuse businesses to explore Middletown. Other parts of the country, and the world, have businesses that offer reusable take out containers that replace plastic, paper or Styrofoam containers. This will go to Finance and Government, and the Common Council in March. Councilman McKeon has had experience with reusable containers. He inquired as to where the containers would be kept. Kim explained that it’s not a barcoded or return system. It is an outreach program and coffee containers will be given out, with a pledge to sign. Also, a coffee passport will be punched each time a person uses their coffee container. This will qualify them for monthly raffles. Councilman McKeon inquired about Health Department considerations. Kim O’Rourke did speak with Health Department staff prior to applying for the grant. Also, she has numerous studies that show there are no health concerns with reuse. Councilman McKeon moved to go forward with the Rockfall Grant. The motion was seconded by Councilman Darnell Ford, and passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

a. Recreation Center Update –
Chris Holden – A. Secondino & Sons has started the demolition portion of the project. Paul Pizzo - Interior demolition, including abatement in old laundry area is complete. Minor abatement will be done outside. Roof on gym is in progress. They are moving quickly on the roof. Negotiating exterior fascia panels, which will be a change order. The first change order for
pool controls has been approved, which includes additional security in the pool area. Construction meetings are on Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. Expecting the temporary gas heating system to be delivered in approximately a week.

b. Veterans Pool and Splash Pad Update – Mike Doherty – The pool permit drawings are compiled and are being sent to the State. Goal is to submit 90% of drawings to the City, in the next week, so that Water & Sewer and the Building Department can have a last look. Documents for bidding will be wrapped up within another week. There is a lot to coordinate, including meeting with Purchasing Department. Comments should be submitted so that they can be included in the specifications before the bids go out. Chris Holden explained that he received and forwarded the updated planting plan to Jane Harris, Chair, and members of the Urban Forestry Commission for review. Mike Doherty said that tree species that he received should all be reflected. Councilman Nocera inquired if the sewer line/water line issue from a year ago has been resolved with the Water Pollution Control Authority. Mike Doherty was not aware of an issue. However, he has coordinated with the Water and Sewer Department for a catch basin and manhole. Chris Holden has been working the Chief Engineer, Brian Robillard, to make sure requirements are met to relocate the water and sewer lines. The cost will need to be addressed. Cathy Lechowicz inquired if there are ways to extend the landscaping to integrate with the rink, and to address water runoff. The possibility of relocating the rink permanently will be considered.

c. Harbor Park Boardwalk Update – Mike Doherty reported that a semi-final punch list has been submitted to the contractor, in preparation for work in the spring.

d. Multiuse Trail Update – Mike Doherty – working on the coordination of the layout of trail itself. It’s his understanding that the land swap was tabled. Whether land swap goes through or not, he has a layout for more than one option. Services have been obtained for cultural resource assessment by Heritage Consultants. This was submitted to the City as an Amendment to the contract. Chris Holden shared that there will be a meeting regarding routes between Mile Lane to Westfield Street. Councilman Nocera inquired if the land swap is an improvement for the trail? Mike Doherty explained that the trail can be completed either way, but could be less costly, if there is a land swap.

e. Saybrook Road Update – Chris Holden reported hearing back from the DOT, there were a few comments, nothing significant. Comments will be addressed and edits will be provided to the State. Bid letter has been prepared, bidding of job should begin in the next few weeks.

OTHER:

Chris Holden inquired about adding the Nutmeg Games to the agenda, Rohan Manning has been working on this event. Councilman McKeon moved to add the Nutmeg Games to the agenda, seconded by Councilman Nocera. The Nutmeg Games begin in May and need to be added to the budget. Rohan Manning – This is an endeavor that is contracted for the next five years. The Nutmeg Games include baseball, softball, basketball, and track and field. Construction at the High School needs to be coordinated. Allstate games will take place for in July. Coordinating with Brian Young from the Parks
Department. Multiple High Schools, public and private, will be utilized. Also, numerous parks throughout the City. This will be added to the budget for 2023, to cover the additional costs for field maintenance and waste removal. Chris Holden reported that estimates and impact on current budget are currently being reviewed. Councilman McKeon inquired about the effect on City sports leagues. It will be the off season for the sports leagues. The American Legion Tournament would be in direct conflict with The Nutmeg Games, working with The Legion to come to a resolution. There will not be a conflict with other sports.

a. January 2022 Monthly Report - Highway Division – Chris Holden reported that there have been challenging storms. Water and Sewer provides approximately 5 staff members to assist with plowing. He gave a shout out to the staff who worked 24 hours, during a recent storm, then returned on Sunday night to clear snow from Main Street. Councilman Nocera expressed appreciation for everyone’s hard work.

b. January 2022 Monthly Report - Parks Division – Chris Holden reported that the Parks Department staff help clean parking lots and sidewalks that the City is responsible for.

c. January 2022 Public Works Overtime Report – Chris Holden reported that Town Aid is the first source of funding for snow removal. To date $181,000.00 has been used, with $4,500.00 remaining. For January there were 2,000 hours of overtime for the highway department. There is approximately $108,000.00 in the regular budget, which will be utilized after the $4,500.00 is exhausted.

d. January 2022 Building Permits – Chris Holden reported that the estimated projected income of $550,000.00, for the current fiscal year, has been exceeded. Currently $556,775.42 has been collected. This reflects the amount of work that is taking place in the City, including renovations and new construction.

Councilman McKeon inquired about the lights still being up on Main Street. Chris Holden explained that the snowflakes are considered winter decorations, and are usually removed around March 15th.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None

Adjourn – As there was no further discussion, Councilman McKeon moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilman Darnell Ford, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm.