



**PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY MARCH 8, 2023
TIME: 6:30 P.M.
Via WebEX.com
MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT**

Members Present: Councilman Gene Nocera
Councilman Ed McKeon
Councilman Mike Marino
Councilman Darnell Ford
Councilman Phil Pessina

Staff Present: Christopher M. Holden, P.E., Director of Public Works
Howard Weissberg, P.E., Deputy Director of Public Works
Cathy Lechowicz, Director of Recreation
Rohan Manning, Chief Management Analyst

Public: Philip Nettis, Tyler Eckstrom, Taylor Brown, John Sutton, Rachel Conners, Don Degennaro, Brian Kronenberger, Pebbles Lacross.

The meeting was called to order by Councilman Nocera at 6:30 p.m. Councilman McKeon moved to approve the Meeting Minutes dated February 8, 2023. Councilman Marino seconded the motion. Councilman Pessina abstained. The motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

John Hall thanked the committee for everything they do for the City of Middletown. He stated that he heard that the commission had voted to either repair or replace the dam at Pamechea Pond, which he was very happy to hear. John Hall states that he was told by the Mayor that there would be open lines of communication regarding this issue and that there would be copies of the study that was done at Pamechea Pond available. He stated he does not feel that those promises have been fulfilled. They have not received copies of the studies and there hasn't been a meeting that reveals to the public the nature of the studies, the results of the studies and the recommendations based on the studies. John Hall stated that dams, in general, degrade waterways. He said there may be benefits to removing the dam. He said as a community, there is work that needs to be done to mitigate the impairment of that which our streams and road run off are causing, and that removing dams can be part of the solution. He said Pamechea Pond has some special circumstances that challenge that general preference for dam removal. He said a fish ladder can be constructed at a small cost to aid in fish migration. He said there are several dams upstream of Pamechea Pond that are affecting it. He thinks the public concern about it, the historic nature of the pond, and the potential recreation and scenic value of the pond is of overwhelming importance. He stated that now that the dam issue has been decided, we still need the



process as the pond is threatened due to filling in with plant life, it is becoming shallower, public access is lacking and the pond is needed as storm water control. He reiterated that the public needs to hear about information provided in the completed report.

Brian Kronenberger wanted to comment on some minutes from last month regarding 109 Old Road Drive. He stated that in 2005 he did a survey of his mother's property and there are 30 foot wide easements that go from Country Club Road through his mother's property that connect to up the hill, right hand turn, and expand to a 30 foot plus another 10 foot right of way that he knows terminated at the DeGennaro property. He said that there has been an issue with record keeping at the Assessor's Office and Engineering and he'd like to submit the drawings. He said that the Assessor's Office did not recognize some building lots that have been on file and he had to go during the reassessment to correct those. He also stated that a drawing was displayed that showed a new road and how it would be configured and he would like a copy as he thinks it does conform to the right of ways that his mother's property allows all of the neighboring lots to get to. Lastly, when a legal opinion is determined, he would like to receive a copy of it. He would also like to request a meeting with Public Works and the commission members to walk the property.

Tracy DeGennaro spoke on behalf of Jill Chase. She thanks Councilman Marino and Ford for their support and concern for safety and accessibility to Old Road Drive for emergency vehicles. She wanted to clarify a point that Director Holden made about the road being parcels of land behind the original home divided out and built upon is false. She stated Brian Kronenberger's father did own a large parcel of land towards the back of the portion of the road and did sell some of the lots for buildings in the early '60s. He did not own all of the land surrounding Old Road Drive and her lot, as well as her closest neighbors, were sold by other residents of Middletown in the early '60s to her and her neighbor and this information can be found in the land records. Both her and her neighbor own the entrance portions of the road that abuts to Country Club Road and all of the residents have an easement to exit the road. Tracy said that the nearest water supply is located at the safety building, which is nearly two miles away and suggested getting another water source closer by. She said it took over ten towns' worth of tankers to come in and she watched her neighbor's house burn down. She said that a young girl was in the house and almost perished. She said when the tanker did get up the street it did not have water, to which she has a video of. She said that they are not the only homes that would benefit from having more water available.

Don DeGennaro stated that the last fire was devastating and it's a big safety concern. He said in 1983 his house caught on fire and burnt to the ground. He reiterated Brian Kronenberger's request of meeting with the Public Works Department and commission members on site.

Philip Nettis would like an update on Saybrook Road and Dripps Road. He did note that he used to live around Pamechea Pond and that there is a lot of things in the ground and to tread lightly when work begins.

The Suttons spoke and thanked John Hall for his presentation on Pamechea Pond. She extended an invitation to the commission to stop over their home front to get a different perspective of and the history of the pond.



CORRESPONDENCE:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. MCHS 2023 Car Show- Middlesex County Historical Society is requesting October 1, 2023 (October 8, 2023 rain date) to hold a car show and flea market. It would be held in the Palmer field parking lot. Councilman Pessina made a motion to approve. Councilman Marino seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.
- b. Draft procedure for private road becoming a City Street- Director Holden requested a more detailed discussion next month on this topic. It outlines the overall procedure of having a private road becoming a City street. Director Holden stated it is a new procedure, although it aligns with what has been done in the past. Councilman McKeon stated that a meeting needs to happen with the Land Use department to discuss this procedure. Councilman Nocera asked if this is something that should be distributed to the people at the meeting other than committee members. Councilman McKeon clarified that under FOIA draft documents are not subject to FOI.
- c. Transfer Station Updates- Director Holden stated that they are trying to get a better control on what is coming into the transfer station. A procedure is being put into place starting July 1, where residents will need to apply for a sticker to use the transfer station. The sticker will be free. There are two categories for commercial entities. One for those transporting waste materials through Middletown and one for those who are disposing of bulk waste in Middletown. There will be a \$25 fee associated with the latter option. The second option will require the hauler to provide proof that the materials are coming from Middletown and there is a cap of two tons per trip. Information is being disseminated so that people can prepare for the July 1 change.
- d. Field Renovations (Pat Kidney, Snow School and Crystal Lake)- Director Holden stated that the department was working on getting some fencing up and improvements made to fields at these locations. Deputy Director Weissberg is working on putting together a RFP to getting some permanent bathrooms in certain locations. Councilman Nocera asked where the funding is coming from. Director Holden stated that it is coming from the Parks bonds. There will also be some improvements in Butternut Park.
- e. New England American Public Works Association Spring Conference- The agenda was amended to add this as an item under new business. Councilman Pessina made a motion to amend the agenda. Councilman McKeon seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. Director Holden stated that this has been attended over the last few years. Deputy Director Weissberg said he is on the Board of Directors for the New England chapter of the American Public Works Association. He shared that it is great for professional development but also to represent Middletown. The total cost will be \$200 for Director Holden and Deputy Director Weissberg to attend. Councilman Marino made a motion to approve. Councilman McKeon seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.



OLD BUSINESS:

a. Field Naming – Councilman Nocera stated that the field behind Beman Middle School is unnamed. There was a request for naming this field after Quentin Williams, State Rep who passed in a motor vehicle accident on Route 9. There was also a request from the Chamber to honor Joey Logano with perhaps a street name. Councilman Nocera said in the past they asked for nominations. Director Holden said another idea was to name the pedestrian bridge over Route 9 for Representative Q. Director Holden said he will look into the exact procedure. Councilman Pessina championed for the field being named in honor of Representative Quentin Williams.

b. Pameacha Pond- Councilman Nocera asked that this item be placed on the agenda for next month.

c. Dog Park Update- Deputy Director Weissberg stated that they had their second working session of the dog park group, open to the public. Potential locations and evaluation criteria were discussed. Locations will be ranked by attendees for the next meeting and will be discussed further.

d. Recreation Center Update – Director Holden stated that there are only a few minor items that need to be wrapped up. Director Lechowicz stated that the last few punch list items are being worked on so that it is wrapped up for Friday.

e. Veterans Pool and Splash Pad Update – Director Holden shared that we are still on schedule to open for Memorial Day. A mural will be placed on the exposed portion of the retaining wall.

f. Saybrook Rd/ Dripps Rd Update- Deputy Director Weissberg shared that on February 8, 2023 he met with Middlesex Land Trust. Parking is a challenge on Dripps Road as it contributes to road degradation and presents a safety challenge. A few locations have been marked out for parking and parking signs should be installed shortly. He is working with the Land Trust to identify ways to get an offsite parking lot built, possibly on Aircraft Road. The Land Trust said they had previously broached that issue with CT Forest and Park and it was not well received. He is working with a vendor to address some of the drainage solutions on Dripps Road. He stated he will be meeting a resident of Saybrook Road to go over the concrete roadway. They are looking to seal some of the joints of the concrete and address some leveling issues. A long term solution is being looked at to cap the concrete.

g. Old Road Drive Update- Director Holden stated he'd be happy to take a copy of the map that Brian Kronenberger has to take a closer look at it and see if the City needs to update theirs. There isn't much else to update at this point until the procedures are fleshed out. Councilman Nocera stated that he will double check with General Counsel to confirm that if the Commission tours Old Road Drive if it would be considered a meeting or not.

OTHER: Reported on by Christopher Holden

- a. February Department Updates- Budget will be presented next month as well as proposed road work for the year.
- b. February 2023 Monthly Report - Highway Division- Nothing additional to OT report.
- c. February 2023 Monthly Report - Parks Division – Nothing additional to OT report.



- d. February 2023 Public Works Overtime Report- Closing and opening of parks on weekends and closing of parks during the week is the cause of most OT for the Parks Division. Snow and Ice removal has been the cause of the majority of OT for the Highway Division.
- e. February 2023 Building Permits – Nearly \$944,000 in building permits so far.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None

Adjourn – As there were no further questions the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.