



**PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY April 12, 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

Public: Philip Nettis, David Sandler, Jill Chase, Patti Nettis-Deegan, Jen Alexander, Don Degennaro, Pebbles Lacross.

The meeting was called to order by Councilman Nocera at 6:33 p.m. Councilman Pessina moved to approve the Meeting Minutes dated March 8, 2023. Councilman McKeon seconded the motion. The motion passed. Director Holden requested the agenda be amended to discuss the proposed paving program first as Deputy Director Weissberg is on vacation and is in attendance. Councilman Pessina made a motion. It was voted on and passed unanimously. Councilman Nocera requested that the agenda be amended to add a status update on the downtown district ARPA grant under public comment. Councilman Pessina made a motion. Councilman McKeon seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Jen Alexander shared that the City received ARPA money, some of which is dedicated to the downtown business district for a façade improvement program. They do not believe this to be practical due to the constraints of the Downtown Business District and the ARPA funding requirement. They have certain items that can be addressed, such as the garbage cans along Main Street, which need to be replaced, condition of certain tree wells street lights, street furniture. The ARPA committee, consultants, OGC and the Mayor have reviewed the request to move the ARPA funding to the Public Works Department so that these projects can be completed. The \$300,000 will be used on streetscaping, infrastructure and beautification initiatives in the downtown area.

Jill Chase of 37 Old Road Drive wants to follow up regarding the efforts to make either improvements to Old Road Drive or to make it a City street. She reiterated that the neighborhood is worried about their safety and accessibility of emergency vehicles. She wants to know what updates there are and if there is



an action plan in the works and to discuss what can be done going forward. She stated no one has reached out to any of the residents of the street to walk the property. She shared that she has older maps that show plot plans if City Hall does not have them. She requested she and her neighbors receive copies of any plans of what may be happening for the street and for a copy of the draft procedure of a private road becoming a city street and an update regarding that.

David Sandler is in attendance to advocate to get his area roads fixed. He submitted a letter of correspondence regarding surrounding streets to the commission.

Phillip Nettis would like to see if there are any updates on Dripps Road and Saybrook Road.

Don Degennaro from Old Road Drive wanted to reiterate what Jill Chase said. He questioned if the bid process will be out to the public about the repaving of City streets or if contractors are already selected for this work. Director Holden stated the bid is already out for an on call paving contractor. The current low bidder is DeRita Construction. When possible, they also piggyback off of existing bids, like State bids. Tilcon tends to be the lowest bidder for paving and milling work. We will not be going out to bid for anything other than the on call paving contractor.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Daniel Penney- South Farms Area- Roads- summarizing some of the work that has been completed out on Chamberlain Hill. He went through a variety of concerns for other surrounding streets.

David Sandler- Lyceum Road Status Update- shared similar concerns to Daniel Penney but would also like an update on Lyceum Road. He would like to see Lyceum Road closed so that it is more pedestrian and bike friendly, as well as cutting down on vehicles who speed in that area.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **Proposed Paving Program-** Deputy Director Weissberg shared that they developed a three year paving program based on what is outstanding on the road bonds. He said there is about \$10 million dollars' worth of work but less than that available in the road bonds so what they will be doing is introducing a bunch of different paving techniques. He stated that he will be providing information to committee members on these techniques and that they are part of a cohesive pavement preservation strategy. It allows our department to use different treatments on different roads which can provide similar results at a significant cost savings. Traditional mill and overlay work will still be used where appropriate. One of the techniques that will be used is hot in-place recycling, which rehabilitates deteriorated pavement. This may be a viable option for Industrial Park Drive, Smith Street and Miner Street. Country Club Road will have a thin overlay with a bonded wearing course. This will be a significant cost savings as it is much less per square foot than traditional mill and overlay. The finalized list is still being worked on with a contractor. Once complete, it will be submitted to committee members and a notice will be placed on social media to the public. Deputy Director Weissberg also said that there will be an updated pavement inventory this summer and fall.
- b. **Dora Drive Island Maintenance-** Director Holden stated we have a contractor who does maintenance to the islands across the City. He isn't sure why the islands on Dora Drive were missed but it will be added to the contract to be maintained.



- c. Naming in Honor of Mayor Maria Holzberg-** Councilman Nocera stated that it may be a reasonable and appropriate decision by the Public Works Commission to name a part of Harbor Park in her honor. Director Holden stated that she has assisted the Public Works Department in gardens across the City as a part of the Middletown Garden Club. Councilman Pessina also stated that she was the first elected female Mayor of the City of Middletown. He agrees that the suggestion of Harbor Park would be great to name in honor of her and to perhaps install a bench and a plaque showing the history of her contributions to the City. Director Holden said that the old Middlesex Pool Club may also be a good spot as there will be a walkway and possible pollinator pathway in the area. Councilman Pessina requested a rendition of what is proposed.
- d. CT Recyclers Coalition Recycling Conference-** K. O'Rourke- Director Holden stated that the conference is a day long discussion of the current situation of recycling in the state of CT. Councilman Marino made a motion to approve this payment for this conference. Councilman Ford seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.
- e. T2 CTI Infrastructure Asset Management Workshop- C. Holden-** Director Holden stated the workshop is for him to learn how to better manage assets across the City. Councilman Marino made a motion to approve. Councilman Pessina seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Dog Park Update** – Councilman Marino stated that Deputy Director Weissberg created a spreadsheet to go over pros and cons of different locations in the City. The meeting that was supposed to happen prior to this was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. They are rescheduling for later in April or early May.
- b. Recreation Center** – Director Holden stated that it is up and running. The pool is ready, there is a game area and gymnasium that is being put to good use.
- c. Veterans Park, Pool & Splash Pad Update-** Director Holden said that the project is roughly 70% complete for billings. Electrical components are difficult to get and the hope is to get it before opening day on Memorial Day.
- d. Old Road Drive Update-** Director Holden stated that he has had some informal discussions with the Office of General Council. He has also had discussions with the Water Department to see what options are available for that area to get closer volumes of water for fire protection. They will need to work with the Fire Department to see if they are viable options. Councilman Pessina asked when staff may be able to meet with residents of Old Road Drive and be able to give a more clear analysis of what is going on. Director Holden will reach out to the residents to schedule a meeting and requested Jill Chase email him her contact information. Councilman Ford shared his concerns about the road and residents safety and that he has been out to the area and walked it before. He would like to have a timeline on how to address this with the residents of Old Road Drive. He would like to be involved in any meetings going forward as to what the action plan will be. Councilman Nocera stated that the blueprint of any action plan is the revenue to support it. At this time there is nothing in next year's budget that would support this action plan. Councilman Ford said that if that is the case, we should be transparent and let residents know and consider any cost efficient solutions to their concerns. Councilman McKeon asked about the ability of ambulance to get up the street. Councilman Marino said that he took a drive last week and



that the street is very tight and it would be tough for a full size fire truck or a box ambulance to get in and out safely. He said that good weather when everything is dry an ambulance would have little trouble getting up there but in inclement weather, especially mud, rain and snow, he can see it being a problem.

e. Public to Private Road Acceptance- Director Holden stated that the commission didn't submit any feedback and requested if they do have any that they send them in. They are waiting for comments from the commission before sending it to the Office of General Council.

f. Street Naming/ Field Naming- Councilman Nocera shared that the BOE is deliberating naming the new multipurpose field after late Senator Quentin Williams. A recommendation should be made before school closes and then it will go to Council for review and discussion. He also shared that the Chamber was hoping to have the committee consider naming the road in front of the old Canoe Club (Harbor Drive) after Joey Logano. Councilman Marino asked if this does go through, it could be coordinated with the opening of 80 Harbor Drive. Councilman McKeon shared he does like that the name Harbor Drive ties into the riverfront aspect of that property. Councilman Nocera and Councilman Marino mirrored this sentiment. This item will be back on the agenda for next month.

OTHER: Reported on by Christopher Holden

- a.** March Department Updates- Councilman McKeon requested an update on the Route 9 project and the 80 harbor Drive project. Director Holden shared that the DOT did traffic counts to evaluate the proposal for River Road. He stated that John Howell had suggested that if the ramp for the Southbound Route 9 going up and over to get off of the bridge on to Route 9 North, why not do a crisscross in there somehow so that you have an exit going on to the bridge from Route 9 North without having to have the signals. It is an option that is being evaluated. Director Holden stated that the structural steel installation for 80 Harbor Drive is complete. The deck essentially fell off but is going through design and structural analysis at the moment. Drainage on the first floor was repaired. Next steps are getting lighting installed and HVAC units installed. There has been a lot of paperwork and approvals needed due to the project having several different funding sources. The current estimate for completion is mid-September.
- b.** March 2023 Monthly Report - Highway Division- Gearing up for construction season and repairing catch basins where necessary. Mile Lane has a problem with pipes rotting away underground. Three pipes need to be replaced and materials are being purchased so the project can start.
- c.** March 2023 Monthly Report - Parks Division – Parks is working on getting fields playable. Fencing replacements at Snow School are being done. Butternut Park and Snow School are being looked at for building restrooms. Director Holden reported that there are large groups of kids congregating at the playground at Pat Kidney Field who are monopolizing the equipment from the younger kids and causing damage to the bathrooms. They are working with the PD to do more frequent passes and are closing the bathrooms for a few hours a day in the afternoon. Councilman Pessina, Councilman McKeon and Councilman Ford do not agree with the decision to close a bathroom that is supposed to be accessible to the public. Councilman Ford asked if there could be discussions with Chief Costa and the PAL program to see if they can create an opportunity for these kids or collaborate with them, the BOE or the Recreation Department.
- d.** March 2023 Public Works Overtime Report- Nothing additional to report.



- e. March 2023 Building Permits – Building Department has hit over a million dollars (\$1,088,496.00) in permit fees received. They are looking into hiring an on call inspector to do some of the time consuming basic inspections.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None

Adjourn – As there were no further questions the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.