



**PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES COMMISSION**

**MEETING MINUTES**

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 9, 2023

**TIME: 6:30 P.M.**

**Via WebEX.com**

**MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT**

**Members Present:** +  
Councilman Gene Nocera  
Councilman Ed McKeon  
Councilman Darnell Ford

**Staff Present:** Christopher M. Holden, P.E., Director of Public Works  
Howard Weissberg, P.E., Deputy Director of Public Works  
Kimberly O'Rourke- Recycling Coordinator  
Rohan Manning, Chief Management Analyst

**Public:** Gary Wallace, Tim & Joy Hollister, John Mills, Jane Harris, Deborah Shapiro, Kristen Brown, Mick.

The meeting was called to order by Councilman Nocera at 6:35 p.m. Councilman McKeon moved to approve the Meeting Minutes dated July 12, 2023. Councilman Ford seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:**

**Mick Bulvich** of 980 Chamberlain Hill Road is in attendance to see updates about the planned work on Chamberlain Hill Road.

**Tim & Joy Hollister** of 1000 Chamberlain Hill Road is in attendance to see any updates on work planned to address drainage issues on Chamberlain Hill Rd.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

The letter of correspondence in regards to the dog park was added into the packet.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. **Tree Health on Miner and Smith-** Councilman McKeon made a motion to add this item to the agenda. Councilman Ford seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. Jane Harris, the Chair of the Urban Forestry Commission spoke to dying trees on Minor Street due to the hot in place paving. She has inspected many native trees that have up to 20 feet of their trunks filled with dead branches. She has read that trees start to die at anything above 110 degrees. She said she was told that only the foliage should be affected but when inspecting the tree and peeling back some of its bark, the entire branch to its tip is dead. The trees she looked at were 6 feet or more back from the edge of



the road. She would like this looked into more deeply before more paving using this technique is done. Councilman Nocera suggested that this be added to the next agenda for an update after looking into the impact of and potential remedies for this process. Councilman McKeon wanted to emphasize the importance of trees in an urban setting. Director Holden stated that they have completed all hot in place that they are doing. Basic milling and paving is happening in the downtown area. Deputy Director Weissberg spoke to his experiences with the hot in place recycling process in Meriden. He said that it is certainly more ideal in an area that is more open. He stated Miner Street is unique to where every option for paving wasn't available due to how the road was. He said that there is definitely a benefit to hot in place when appropriately done, but suggested working with the Urban Forestry Commission going forward. He said that in his experience, he has seen desiccation of leaves in year one and mostly full recovery in year two. He stated that tree protection and assessment can be addressed in the analysis going forward.

- b. SMM Grant Resolution Amendment-** Director Holden stated that we were able to collect data and determine what the next phase of the co-collection program will look like. He went over unit based pricing. Kristen Brown went deeper into the trash crisis, program update and what will be happening with the program going forward. DEEP is willing to provide some bridge gap funding to provide the program for the next year. Ideally, there would be a two-tiered rate where there is a base fee and a per bag disposal fee. It is expected that there would be a reduction in the annual base cart fee. More sizes of the bags would be available. Councilman Nocera made a motion to move this resolution amendment to Finance and Government. Councilman McKeon seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- c. Honorary Naming of Existing Streets while retaining its actual name-** Deborah Shapiro proposed an honorary street naming program for Middletown. She was approached by John Mills, an independent scholar, who has done research is Prince Mortemer, who was enslaved in Middletown on Rapallo Avenue. It is requested that this be renamed to honor Prince Mortemer. There are similar programs in Bridgeport and Bloomfield. John Mills gave some background on Prince Mortemer and the area. Director Holden shared that the honorary name would be placed below the actual street name. Deborah Shapiro said that she would work with the City attorney's office on some parameters of the program into an ordinance. Councilman McKeon made a motion to change Rapallo Avenue to Prince Mortemer Avenue and to explore the recommendation for an honorary naming program. Councilman Form seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. Kings Avenue Abandonment-** Director Holden shared a map to show the area in question. There is currently a City parking area and a private parking area. A portion of that area would be abandoned and become part of the property owner's parcel. Councilman Ford made a motion to have this area surveyed and the topic further discussed. Councilman McKeon seconded the motion. Councilman McKeon is not in favor of doing this. He stated that the adjacent owner who would have this property if the City were to abandon it has aggressive towing policies, which he has been a victim of. He believes that any business owner that has predatory towing companies hauling vehicles out of Middletown aren't owed any favors. Councilman Ford mirrored reservations of abandoning this area to property owners and that other options should be explored. The motion did not pass to move to survey.
- e. Ravine Avenue Abandonment-** Director Holden shared a map to show the area in question. This is a residential area. The driveway of a house on Miles Ave is essentially a paper road. The property owner has requested it be abandoned. Director Holden stated that essentially the road would be split down the middle. Half would go to the homeowner and the other would go to Ravine Park.



Councilman McKeon made a motion to move this forward. Councilman Ford seconded this motion. Councilman McKeon noted he needed to abstain as he is a friend of the person who owns the home requesting the abandonment. The motion passed.

- f. Newfield Street Addressing-** A new development is going on Newfield Street and requested an official Newfield Street address. It is being tabled until the next meeting so that more information can be presented.
- g. Purple lighting on Main St- CHC-** Gary Wallace, who is representing CHC on this matter. He discussed the case of baby Aiden and what can be done to heal the community after the murder of baby Aiden. He wishes to highlight awareness of domestic violence. Flags have been hung before, as have banners. Purple lighting is another way to bring awareness to domestic violence and show support to victims and their families. Councilman Ford supports this initiative 100%, as does Councilman McKeon. Councilman Ford made a motion to explore this further. Councilman McKeon seconded the motion. The motion passed.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- a. Dog Park Update** – Deputy Director Weissberg share that there is a draft presentation that is being finalized. They would like to present this at the next Public Works Commission Meeting.
- b. Veterans Park, Pool & Splash Pad Update-** Director Holden stated that the project is up and running and that residents are enjoying the facility.
- c. Proposed Paving Program Update-** Deputy Director Weissberg stated that the paving program is well under way. Industrial Park, Miner Street and Smith Street underwent hot in place recycling. Miner St has been capped with a chip seal product. Milling is complete on Country Club Road. It will be capped with a bonded wearing course. The notification process will be improved going forward. Director Holden gave an update about work that will be done on Mile Lane.
- d. Chamberlain Hill Rd Issues-** There was a motion to move this to the beginning of old business. Councilman McKeon made a motion. It passed unanimously. Director Holden stated that the City Engineer visited the area and is working on a plan to address drainage issues. Councilman Nocera suggested a preliminary action plan be developed between this meeting and the next meeting. Councilman McKeon made a motion. Councilman Ford seconded the motion. The motion passed.

#### **OTHER: Reported on by Christopher Holden**

- a.** July Department Updates- Nothing additional to below.
- b.** July 2023 Monthly Report – Nothing additional to below.
- c.** July 2023 Monthly Report – Nothing additional to below.
- d.** July 2023 Public Works Overtime Report- Parks has been working a lot of OT to keep up with various tournaments and games. The building department has been working OT to address their backlog of inspections. Highways OT has mostly been due to paving programs.
- e.** July 2023 Building Permits – Building Department permit totals were not discussed.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** None

**Adjourn** – As there were no further questions the meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.