

**STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING**

Thursday, March 28, 2024 at 5:00 P.M.

STONINGTON POLICE HEADQUARTERS

173 SOUTH BROAD STREET

PAWCATUCK, CT 06379

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Chairman Bill Turner, Vice Chairman Patricia Coan,
Secretary Lisa Tepper Bates, Commissioner Jessica Mills, Commissioner Richard
Balestracci
Chief Jay DeGrosso, Deputy Chief Todd Olson, Captain Bryan Schneider

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Turner called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

2. Remarks of the Public

Selectman Ben Tamsky, Edgemont St Mystic, CT

Mr. Tamsky made remarks regarding the Route 27 crosswalk, after last months meeting, he contacted the towns Public Works Director regarding the cost for curb cuts, and the possibility of grants to cover the cost. Chief DeGrosso expressed concern over the lighting in that area. Mr. Tamsky also wanted the commission and police department to be aware that car carrier trucks have been parking on the side of Route 1 across from Brustolon Buick GMC in Mystic, he believes this poses a safety concern for bicyclist. Chief DeGrosso noted this was the first he had heard of this.

3. Correspondence

a. Letter Re: Route 27 Crosswalk

4. Planning and Zoning Permit Applications

a. Planning & Zoning Text & Map Amendment Application: J & H Mystic Hospitality

*** COMMENTS NEEDED***

John Casey, Robinson & Cole LLP

Mr. Casey was in attendance representing J & H Mystic Hospitality, seeking clarification and text amendments to the buffering requirements set forth by the towns zoning regulations. The current buffer requirements read, 50 feet with 25 feet of screening (except in front yard), they are proposing they add, *or along property lines that abut interstate 95 and/or its on- and off-ramps.*

The second requirement reads, 50 feet of screening adjoining hotels (except in front yard).

They would also like to add, *minimum buffer requirements shall not be required for a hotel use that adjoins another hotel use.*

Mr. Casey noted he'd like to see more consistency in the requirements as the Mystic Aquarium and Olde Mystik Village, which both abut to Interstate 95 as the J & H Mystic Hospitality does, do not have a buffer. They feel this is an unnecessary requirement.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to pass along to planning and zoning, that the police commission sees no issues with this application as it relates to traffic, safety, and parking, Motion seconded by Commissioner Balestracci. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**b. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Application: Precious Memories Place
*COMMENTS NEEDED***

**c. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit and Coastal Area Management Application: Currier Group,
779 Stonington Road, Stonington, CT *COMMENTS NEEDED***

Sergio F. Cherenzia, P.E. Cherenzia & Associates, LTD.
Robert Currier, Currier Group, Woodfellas Pizza Owner

Mr. Cherenzia was in attendance with his client Mr. Currier who is seeking approval to be able to use the property at 779 Stonington Rd to host 3 vendor food trucks, including Woodfellas mobile pizza truck. The hours of operation would be seasonal, weather dependent, and limited hours/days of operation. Parking is in compliance with the special use permit, contingent on Department of Transportation approval of lease, as this is a State right of way. The lot has 12 parking spots, including an ADA spot, and it's possible they could fit 1 or 2 more spots. Chief DelGrosso expressed concern over the possibility of people running across Route 1 to get to the location from businesses across the street. Mr. Currier explained that he has spoken with neighboring business', The Hounds, which has the most conducive parking and they are open to sharing their parking lots on their off hours if needed, it should be noted the Mr. Cherenzia acknowledge that due to zoning regulations, and code, offsite parking is not allowed, but acknowledged it occurs, and as long as the neighboring business' have no problem with it, it should not be an issue. The Department of Transportation made preliminary comments regarding dirt from the lot getting on to Route 1, they plan on either paving or placing crushed stone down to eliminate that concern. DOT also noted the placement of a stop sign, or stop bars at the entrance/exit of the lot. Chief DelGrosso asked if the sight line will be impaired due to signage to which it was stated they have moved the sign back so that it does not disrupt the view of traffic.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to pass along to planning and zoning, that the police commission sees no issues with this application as it relates to traffic, safety, and parking, Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

5. SPECIAL EVENTS

a. Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce Events

1. Mystic Outdoor Art Festival * PRESENTATION FOR TENTATIVE APPROVAL- TO COME BACK ON JUNE 13, 2024 FOR FINAL APPROVAL*

Bruce Flax, President, Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce

Rosalie Walsh, Williams St Resident, Participating Artist at the Mystic Outdoor Art Festival

Susan Fisher, Lords Point Resident, Director of Mystic Museum of Art

Mr. Flax was in attendance to discuss the 65th annual Mystic Outdoor Art Festival being held on August 10 and 11th, he noted there were two members of the public who would like to make comments in relation to the Festival, Commissioner Turner allowed for public comment. Mrs. Walsh and Fisher were both advocating for the addition of 6 artist booths on Bay St, in addition to the 6 they already have, bringing the total number of booths on Bay St to 12. They believe this will help with the continuity of the festival from Holmes St, on to Bay St and into the Seaport, supporting the community and small businesses.

Mr. Flax explained that he meet with Bay St residents out of respect in February of 2024 to discuss increasing the number of booths on Bay St, after a lengthy discussion they could not come to any agreement, with the only amenable path forward being staying at 6 booths or having none. Mr. Flax noted that the Bay St residents expressed concern over the safety of having booths on Bay St at all. The Chamber provides volunteers, and signs to safeguard properties, as well as a contact number for the residents if they need to leave via vehicle with a police escort.

The Chamber is asking for 12 booths on Bay St this year, with all other areas of the festival, and plan to stay the same as the previous year.

No vote

2. Halloween Parade * PRESENTATION FOR TENTATIVE APPROVAL- TO COME BACK ON AUGUST 8, 2024, 2024 FOR FINAL APPROVAL*

Mr. Flax noted no changes, same as previous year.

3. Santa Arrives by Tugboat/ Lighted boat Parade * PRESENTATION FOR TENTATIVE APPROVAL- TO COME BACK ON September 12, 2024 FOR FINAL APPROVAL*

This was the biggest event in Mystic for 2023, with an estimated 28,000 attendees. The event is to be held on November 30th, 2024. Mr. Flax noted this year they will set up bike racks down the boardwalk with yellow caution tape, first thing in the morning, and the public will not be allowed inside that area as this was an issue in 2023. Chief DelGrosso noted that the department is working together with our Federal and State partners to do the best we can with such a large event. Mr. Flax also noted that they will be getting assistance from cadets of the Navy or Coast Guard to help monitor on the dock.

No motions were made for any of the above Greater Mystic Chamber Events, a vote will be done at the above stated date.

b. 2024 Art Walk in Stonington Borough * VOTE NEEDED*

Sandra Alexander, Dessa Lea Productions, Stonington Borough Merchants Association

Sandra Alexander was in attendance on behalf of the Stonington Borough Merchants Association. The Stonington Borough Art Walk will be held on Saturday, September 14, 2024, with a rain date of Sunday, September 15, 2024. There are no changes to the event from the previous year. Chief DelGrosso asked they communicate with Chief Hoadley of the Stonington Borough Fire Department regarding no parking signs, and barricades, to ensure fire trucks can maneuver tight corners, and streets, if need be. Ms. Alexander has been in talks with Chief Hoadley.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the 2024 Art Walk in the Stonington Borough as submitted to the Police Commission, subject to the meeting of the town's insurance requirement, and any issues the police department determines are needed prior to the date of the event. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

c. Spellman Park Events * VOTE NEEDED*

Richard Ward, Recreation Administrator

Mr. Ward was in attendance seeking approval for road races and events on Spellman Drive. The first event is the Deans Mill School PTO Color Race being held on Saturday, June 1, 2024. The race will begin and end at the West Pavilion, runners will use Spellman Drive between the East and West Pavilion only and will be cordoned off during the run. The Stonington Cross-Country 5K will be held on Wednesday, August 14, 2024 starting and ending on the track at Palmer field, runners will cross Spellman Drive at the 3-way stop sign. The Stonington Open Tennis Tournament will be held on Friday- Sunday, August 9-11, 2024, and the Stonington Soccer tournament will be held Friday – Sunday, August 16-18, 2024. Spellman Drive will not be cordoned off during the tournaments, but they expect a large crowd for each, utilizing all parking options on Spellman Drive.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the Deans Mill School PTO Color Race, Stonington Cross-Country 5K, Stonington Open Tennis Tournament, and Soccer Tournament submitted, as the Police Commission sees no issues with this event, subject to the meeting of the town's insurance requirement, and any issues the police department determines are needed prior to the dates of these events. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

d. Ragnar Relay Event * VOTE NEEDED*

Marc and Carol Kanoey, RAGNAR Events

Mr and Mrs. Kanoey were in attendance to represent the RAGNAR Relay which will be coming thru Stonington on May 17, 2024 at about 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM. This will be the same route that was taken last year. The leg of the race that leaves Elmridge Rd and goes onto Route 2 before entering into Westerly, RI via White Rock bridge is the spot of concern, they will have plenty of cones, signage, and the same restrictions as last year.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the Ragnar Relay as submitted to the Police Commission, subject to the meeting of the town's insurance requirement, and any issues the police department determines are needed prior to the date of the event. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

e. Strawberry Festival * VOTE NEEDED*

Eric Meyer, Old Mystic Village Merchants

Mr. Meyer was in attendance looking to replace the Taste of Mystic with the Strawberry Festival, which will be mirroring the Apple Festival in the Old Mystic Village. This is a brand-new event and will have a short advertising window due to the event being held on June 8th and 9th, however they do expect a good turnout. Chief DelGrosso expressed concern over adding an additional event at the Old Mystic Village and the strain it puts on the police department. However, upon learning this event would be replacing the Taste of Mystic, he explained it is not an additional impact on the department.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the Strawberry Festival at the Old Mystic Village, as submitted to the Police Commission, subject to the meeting of the town's insurance requirement, and any issues the police department determines are needed prior to the date of the event. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

f. Salt Marsh Opera Concert at Lighthouse * VOTE NEEDED*

John Delmhorst, Salt Marsh Opera Company

Mr. Delmhorst was in attendance representing the Salt Marsh Opera Company who will be hosting their annual concert on the lawn of the Stonington Lighthouse Museum on Sunday, July 21, 2024. The event will be the same as previous years, and they will be hiring two officers to facilitate traffic, no food or drinks will be sold at the event.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the Salt Marsh Opera Companies concert as submitted to the Police Commission, subject to the meeting of the town's insurance requirement, and any issues the police department determines are needed prior to the date of the event. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

g. Road Church 350th Anniversary Event * VOTE NEEDED *

Donna Brandelli, Chairperson Road Church, First Congregation Church of Stonington

Ms. Brandelli was in attendance seeking approval for the Road Churches 350th anniversary festival, this will be the first event of the year to celebrate their anniversary. They are anticipating a few hundred people to attend, since there is not a lot of formal parking at the church, they will have offsite parking at Pine Point and Deans Mill Schools and will provide two shuttles. They hope offsite parking will alleviate any issues on Pequot trail. Drop off will be available at the church for handicapped individuals, and a few spots will be reserved for VIP guest. Signs will be placed in front of the church, and driveway directing where to park. Neighbors will be notified of the event in advance. They are requesting officers to help with traffic. Chief DeGrosso believes one officer will be sufficient.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the Road Church's 350th festival as submitted to the Police Commission, subject to the meeting of the town's insurance requirement, and any issues the police department determines are needed prior to the date of the event. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

h. FarmFest Fundraiser * VOTE NEEDED*

No changes

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the FarmFest as submitted to the Police Commission, subject to the meeting of the town's insurance requirement, and any issues the police department determines are needed prior to the date of the event. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

6. Traffic

a. Email re: Wheeler Rd Warning Sign * VOTE NEEDED*

Paul Thomas, Stonington Public Works

Mr. Thomas is seeking approval to install a left arrow warning sign on Wheeler Road. While repairing the warning sign on the southbound lane he found there was not a warning sign on the northbound lane of the same curve.

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the replacement of the Wheeler Road Warning sign as submitted to the commission. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

b. Email re: Request for Guardrail Change Nautilus Way * VOTE NEEDED*

Jean Lennon, Nautilus Way

Ms. Lennon is seeking to have a guardrail that runs through her front yard removed or modified. Chief DelGrosso explained that she would first need to speak with the town regarding the reasons the guardrail is there in the first place. Ms. Lennon explained she was unable to get clarity on who to speak with, Chief DelGrosso told Ms. Lennon he would reach out to town hall to get answers on how to move forward, and a better understanding of what purpose the guardrail has so that he could inform the commissioners and will reach out. No vote made.

7. Approval of minutes from Thursday, February 8, 2024 Regular Meeting *VOTE NEEDED*

Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the minutes for the Thursday, February 8, 2024 Regular Meeting as submitted. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

8. Report of the Chief of Police

a. Budget Report

b. Monthly Report

c. Special Events Schedule

d. Sergeant Promotional Process

Chief DelGrosso thanked the Commissioners for their time during this process.

e. Police Commission Secretary Pay * VOTE NEEDED*

Chief DelGrosso would like to increase the Police Commission Secretary pay from \$125.00 to \$200.00 with the flexibility to move it to \$225.00. No vote was needed.

f. Approved Bid Waiver Request Granted for Furniture Purchase

9. Consent Agenda

a. Highway Use Permit: Feast of the Assumption

b. Highway Use Permit: Westerly-Pawcatuck Memorial Day Parade

c. Good Job Ofc.Armstrong

10. Executive Session

a. Interview of Sergeant Promotional Process Candidates

At 6:31 PM Commissioner Coan made a motion to adjourn to the executive session, seconded by Commissioner Bates. All in favor, motion approved.

At 9:58PM Commissioner Coan made a motion to come out of executive session and stated the Police Commission promotes Troy Powell to the position of Sargent, seconded by commissioner bates, all in favor, motion approved.

11. Adjourn

At 10:02 p.m., Commissioner Coan made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Bates, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lisa Tepper Bates
Secretary