

CITY OF NORWALK
TRAFFIC AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE
MARCH 18, 2024

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Rilling; Commissioner Lopez; Commissioner Nate Sumpter

STAFF: Chief James Walsh; Deputy Terry Blake, Garrett Bolella, Asst. Director, TMP; Kyle Benjamin, Traffic Analyst, Vanessa Valadares, Chief of Public Works, and Operations; Wilber Giron, DPW

OTHERS: Alex DiBella, Asst. Construction Manager, Burns & McDonald; Tanner Thompson, Chair, Bike-Walk Commission; Benjamin Hanpeter; Jim Anderson; Carolyn Greenbaum

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Members of the public who wish to view the meeting, but are not participating, can view a live stream on the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. This stream is delayed by approximately 20 seconds. Please find the information using the link above. The meeting recording and minutes will be posted on the City of Norwalk website within seven (7) days after the meeting.



Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Garrett Bolella at gbolella@norwalkct.gov with subject header “**MARCH TRAFFIC AUTHORITY**” to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 4:03PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Thompson spoke in support of the SONO Streets event and said that he thinks it's a wonderful idea and hopes there is a way to accommodate it.

1. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 26, 2024

**** COMMISSIONER SUMPTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 26, 2024, AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. APPROVE THE PARTIAL ROAD CLOSURE OF ELIZABETH STREET FROM SOUTH MAIN STREET TO WATER STREET (CT ROUTE 136) FOR THE EVERSOURCE ENERGY TRANSMISSION PROJECT FROM APRIL 2, 2024, TO JULY 31, 2024

Ms. Valadares presented a follow-up to the original plan that was presented to the commission a couple of years ago when Eversource was proposing work through Elizabeth Street. She said some of the parking spaces will need to be blocked off so that traffic can be maintained through Elizabeth Street for one lane of traffic.

Mr. DiBella said that Eversource is working in coordination with CTDOT with their replacement of the Walk Bridge. Eversource currently has two transmission lines on high towers over the existing Walk Bridge and in order for the CTDOT to complete that replacement the Eversource lines will need to be vacated from the bridge. He presented the traffic management plans to implement detours, signage, public safety etc. and will work from Water Street up Elizabeth Street and crossing South Main Street. He provided a breakdown to the commission on what Elizabeth Street will look like phase by phase and the full traffic plan shows the entirety of the street blocked off allowing one way traffic at the other end of the street and will be done in sections over a seven-week period impacting a limited number of parking spaces at a time. He said the plan is to work with DPW to begin the work on April 1, 2024, and try to get as much of the work done in early spring as possible.

Commissioner Lopez asked if the project will be completed by July 31, 2024. Mr. DiBella said "yes" it would be the end of that work on these streets and emphasized that the goal is to beat this schedule and work more efficiently but won't know until they get started.

Mayor Rilling said that the Operations Department and Eversource have been working at length to try to find the appropriate route for this underground and go underneath the channel as opposed to going above ground and having poles with wires and he certainly supports it.

**** COMMISSIONER LOPEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE PARTIAL ROAD CLOSURE OF ELIZABETH STREET FROM SOUTH MAIN STREET TO WATER STREET (CT ROUTE 136) FOR THE EVERSOURCE ENERGY TRANSMISSION PROJECT FROM APRIL 2, 2024, TO JULY 31, 2024.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- 3. APPROVE THE FULL CLOSURE OF HIGHLAND AVENUE (CT ROUTE 136) FROM ROWAYTON COMMUNITY CENTER TO MCKINLEY STREET (CT RT. 136), MCKINLEY STREET (CT. RT. 136 FROM HIGHLAND AVENUE (CT. RT. 136) TO ROWAYTON AVENUE (CT. RT. 136) AND ROWAYTON AVENUE (CT. RT. 136) FROM MCKINLEY STREET (CT. ROUTE 136) TO WILSON AVENUE FOR THE ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY PARAGE ON MAY 26, 2024, FROM 11:00AM TO 1:30PM**

Mayor Rilling said the parade has been held for many years and he does not believe there has been a change to the route. Mr. Benjamin said that is correct.

**** COMMISSIONER LOPEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE FULL CLOSURE OF HIGHLAND AVENUE (CT ROUTE 136) FROM ROWAYTON COMMUNITY CENTER TO MCKINLEY STREET (CT RT. 136), MCKINLEY STREET (CT. RT. 136 FROM HIGHLAND AVENUE (CT. RT. 136) TO ROWAYTON AVENUE (CT. RT. 136) AND ROWAYTON AVENUE (CT. RT. 136) FROM MCKINLEY STREET (CT. ROUTE 136) TO WILSON AVENUE FOR THE ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY PARAGE ON MAY 26, 2024, FROM 11:00AM TO 1:30PM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mayor Rilling welcomed Deputy Chief Blake back after spending several weeks at the FBI National Academy and hoped it was a valuable experience and a pleasant one. Deputy Chief Blake said it certainly was and thanked him for approving him to attend.

- 4. APPROVE THE PARTIAL CLOSURE OF CALF PASTURE BEACH ROAD FROM MARVIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO CALF PASTURE BEACH FOR THE 2ND ANNUAL NORWALK OPEN STREETS EVENT ON MAY 4, 2024, FROM 6:30AM TO 3:30PM.**

Mr. Thompson provided an overview of the event and said this is the second iteration of the event and is an event that is about getting people out to walk, bike, and roll and will be partnering with Norwalk public schools and are also working closely with Recreation and Parks. Mr. Hanpeter presented the traffic plan and said that the event is almost identical to the plan that was used last year, and the only difference is the addition of activity centers, but the actual traffic management plan is all the same. He said the layout in the Calf Pasture Beach parking lot will be somewhat modified and cars will be entering through one of the entrances but will be exiting through the other entrance, and the normal two exits will be closed so there will be signage inside the parking lot to be sure people know how to get in and out properly. Mayor Rilling asked if the Norwalk Karting Association will be operating that day. Mr. Hanpeter said not that he is aware of. Mr. Thompson said the Norwalk Karting Association spring session ends in April.

Mayor Rilling asked how people can leave the beach if they can't use Canfield Road. Mr. Hanpeter said that Canfield Road will still be open and there will be an officer at the intersection to help direct traffic or to have conflicts with the people who are using the greenway.

**** MR. SUMPTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE PARTIAL CLOSURE OF CALF PASTURE BEACH ROAD FROM MARVIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO CALF PASTURE BEACH FOR THE 2ND ANNUAL NORWALK OPEN STREETS EVENT ON MAY 4, 2024, FROM 6:30AM TO 3:30PM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. APPROVE THE FULL CLOSURE OF HENRY STREET FROM SOUTH MAIN STREET TO CHESTNUT STREET FOR "THE BLESSING, INTERNATIONAL CAR SHOW" ON APRIL 13, 2024, FROM 9:00AM TO 4:50PM

Mr. Anderson provided an overview of the event and said this is the first time the event will be held, and the diocese has granted them the use of the lot at St. Joseph's Church, and it was recommended by the Police Department to close Henry Street. He said the event is to help raise money for repair the roof at St. Joseph's Church and there will be approximately 80 cars in the show and there is no rain date.

Commissioner Lopez asked how they derived the number of participants. Mr. Anderson said they don't have any idea how many participants there will be and that is an estimated number, but they are limited in space. Mr. Anderson asked who he can contact to use the lot at SONO School for overflow parking. Mayor Rilling suggested he contact Norwalk Public Schools facilities division to make that request.

Chief Walsh said he is concerned about the number of participants and said there are a lot of people for that space. Mr. Anderson said they will have police, police cadets, and volunteers from the church to help, and if this turns out to be a very big event, they will turn down show cars anymore and only limit them to 80. Commissioner Lopez asked if there will also be food vendors. Mr. Anderson said "yes" they will have one food truck, and two vendors as well as a DJ and stage. Mr. Bolella said it is always challenging to determine the number of participants there will be when planning the first event, but he does echo the Chiefs concerns regarding the estimated number of participants and that it is important to nail down where the patrons for the event will be parking and noted that there is surplus available parking available at the SONO garage and surface lots and can put him in touch with the Parking Authority. He said as different parking areas are looked at for the event it will be important to provide that information on the flyer. Commissioner Sumpter suggested signage to let people know where to park.

6. APPROVE THE PARTIAL CLOSURE OF WASHINGTON STREET FROM SOUTH MAIN STREET TO WATER STREET (CT ROUTE 136) FOR THE SONO SUNDAY STREETS EVENT EVERY SUNDAY FROM JUNE 6, 2024, TO SEPTEMBER 1, 2024, FROM 6:00AM TO 11:00PM

Commissioner Lopez moved the item for discussion.

Mayor Rilling said something can be done on Washington Street and is a good idea which has been discussed for quite some time now, but he does have some questions on this event since it is every Sunday for the entire summer. Mayor Rilling said the driveway to the Pearl is on Washington Street and is needed for ingress and egress and asked if any arrangements have been made with the Pearl and if the residents have been made aware. He also asked if the restaurants and retail owners on Washington Street have been notified. Ms. Greenbaum said the person she had been speaking with from the Traffic Authority suggested

that one lane be kept open for the residents of the Pearl to enter and exit with the assistance of the police. She said they have not yet approached the businesses yet because it has not been approved but does believe this is something they would be supportive of as she hopes this event would bring more traffic to the street even though that traffic would not be vehicle traffic.

Mayor Rilling said because the event is still a few months away time is not of the essence and suggested tabling the item until the April meeting and requested a finalized plan as well as the response of the business community.

Commissioner Lopez said the event ends late and he is concerned for the residents. Ms. Greenbaum said they would definitely abide by any noise ordinances and don't intend to cause any disruption to the residents. She said the intention of this event is to have a summer street fair series and will bring different events and entertainment throughout and she set the times as a placeholder for set up and teardown but can work with the commission if they think the times should be adjusted.

**** COMMISSIONER LOPEZ MOVED TO TABLE THE PARTIAL CLOSURE OF WASHINGTON STREET FROM SOUTH MAIN STREET TO WATER STREET (CT ROUTE 136) FOR THE SONO SUNDAY STREETS EVENT EVERY SUNDAY FROM JUNE 6, 2024, TO SEPTEMBER 1, 2024, FROM 6:00AM TO 11:00PM UNTIL THE APRIL 15, 2024.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

7. ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER SUMPTER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:46PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd