

CITY OF NORWALK
TRAFFIC AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE
February 26, 2024

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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via e-mail 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 to provide written comment prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Rilling; Commissioner Lopez; Commissioner Collier-Clemmons;
Commissioner Sumpter

STAFF: Chief James Walsh; Deputy Chief Melissa Lepore, Deputy Chief James Dinho; Kyle Benjamin, Traffic Analyst, TMP; Ben Yeung, Senior Engineer, TMP; Vanessa Valadares, Chief of Public Works, and Operations; Paul Sotnik, DPW Senior Engineer; Daniel Stanton, DPW Senior Engineer; Nathan Fankhanel, Junior Engineer, TMP; Ian Hall, Zoning Asst., Planning & Zoning; Sabrina Godeski, Director, Business Tourism & Development; Anna Breault, Special Event Coordinator, Business Tourism & Development

OTHERS: Emilio Flores, CTDOT; Stephen Barrett, Frontier; Stephen Ivan; Brad Craighead; Mr. Melo; CTDOT

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 4:00PM.

Mayor Rilling welcomed Commissioner Nate Sumpter who is joining the Traffic Authority and Police Commission as our newest Commissioner.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Diane Cece

Ms. Cece said she would like to raise some concern regarding the closure of East Avenue from Fort Point Street to Winfield Street because it was her understanding that the closure of the railroad station at the same time was only regarding the East Norwalk station, and she does not think anyone in the community or the neighborhood association has been made aware of the closure of East Avenue again for an extended period of time next month. She said one of the concerns is that part of the road should only have been impacted once or a couple of times to have all the work done and it is beginning to be a nuisance for the community especially with an extended closure as well as the road always being left in disrepair as well. She said she is also not sure that this is the best road in the area to divert traffic for a three-week period in March with little to no notice.

1. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JANUARY 22, 2024

On page 3, paragraph 1, change “conversion” to “conversation”

**** COMMISSIONER LOPEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. APPROVE THE PARTIAL ROAD CLOSURE OF CHESTNUT STREET FROM MONROE STREET TO HENRY STREET & HENRY STREET FROM SOUTH MAIN STREET TO SONO RAILROAD STATION DRIVEWAY FROM THE SONO TOD INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (MAY 2024-JULY 31, 2024/JUNE 30, 2025

Ms. Valadares said there were a couple of concerns at the last meeting regarding the closure from one of the property owners in the area so the item was tabled so that staff could have a conversation with him and address his concerns. Mr. Sotnik said that he and Mr. Ivan met with the residents that were concerned

on February 1, 2024, and walked the area with them and discussed the project with them and they said if they can use a portion of Concord Street between Chestnut Street and South Main Street for their trucks during construction and be able to make the turn they have no issues with the project.

Mayor Rilling asked if the road will be closed from May 2024, to July 31, 2024. Mr. Sotnik said “yes” for the water portion of the project and once that section is completed, they will come to finish the remainder underground electric and telecommunication utility work which will go until July 1, 2025. Mayor Rilling asked if the road will be totally closed at any time. Ms. Valadares said “no” it will be open one way for traffic. Mayor Rilling it is his understanding that the road will permanently be a one-way road. Ms. Valadares said it will only be a one-way road as part of this project but there may be some future plans to change the road, but those plans are still in the design phase and will need to come before the Traffic Authority for approval. Commissioner Lopez asked if the issue of the no parking sign has been addressed. Ms. Valadares said “yes” and that no parking sign would remain, and he was afraid if there were cars parked on the corner that the trucks would not be able to make the turn but there is already a no parking sign installed on the corner. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked if there are any issues with anyone continually violating the no parking zone. Ms. Valadares said they understand the concern of the property owner and understand that there will be cars that park there illegally but that will be enforced. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked if the no parking sign that is already in place is adequate for the business owners’ trucks to make the turn safely. Mr. Sotnik said “yes” and when they met with him, he stated as long as there were no cars parked there, he would have no issues. Mayor Rilling asked if there would be any interruption for the church traffic from the church that is on Concord Street and South Main Street. Ms. Valadares said the proposed one-way road is just for the first block so between the portion of Monroe Street and Henry Street is where they are proposing the street to become one-way during construction for a period of just over one year.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE PARTIAL ROAD CLOSURE OF CHESTNUT STREET FROM MONROE STREET TO HENRY STREET & HENRY STREET FROM SOUTH MAIN STREET TO SONO RAILROAD STATION DRIVEWAY FROM THE SONO TOD INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (MAY 2024-JULY 31, 2024/JUNE 30, 2025).**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. APPROVE THE FULL ROAD CLOSURE OF EAST AVENUE FROM FORT POINT STREET TO WINFIELD STREET (CT ROUTE 136) FOR FRONTIER ADVANCED UTILITY WORK FOR THE WALKBRIDGE PROJECT FROM MARCH 11TH 2024 TO MARCH 31, 2024

Ms. Valadares said there will be a full closure of the East Norwalk train station as part of the Walk Bridge Project. She said the project team meets bi-weekly and discuss ways to minimize the impacts of the project around the neighborhood and one of the items that still needs to be done is the infrastructure for Frontier under the bridge between Winfield Street and Fort Point Street. She said considering the amount of traffic will be much less due to the closure of the train station the team and city staff thought it would be a good idea to propose a full closure of the road between Fort Point Street and Winfield Street so that Frontier can install their infrastructure within that three-week period of time rather than for the eight weeks it was originally scheduled for. She said this will also allow the project team to remove some of the pins that are installed under the bridge that is causing the uneven surface and eventually do a full paving of the road between Winfield Street and Fort Point Street. She reminded the commissioners that all of the closures that were approved for this project have already been approved by the Traffic Authority and the

project is not diverting from the original schedule and if any additional closures are needed, they would need to be approved by the Traffic Authority. Mayor Rilling asked if the work would be performed 24 hours a day and if not if there is a possibility that the roadway could be opened overnight and what provision would be made for a well-marked detour as well as for traffic control. Mr. Flores said he is the project engineer for the CTDOT and is working on the overall closure of the station and as Ms. Valadares stated this would be a good opportunity for Frontier to install their infrastructure and there are steel beams in both directions that the crews will need to work on and will be working in one shift but because of the small area and the nature of the project that is all they will be able to do during the closure of the station and will be a huge benefit to the community to allow Frontier to utilize this three week closure. Mayor Rilling asked when the work is done if the road needs to be dug up again or will they finally get a smooth road. Mr. Flores said once Frontier is the last utility that is under the road and once they have relocated their infrastructure the department will be able to come in and start removing all the steel underneath the road allowing them to bring in the final pavement structure and are just a few steps away from buttoning up what is underneath the road.

Mr. Barrett provided an overview of the project and said the benefit of the closure is not having to keep opening and closing the road and it is a difficult working area with the number of utilities and structural steel and by having the road closed they will be able to move at a much quicker pace and although not working 24 hours a day will be working extended hours to get as much done as they can and they would like to get the work completely done that is under the bridge and then do the work on the east side which is more towards the curbline. He said the detours will mimic the pattern the CTDOT had already set up and would go down Fort Point Street to Van Zant Street to get over to East Avenue. Mr. Flores said that is the same closure that was presented to the Traffic Authority in the past and has been approved and utilized without incident. Mayor Rilling asked how the traffic control would be handled. Mr. Flores said that will also mimic what has been done in the past and will have barricades and police officers as well as signage on both sides of the street. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked how long the closure was that worked so well. Mr. Flores said one week, and this will be a longer closure as they are trying to take advantage of the station closure which will significantly reduce the pedestrian traffic and help improve safety during the closures. Ms. Valadares said there will be no other closures in the area during this closure and will not be allowing any work in the nearby area that would add any more traffic conflicts and although the three-week closure may be inconvenient in the long term will be a win for the neighborhood. Commissioner Lopez said it seems it will be very disruptive, and he understands the train station will be closed for a period of time, East Avenue is very busy as we all know, and Fort Point Street and VanZant Street are narrow and have on street parking and he is not sure how much of that volume that will be detoured will adversely affect both businesses and residents. Ms. Valadares said she understands the concern, but the work needs to happen regardless and if the closure is not allowed the work will still need to be done during regular hours with alternate lanes. Mr. Flores said it is very difficult to keep pedestrians from crossing across the work zone so this will have a significant impact on the safety of the traveling public in this area.

Mr. Melo said one of the big advantages will be allowing the department to come in after Frontier has completed their work and repaving this road as they have been working on East Avenue particularly under the bridge for the past 2 ½ years and have had numerous complaints from the public regarding the condition of the road. He said soon after Frontier has completed their work the struts will be pulled up and a full-depth reconstruction will be done between Fort Point Street and Winfield Street which will be a tremendous benefit to the users of East Avenue.

Mr. Sumpter asked if the Frontier trucks that are parked on Meadow Street are part of Frontier's organization. Mr. Barrett said he does not know if Frontier has a property on Meadow Street but there could be a garage area that he is not familiar with. Mr. Sumpter said that he had served on another committee and Frontier had requested the building and he has noticed that the trucks are there, but they

also agreed to keep the property clear of rubbish and garbage and have the greenery to be neighborly and from what he has seen have not delivered what they had promised and asked Mr. Barrett if that is something he could address. Mr. Barrett said he could pass the concerns on to the appropriate person. Mayor Rilling said he can have that inspected by the Planning & Zoning Department to be sure they are in compliance with the agreements that were made.

Commissioner Lopez asked for a further explanation of the proposed detour to get back onto East Avenue. Mr. Flores said traffic during the last three-week closure was during the summer where there were higher volumes of traffic so when they utilized this closure last summer there was not excess buildup but of course during the morning rush hour it was the heaviest and was very manageable and did not receive excess complaints during that period, and expects to see even less traffic as there will not be any beach traffic during the day and this detour has been implemented successfully and safely in the past.

Mayor Rilling said this will be an extreme inconvenience to the East Norwalk residents and asked if they are comfortable with the estimated time of three weeks. Mr. Flores said the three weeks is written in stone and will not be any longer than the three-week station closure and Frontier is going to have to move slightly north of the closure to Fitch Street so there will be some alternating one-way traffic, but this three-week closure will minimize that. Mayor Rilling asked if once Frontier has completed their work if the steel beams would then need to be removed. Mr. Flores said “yes” the steel structure will need to be removed but will be a weekend operation that will be performed by the department’s contractor not Frontier.

Mayor Rilling said the traffic light at Fort Point Street @ Van Zant Street will need to be monitored to see if there will be a huge backup of traffic on any of those roads and may need police for traffic control. Ms. Valadares said if there is a full closure on any city road an email along with a copy of the detour map is issued to all emergency responders, so they are aware of the closure.

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked how much additional time it will take to repair the road once Frontier has completed their work, and will it require a complete road closure. Mr. Melo said per the contract 12 weekend closures are allowed at the contractor’s discretion that was previously approved by the Traffic Authority so the contractor may elect to do a weekend closure of the road to remove the stirrers and perform the paving, or to have alternating one way traffic and perform the work at night.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FULL ROAD CLOSURE OF EAST AVENUE FROM FORT POINT STREET TO WINFIELD STREET (CT ROUTE 136) FOR FRONTIER ADVANCED UTILITY WORK FOR THE WALKBRIDGE PROJECT FROM MARCH 11TH 2024 TO MARCH 31, 2024.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. APPROVAL OF FULL ROAD CLOSURE OF NORTH MAIN STREET FROM WEST AVENUE TO WASHINGTON STREET AND WASHINGTON STREET FROM NORTH MAIN STREET TO SEAVIEW AVENUE FOR THE POLICE’S ST. PATRICK’S DAY PARADE ON MARCH 9, 2024, AT 11:00AM

Mayor Rilling said this parade has been held for the past couple of years and he believes the same route will be used.

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE FULL ROAD CLOSURE OF NORTH MAIN STREET FROM WEST AVENUE TO WASHINGTON STREET AND WASHINGTON STREET FROM NORTH MAIN STREET TO SEAVIEW AVENUE FOR THE POLICE'S ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE ON MARCH 9, 2024, AT 11:00AM.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. APPROVE THE PARTIAL ROAD CLOSURE OF SEAVIEW AVENUE FROM FORT POINT STREET (CT ROUTE 136) TO BETTS PLACE FOR THE O'NEILS 5K ON JUNE 2, 2024, FROM 9:00AM TO 11:00AM

Mayor Rilling said this has also been held for the past several years.

****COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE PARTIAL ROAD CLOSURE OF SEAVIEW AVENUE FROM FORT POINT STREET (CT ROUTE 136) TO BETTS PLACE FOR THE O'NEILS 5K ON JUNE 2, 2024, FROM 9:00AM TO 11:00AM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. APPROVE THE FULL ROAD CLOSURE OF PARK STREET FROM EAST WALL STREET TO LEWIS STREET AND ALL OF ST. PAUL'S PLACE FOR THE NORWALK GREEN EARTH DAY EVENT ON APRIL 27, 2024 FROM 10:00AM TO 5:00PM

Mayor Rilling asked how the traffic will be handled in that section as it is a highly traveled road. Mr. Craighead provided an overview of the event and said this will be the third annual event and one of the key partners is the City of Norwalk along with the First Taxing District and the Keep Norwalk Beautiful group. He said the road closures will be the same as last year with the exception of St. Paul's Place which he considers optional although preferred and will have police for traffic control at East Wall Street and Park Street along with cadets as well as one police car at the corner of Lewis Street and Park Street. He said the event will be held from 12:00PM to 4:00PM and is proposing the road closures take place from 11:00AM on to give the exhibitors and vendors a chance to set up. He said they are anticipating 600-800 people attending and are expecting more exhibitors and vendors than they have had in the past, and there will be food trucks along Park Street as well as a city approved beer vendor.

Mayor Rilling asked how the traffic would be handled that is coming from North Avenue and Park Street and if the cars would be detoured down Lewis Street. Mr. Craighead said that was kept open last year but was for local traffic only and had cadets posted on the corner of Route 1 and Park Street and cones will also be placed. Chief Walsh said this was a concern last year and he believes that they had settled on leaving the southbound lane open, and he has concerns with placing cones on Park Street, France Street, and Route 1 because not only is access being blocked to a business and a few residents, so the resolution last year was to leave one lane open on Park Street going southbound. Mr. Craighead said he thinks that is correct. Mayor Rilling asked if that would work if the commission allowed the closure of St. Paul's Place. Mr. Craighead said "yes".

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked how many food trucks there were last year and how many they are expecting this year. Mr. Craighead said he believes there were three and will probably be the same this year. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked if the street closure will begin at 10:00AM or 11:00AM because the diagram that was provided states 10:00AM. Mr. Craighead said that he believes that

11:00AM is sufficient. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked if there were any issues last year with trash being left in the area. Mr. Craighead said “no” and the understanding they have with the First Taxing District is that they will keep and leave the neighborhood as clean if not cleaner than when they had arrived.

****COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE REQUEST WITH THE CHANGE THAT ONE LANE ON PARK STREET ON THE SOUTHBOUND SIDE BE LEFT OPEN AND THE ROAD CLOSURES BEGINNING AT 11:00AM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

*** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED THE ITEM FOR DISCUSSION.*

7. READING OF CUSTOMER SERVICE LETTER REGARDING PARKING AND SPEEDING ON IVY PLACE.

Mr. Benjamin said the street has already been measured and the Parking Authority is doing some parking counts and speed measurements will also be taken and a plan will be presented to the Traffic Authority at some point in the future.

8. APPROVAL OF PROPOSED “NO PARKING” REGULATION ON SENGARoad FROM SCRIBNER AVENUE TO AVENUE E.

Mr. Yeung said that TMP had received a concern from a resident regarding parking on both sides of Sengaroad, which is a relatively narrow road, was creating challenges for two-way traffic. He said staff reviewed the issues and concur with the residents’ concerns and conducted a parking count survey to be sure that any proposed parking restriction would not negatively impact the need for parking for the residents on this roadway and believe that on street parking can be restricted on the north side or the odd-numbered side on Sengaroad as well as a small 100’ section of the south end on the curved narrow portion or Sengaroad to the east. He said that parking would be permitted on the rest of Sengaroad and has notified the residents of the proposed parking restrictions and believe this will help to facilitate more efficiently and safer. Commissioner Lopez asked what the overall consensus of the residents was. Mr. Benjamin said the roadway was already too narrow to allow parking on both sides of the street and when DPW installed sidewalks they restricted the roadway to truly be defined as an area that is too narrow for parking on both sides of the street and two-lane traffic, so the residents were not surveyed but the letter was sent out to them.

**** COMMISSIONER SUMPTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED “NO PARKING” REGULATION ON SENGARoad FROM SCRIBNER AVENUE TO AVENUE E.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9. APPROVAL OF PROPOSED “NO PARKING” REGULATION ON BERKLEY STREET FROM WEST AVENUE TO ELM STREET

Mr. Stanton said that DPW is working to finalize the design for curbs and sidewalks project on Berkley Street that is out to bid. He said during the design period they had worked with TMP and identified several constrictions on the road and an opportunity to place tree wells at the entrance from West Avenue onto Berkley Street. He presented a drawing that identified memorializing where people park currently and where parking was restricted previously and where parking should be identified as “no parking anytime” in the corner for that. Mayor Rilling asked if parking is being removed completely from West

Avenue to Elm Street where will the residents and their guests park. Mr. Stanton said they had the opportunity to place tree wells by bumping out the curb line several feet which would allow parking westbound on Berkely Street in that area.

**** COMMISSIONER SUMPTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED “NO PARKING” REGULATION ON BERKELY STREET FROM WEST AVENUE TO ELM STREET.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:19PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd