CITY OF NORWALK
TRAFFIC AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE
JANUARY 22, 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
STAFF:	Chief James Walsh; Deputy Chief Melissa Lepore, Deputy Chief James Dinho; Jessica Vonashek, Chief of Economic and Community Development; James Travers, Director, TMP; Kyle Benjemin, Traffic Analyst, TMP; Ben Yeung, Senior Engineer, TMP; Vanessa Valadares, Chief of Public Works, and Operations; Paul Sotnik, DPW Senior Engineer; Ian Hall, Zoning Asst., Planning & Zoning
OTHER:	Kevin Smith, Henley Street Marketing, LLC.

CALL TO ORDER

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

1. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 18, 2023

**** COMMISSIONER LOPEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**
**** 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 FRO THE SONO TOD INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (MAY 2024-JULY 31, 2024/JUNE 20, 2025)

COMMISSION COLLIER CLEMMONS MOVED THE ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Ms. Valadares said she is requesting a one way change on Chestnut Street from Monroe Street to Henry Street and Henry Street up to the driveway so we can perform the underground utilities that are associated with the TOD, and that all the residents that will be affected were contacted. She said it is an extensive project that will begin in the spring of 2024, and the deadline to complete the project is in July 2025. She said there are restrictions in place on the time the work can be performed to avoid any traffic issues particularly around the school hours. Mayor Rilling said that further south down the road there is a gentleman that has a business with several large trucks, and he met with him earlier and he expressed his concerns about where his trucks will be able to go if Chestnut Street is one way and asked if he had been contacted as well. Ms. Valadares said she does not see any issue with any of the trucks because they can get through South Main Street and make a left turn on Monroe Street and go under the bridge where there is enough clearance. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked if the business owner has been contacted and communicated with because she thinks his issue is a little bit more than just the access, turning points, and bridge access. Mr. Hall said that TMP held a public meeting and the business owner had attended and staff had spoken to him extensively and their concern was more between Concord Street and Henry Street then there was for Monroe Street and Henry Street because they wouldn't have access to Henry Street Ext., and staff is currently in the process of reevaluating that but are not requesting any permanent or temporary one way on Henry Street Ext. so they should still have access. He said we have also consulted with the Transit District because their bus routes loop through there and they said they are able to get their buses up Henry Street Ext. to Ely Avenue and back to Martin Luther King Drive. He also said that Station Place will be open as a third way to get to Monroe Street. He said that staff has not

spoken to the business owner specifically on the Monroe to Henry Street one way for the work that needs to occur but again said they did speak with them extensively during the public meeting. Mayor Rilling said this is not requested until May 2024, and suggested tabling the item to the next meeting so the Traffic Authority can further review the plan to see if the business owner can be accommodated a little more effectively. Ms. Valadares said the project is currently out to bid and if the plans change it may affect the cost of the project. Mayor Rilling said he is not suggesting changing the plan, but he is suggesting a conversion with the business owner to be sure he is comfortable with it.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEM UNTIL THE FEBRUARY MEETING AFTER THERE HAS BEEN CONSULTATION WITH THE BUSINESS OWNER BY TMP STAFF AND THE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. GOLF CART REGULATIONS FOR NORWALK STREETS

COMMISSION LOPEZ MOVED THE ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Mr. Smith said during the Traffic Authority meeting that was held on December 18, 2023, the proposed regulation was tabled pending some answers to a number of questions and concerns that were raised during that meeting, and Connecticut Custom Carts has attempted to address them in a questions and answers document that was provided to the Traffic Authority on January 9, 2024. He reviewed some of the key questions and said that they have confirmed Chief Walsh's figures from the prior meeting and determined that while some towns do experience a significant percentage increase during the summer months, the summer totals do not approach those of Norwalk. He said one of the questions was what is the largest city in the United States by population that allows golf carts and it ranged from 3,997,984 in Los Angeles, California, to 699,927 in Boston Massachusetts, and the top ten cities are major population centers, and there are more then 250 cities in the United States that have populations as large or larger than Norwalk that have statewide laws making it legal to use gold carts on local roads. Mayor Rilling asked if the cities that have the statewide laws have adopted those laws for use of gold carts within their boundaries. Mr. Smith said the state laws don't require that, and they all have the ability to allow golf carts on their roads but have to meet the requirements set by the state's regulation. He said the next question was regarding the cost incurred by the cities in Connecticut regarding implementing the regulation and said they were not able to get all the cost data and income figures from the towns that do have the regulation but presented the costs from East Lyme, Stratford, Old Saybrook, Clinton, and East Haven. He said the last question is that there was some concerns regarding Connecticut Custom Carts introducing golf carts to East Norwalk without doing it the right way and the company sold a total of four golf carts to Norwalk and Rowayton customers since its inception, and three were replacement carts and the company engaged in numerous prospects during the last year and informed their customers that the golf carts were not permitted yet on Norwalk roads and as a result many of those perspective sales were lost. He also said it was indicated that restaurants were using golf carts to deliver food from restaurants and the company was not aware of that and asked to be provided with the names of those restaurants as they would be happy to reach out to them and explain the correct restrictions around that practice. Chief Walsh said that based on the net sales of only one golf cart does not add up and that he has been here for 36 years and has never had a golf cart issue in East Norwalk before last summer. Mr. Travers said that TMP would be concerned about the state requirements of 25 MPH and the request to have TMP reduce the speed limit, which is a time-consuming process that would negate staff to work on other projects. Additionally, the right of way in the beach communities are small and are already accommodating

cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists and they would have safety concerns if adding another vehicle to the road.

**** THE MOTION FAILED WITH THREE (3) OPPOSED AND NONE IN FAVOR.**

4. APPROVAL OF ROWAYTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ZONE SPEED LIMIT

Mr. Benjamin said that TMP has been doing speed limit changes throughout the city and recently did a school zone speed limit at Fox Run Elementary School and they recently received a complaint from a resident that lives on Rowayton Avenue regarding issues with speeding on her street. He said that staff looked into it and even though there is not a speeding issue on the street it could use a school zone speed limit to better enforce the areas around Rowayton Elementary School. He said the school zone speed limit would be between the hours of 8:30AM to 9:30AM and 3:15PM to 4:15PM.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ROWAYTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ZONE SPEED LIMIT.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. APPROVAL OF TIMED PARKING REGULATION ON LEXINGTON AVENUE

Mr. Yeung said the Hector Delgado is the community police officer for this area and earlier this month the business owner at 37 Lexington Avenue had made a complaint to Officer Delgado about a lack of parking in front of their business which was recently made somewhat worse with TMP's decision to enforce the citywide ordinance of no parking from 25' to street corners. He said TMP felt it was imperative to enforce this no parking zone due to constraints with truck turns to and from Olean Street as well the fact that this is a high crash location in the city. He said to offset some of these concerns about not having enough parking in front of the two businesses staff would like to propose timed parking regulations on the east side of Lexington Avenue near the frontage of each of the businesses, and the proposed regulation is for one hour parking between 9:00AM to 7:00PM., Monday through Saturday. He said that Officer Delgado spoke to both of the business owners, and they are in favor of the regulation. Commissioner Lopez asked how many car lengths would be accommodated. Mr. Yeung said it would be one car length long each and would be 25' long in each of the zones. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked if there are any problems with commuter parking on that street. Mr. Yeung said he is not sure but anecdotally some of the issues are from commercial vehicles which is more of the issue than commuters in this area. Commissioner Lopez asked why the proposed regulation would be for one hour. Mr. Yeung said just to be accommodating and to create turnover without being overly restrictive and it is the same time period for a similar grocery store that is further north on Lexington Avenue. Mayor Rilling said since this area is a high crash location asked if that is due to turning vehicles or poor sightline and asked if a three-way stop sign would be an appropriate response as well as for traffic calming. Mr. Benjamin said TMP has developed a comprehensive crash data repository for the entire city to equivocate each intersection and we would need to review the location to be able to say what types of crashes are happening but are looking at improvements further down the street which may help to improve this intersection, which is not particularly dangerous, but it is crash prone. Mayor Rilling requested that staff look into the intersection to determine what types of accidents they are referring to when they say the highest crash rates and make a recommendation at a future meeting. Chief Walsh said the major issue is the width of the road along with the parked cars.

**** COMMISSIONER LOPEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE TIMED PARKING REGULATION ON LEXINGTON AVENUE**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:44PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd