

**STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 11, 2013
5:00 PM AT THE STONINGTON POLICE HEADQUARTERS
MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Chair Scott Bates and Vice-Chair Mel Olsson
Commissioners Harry Holt (via phone), Patrick Moukawsher and Frank Pucci
Chief Darren Stewart and Captain Jerry Desmond

1) Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Bates called the meeting to order at 5:00PM.

2) Remarks of Visitors

Mystic Outdoor Art Festival & Taste of Mystic

Susette Tibus introduced Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce staff: Patricia Walsh, President; Cherie'lin Toporowski, Director of Events, and Hannah Stewart, Manager of Membership.

- A motion was made by Vice-Chair Olsson to approve the following events:
 - Mystic Outdoor Art Festival, August 10 & 11, 2013
 - Taste of Mystic, September 6, 7, & 8, 2013provided all necessary insurance and paperwork is in place. Motion seconded by Commissioner Pucci, all in favor, motion approved.

Benefit Fun Run, Andrew McCauley – Boy Scout Troop 9

Mr. McCauley is currently working on his Eagle Scout Project, and in attendance to request permission to hold a fun run at Donahue Park on June 9, 2013 to benefit the poor and homeless in the community.

Chief Stewart stated that he would like nothing more than to support Mr. McCauley in his endeavors, however he has been required to decline any further race requests in this area to due to an already saturated event schedule; he feels he can only ask the residents of this area to endure so many events. The Chief suggested that Mr. McCauley work with him, Captain Desmond, Chair Bates and Mr. Bessette (current race organizer), to utilize currently scheduled races to benefit his cause and work toward his scouting requirements.

Chair Bates stated that he will be happy to assist Mr. McCauley with his Eagle Scout project along with Chief Stewart and Captain Desmond.

2) Remarks of Visitors (cont'd)

Carlene Donnarummo, Pawcatuck, CT

In attendance to address what she felt was unprofessional behavior by officers that came to the home of her sister-in-law upon the death of her brother-in-law. She stated that her brother-in-law had just passed away, and circumstances required that he be pronounced dead by an officer. Ms. Donnarummo stated that an officer arrived in uniform, but then two other people walked into the house without identifying themselves. She stated it was very disconcerting to have people that the family did not know in the house at this time. She asked them who they were, and it turned out they were detectives, however she believes it will help ease a stressful situation if officers are taught at training to introduce themselves during these difficult situations.

Chair Bates stated that he understands it was not easy for Ms. Donnarummo to relive the story, and thanked her for her input.

Chair Bates requested the Commission move the following agenda item under Remarks of Visitors for discussion at this time:

8. Report of the Chief

f. Downtown Pawcatuck/Visit – First Selectman Ed Haberek, Jr.

First Selectman Ed Haberek in attendance to discuss downtown Pawcatuck. The First Selectman discussed Pawcatuck statistics, and stated that the Town has spent \$2.8M on the Pawcatuck Streetscape Project, \$681K to restore Donohue Park, and is currently working hard on the Distressed Building Ordinance, to revitalize the area economically. But he stated he also has concerns that he knows as a team have been discussed over the years, and stated that in 2011 he was approached by a number of residents with complaints about various occurrences. First Selectman Haberek stated that he met with the Captain and the walked the area, some environmental changes were made, but when he contacted the Police Commission regarding a small community meeting he was attempting to put together, he received a letter from former Chair Susette Tibus respectfully declining the invitation, and he stated he was instead invited to bring his concerns to the public meeting of the Police Commission, which is why he is in attendance at the meeting tonight. First Selectman Haberek stated that after that, in 2012, he was again approached regarding several complaints, and he forwarded this information to the Chief and the Police Commission, and at the March 8, 2012 Police Commission meeting authorized the Chief to request a line item transfer of funds for earlier hiring of the CSO's. He believes this did help, but stated that now in 2013, there is again criminal activity. First Selectman Haberek stated this time he took a different tack, this time meeting with several business owners, going door to door, and attending the Westerly Pawcatuck Downtown Business Association meeting with the Captain. He believes that the key to solving these problems are collaboration and cooperation, and proposed establishing a downtown Pawcatuck communication network, meeting with building owners to screen tenants, community policing with officers instead of CSO's (where he will be glad to defend any type of funding for a foot patrol of periodic times), the "broken window" strategy that involves getting rid of the signs of disorder, and computerized mapping of criminal "hotspots".

2) Remarks of Visitors (cont'd)

8. Report of the Chief (cont'd)

f. Downtown Pawcatuck/Visit – First Selectman Ed Haberek, Jr. (cont'd)

Chair Bates thanked the First Selectman for his comments, and stated that on behalf of the Commission, as well as himself personally, the principles presented by him are very sound, they will have information to provide after public comment, and the Commission is committed to working with the First Selectman toward these goals.

Susette Tibus, Former Police Commission Chair

Ms. Tibus stated that she wants to provide clarification that back in 2011 & 2012 there were several meetings with local business owners, put together by the Chief and the Captain, that the First Selectman did not attend, and they were very positive. She is happy to see all the business owners that are present at the meeting tonight, as this is the proper venue, in public, to discuss these types of issues. She stated it is essential, and although people may go personally to the First Selectman's office where they feel more comfortable, the proper venue is at the public meeting where all can hear, so the Commission is allowed to bring positive resolutions.

Chair Bates stated that he is going to get the next three or four meetings outside of the Police Department.

Dr. Stephen Coan, Former Police Commissioner

Dr. Coan stated that he was the last person from Pawcatuck to be appointed to the Police Commission, which was 2006. He stated that in 2011, when issues regarding Pawcatuck were brought forward to the Commission, he encouraged the Board of Selectmen to appoint someone from Pawcatuck. He believes it is imperative that the Board of Selectmen bring forward a candidate for the Police Commission that is from Pawcatuck, particularly with the concerns that are being brought forward by the First Selectman.

Lisa Konicki, Executive Director, Westerly Pawcatuck Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Konicki stated that she felt it important to say that she believes there is not an issue with crime in downtown Pawcatuck. She believes a lot of what we are dealing with is a result of good news; the result of the area experiencing a renaissance. Although there may have been a setback in Pawcatuck recently, there are currently some of the highest occupancy rates downtown for both businesses and residences on the second floors that there has been in years, and naturally with more people and more commerce, there comes more concerns, but she does not believe there is a rampant crime problem in Pawcatuck. Ms. Konicki stated that she has spoken with many business owners, and there is a common feeling that they are all very lucky to 1) have a safe feeling downtown and 2) that the police are extremely responsive. The last message she wants to send out the community is a skewed one, where people become fearful of coming in downtown just because the statistics have been exasperated through the media. In addition, Ms. Konicki stated she has personally witnessed officers visiting Hooties, being very friendly, and no patrons got upset and left because the officers were intimidating; it was clear that the officers wanted to make sure everyone was safe.

2) Remarks of Visitors (cont'd)

8. Report of the Chief (cont'd)

f. Downtown Pawcatuck/Visit – First Selectman Ed Haberek, Jr. (cont'd)

Fran O'Neill, Pawcatuck resident

Ms. O'Neill stated that she has heard a lot about homeless people downtown, and she drives through downtown everyday but does not see them, and asked what is being done. She does not believe there are a lot of businesses downtown, and she is tired of everyone putting Pawcatuck down.

Chair Bates thanked Ms. O'Neill for her comments, and stated that his wife runs Mystic Area Hospitality Center, and he agrees things are hard in these economic times.

Kevin Oliveira, Pawcatuck Resident

Mr. Oliveira stated that he is happy to receive email updates from the Police Department, and believes the same should be done for businesses.

Glee McAnanly, Board of Selectmen

Selectman McAnanly stated that she agrees that there should be a representative from Pawcatuck on the Board of Police Commissioners, and believes the Board of Selectmen should act now, and will appreciate any suggestions.

First Selectman Ed Haberek, Jr.

First Selectman Haberek stated that he wants to add that he believes whether or not a police commissioner is from Pawcatuck, Stonington, or Mystic, he/she is concerned about the whole town. Where someone is from geographically does not matter.

Dr. Stephen Coan, Former Police Commission Chair

Dr. Coan stated that he wants to speak to the issue of police commission representation. His primary point is that seven years is an incredibly long time to go without representation from Pawcatuck, particularly when the First Selectman has stated his high level of concern for criminal activity in that very area. Dr. Coan stated that he was very taken aback, as Mr. Haberek has stated on many occasions that it is important to have representation from Pawcatuck. One additional point he would like to make is that this is a very, very sensitive time for this area, particularly for Westerly, Pawcatuck and Misquamicut relative to tourism, and everyone needs to be concerned about that, because our economy depends on people's perceptions, and we need to be very circumspect in our public remarks about the safety of our community and the ability of the community to welcome people and to provide a safe haven when they come. Rebuilding the tourism industry is critical.

Commissioner Moukawsher stated that many of the First Selectman's comments had to do with economics, and asked the First Selectman if he is working with anyone or has approached anyone on the Economic Development Commission.

First Selectman Haberek stated that they have all worked together on the revitalization.

2) Remarks of Visitors (cont'd)

8. Report of the Chief (cont'd)

f. Downtown Pawcatuck/Visit – First Selectman Ed Haberek, Jr. (cont'd)

Commissioner Moukawsher stated that as a business owner in Stonington, one of the things he sees happening in both Stonington and Pawcatuck, is that if the economics aren't there, the property owners won't put the money back into their properties, which is the root of some of this trouble. Commissioner Moukawsher stated that he believes that some of the issues are economic, and some are the matter of the Police Commission.

Commissioner Olsson stated that he believes crime is an issue all over, not just in downtown Pawcatuck; he has a business in Mystic, and it has gotten broken into.

Captain Desmond stated that the issue of trying to improve the perception of downtown Pawcatuck has been an ongoing issue. This is about a constant need to keep the improvements happening.

Chief Stewart presented a PowerPoint presentation detailing statistical information on downtown Pawcatuck. The Chief showed how criminal activity has always been an issue, but has actually gone down over the past decade. Drug arrests are down; the Department works very closely with Pawcatuck establishments that serve alcohol, especially due to the fact that bars are open later than Rhode Island. Homeless individuals are offered assistance from WARM, MASH and Stonington Human Services. Stonington Human Services works very closely with homeless individuals, as well as families in need to provide assessment, services and referral. The Chief stated that there are true issues, however there always have been, but using community policing and communication has allowed the Department to work through them. Recent Department solutions have involved: beat realignment based off the results of hotspot policing; bike patrol; the "Early & Often Technique"; continued communication with businesses; examination of a downtown camera system, and monthly review of routine statistics with the Police Commission at the monthly meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners. Chief Stewart stated that in addition, he cannot say enough about the Officers that work tremendously hard to bring criminals to justice when situations occur, as well as members of the public that see something and report it.

Chair Bates thanked everyone for speaking, and reinforced that anything can be accomplished if everyone works together.

2) Remarks of Visitors (cont'd)

Dirt Bike Issue, Richmond Lane, Mystic, CT

First Selectman Ed Haberek, Jr.

The First Selectman stated that he also wants to touch base on a different issue taking place in Mystic that involves neighbors that are upset over the resulting noise from the use of dirt bikes. He stated the neighbors presented a petition that he will forward to the Commission, and he checked with the Town Attorney but there is not currently a noise ordinance that prevents this.

Aaron Green, 18 Richmond Lane, Mystic, CT

Mr. Green presented a neighborhood petition requesting to address the disturbance of the peace, and spoke on behalf of those that signed the petition:

Mr. Green read the introduction of the petition to the Police Commission, and stated that despite numerous calls to the police, visits by police to the area, and asking the riders and their parents to be more considerate, the situation continues, and has continued for several years. Mr. Green stated that the noise of these bikes is intolerable, excessive, and affects their quality of life at their homes, disturbing the peace and negatively impacting their property values. Mr. Green stated that those that signed the petition did so to urge their leaders to require that the Stonington Police Department enforce the laws regarding disturbing the peace due to the riding of dirt bikes in a residential neighborhood. Mr. Green stated that there are 32 names on the petition, representing 9 different streets.

Mr. Green stated his own comments are as follows:

He lives at 18 Richmond Lane, the dirt bikes are being ridden on two adjoining properties, 12 and 16 Richmond Lane, and he shares a boundary line with both of these properties. Mr. Green stated that the neighbors have built a dirt bike track right along the boundary line; they are extremely loud, disturbing and disrespectful; his children can't even do their homework. Mr. Green stated that as far as he is aware, in the past year, six noise complaints have been made to the Stonington Police Department from several different properties, however to his knowledge no breach of peace citations have been issued. Mr. Green offered his phone number in case any of the Commission members want to visit the site.

Charlene Fowles, Richmond Lane, Mystic, CT

Ms. Fowles stated that she lives across the street from the property, and she believes the real issue is that the dirt bike riding is excessive; she stated there are some weekends it goes on 5-7 hours at a time, and the noise is unbearable. Ms. Fowles stated that the reason the group is here today is to ask the police to enforce the disturbing the peace issue; she said that so far the police have come out, they talk to the kid's mother, but they don't do anything, and it has got to come to a stop, they cannot face another summer with this noise.

2) Remarks of Visitors (cont'd)

Dirt Bike Issue, Richmond Lane, Mystic, CT (cont'd)

Captain Desmond stated that he sympathizes with the entire group; in fact, he was just talking to a supervisor about the case, however the challenge is finding what current ordinances are applicable to the situation. The Department has been working to obtain a noise meter, however the problem with that is that the noise has to be measured while the bike is idle, and that may not resolve anything. Captain Desmond stated that the Commission may want to look into some type of Town ordinance; however at the moment they are looking at a situation where individuals are operating the dirt bikes on their own property. The Captain stated they will look into the matter, and invited anyone to come over to the Department to discuss.

Chair Bates stated that this issue will be put on the agenda for the May meeting.

Chair Bates wanted to inform those in attendance that currently there is a proposal that was put in front of the Board of Finance to finance a school safety pilot program at West Vine Street School in Pawcatuck, CT if the funds can be found, and thanked the First Selectman for coming before the Commission today. Chair Bates stated that he looks forward to working with the First Selectman on all the issues.

3) Correspondence

None

4) Traffic

- a. Letter Re: Mystic Outdoor Art Festival & Taste of Mystic – See Remarks of Visitors
- b. Letter Re: Angel Ride/Young Angel Ride
 - A motion was made by Commissioner Moukawsher to approve the Angel Ride/Young Angel Ride, provided all necessary paperwork and insurance is in place. Motion seconded by Vice-Chair Olsson, all in favor, motion approved.
- c. Letter Re: Benefit Fun Run – see Remarks of Visitors
- d. E-Mails Re: Taugwonk Road Horse Sign Request
- e. A motion was made by Vice-Chair Olsson to allow Chief Stewart to proceed as he deems necessary regarding the Taugwonk Road Horse Sign Request. Motion seconded by Commissioner Moukawsher, all in favor, motion approved.
- f. E-Mail Re: SoNew Cyclone Event
- g. E-Mail Re: Paving Update

5) Approval of Minutes for the March 14, 2013 Regular Meeting

Correction to the March 14, 2013 minutes:

Agenda item 4a & 4b should read:

4) Traffic

a. Letter Re: Pequot Cyclists Time Trials

- A motion was made by Vice-Chair Olsson to approve the Pequot Cyclists Time Trials request, provided all necessary paperwork and insurance is in place. Motion seconded by Commissioner Moukawsher, all in favor, motion approved.

b. E-Mail Re: Sign Request – Taugwonk Road
Motion tabled

Upon the above revisions, a motion was made by Vice-Chair Olsson to approve the minutes from the March 14, 2013 Regular Meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Pucci and approved.

6) New Business

Chair Bates stated that when he went out with Chief Stewart for a midnight shift he witnessed not only law enforcement, but diplomats; he saw many people out walking, and the Officers goals centered not on intimidation, but making sure people got home safely.

7) Old Business

None

8) Report of the Chief of Police

- Budget Report
- Monthly Report
- Alarm Report
- Pawcatuck Statistics
- Special Event Schedule
- Downtown Pawcatuck/Visit – First Selectman Ed Haberek, Jr. (see Remarks of Visitors)
- E-Mail Re: Prisoner Transport to Court
- Article Re: Emotionally Disturbed Person (EDP) Calls for Service
- Letter Re: POST Mandatory Training Requirements Completed
- Memo Re: PSAP Consolidation Proposals

A motion was made by Vice-Chair Olsson to approve the Report of the Chief. Motion seconded by Commissioner Holt, all in favor, motion approved.

9) Consent Agenda

- a. Letter Re: Thank You – Kelley's Pace
- b. Highway Use Permits – Good Friday Hunger Walk, Memorial Day Parades & Veterans Day Parade
- c. Letter Re: Dispatching Services – Stonington Ambulance Corps
- d. Letters & Highway Use Permit – Pequot Cyclists Time Trials
- e. Letter Re: Crossing Guard Marjorie Moshier Resignation
- f. Letters Re: Thank You – Incident with Armed Subject
- g. Memo Re: Thank You – Officer Brummund
- h. Propertyroom.com Check
- i. Article: Is There A Crime Problem In Downtown Pawcatuck?
- j. E-Mail Re: Updated Memo – Bicentennial Celebration
- k. Memo Re: Thank You – Sgt. McCaffery & Chris Gomes
- l. Memos Re: Attendance – Thank You
- m. Memo Re: Sgt. Diamanti – Honor Guard
- n. Memo Re: Sgt. Morrison – Job Well Done
- o. E-Mail Re: Conservation Commission Recommendations for 2014 POCD Update
- p. Letter Re: Thank You – Incident with Armed Subject
- q. Memo Re: Background Checks
- r. E-Mail Re: Hands Along The Sands
- s. E-Mail Re: Clairemont Cluster Subdivision
- t. Letter Re: Young Angel Ride
- u. Letter Re: Past Due Alarm Fines
- v. Letter Re: Stonington Farmer's Market
- w. Thank You Note – To Chief Stewart

A motion was made by Commissioner Moukawsher to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion seconded by Commissioner Pucci, all in favor, motion approved.

Chair Bates thanked the Commission members for volunteering, and being active in supporting the budget, school safety, and responding to Pawcatuck issues.

The Captain thanked the Commission on behalf of himself and the Chief, for their support during challenging times.

Commissioner Moukawsher stated that he does not think that many people realize just how different the life of a police officer is compared to other members of the community, and it is very rewarding to serve on the Police Commission.

10) Adjourn

Vice-Chair Olsson made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Commissioner Pucci, all in favor, motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:41PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Frank Pucci, Secretary