



TOWN OF HAMDEN

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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SPECIAL MEETING OF THE FARMINGTON CANAL COMMISSION

MINUTES: The Farmington Canal Commission, Town of Hamden, held a Special Meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 21, 2023 in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following topics were discussed.

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. Schaefer, Mr. Anton, Mr. Reger, Ms. Larson, Mr. Radcliffe, Mr. Cyr

Commissioners Excused: Mr. Horowitz, Mr. D'Agostino, Ms. Maloney

Others in Attendance: Spring Glen School Parent Susan, Town Engineer Mr. White, Grant Writer Ms. Hazen, Town Planner Mr. Livshits, Public Works Assistant Director Mr. Siciliano, Commission Clerk Ms. Tobin

1. Call to Order

Mr. Schaefer called the meeting to order at 6:35.

2. Review of proposed grant application for funds to maintain and improve the Farmington Canal Greenway.

Ms. Hazan is working on the grant application and is writing the project scope based on input from the Commission and internal research and the parameters of the grant application. This is an 80% grant with the Town being responsible for the remaining 20%. We are asking for \$500,000 for a Planning and Design component to include equitable access, additional connections to other Hamden locations, and wayfinding. Under the maintenance bucket, we are asking for equipment and repairs for safety and access along the ten mile Greenway.

There was discussion on the name of the trail. Mr. Schaefer said Hamden uses the Farmington Canal Greenway. Mr. Schaefer mentioned that there are several advocacy groups along the way, including the Farming Canal Rails to Trails organization. Some of these advocacy groups wanted us to rebrand our trail to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and we said no.

Ms. Hazan said there is a three page project description. Connecticut has the second largest outdoor economy and employment in the Country, and we can build on that momentum with wayfinding. Maintenance is a critical need to support the outdoor economy. The description

includes an introduction of the Commission and what they do, a survey and data points. Parts of the trail are 28 years old. We want to build equitable access in southern Hamden, an environmental justice community. Mayor Garrett has a proposal in to the Legislative Council to build a community campus on the former middle school site to include a replacement for the Keefe Center, a gym, art center, and health center. We are working on public and private partnerships with Quinnipiac and Albertus Magnus, and would like to see a connection to the trail.

Ms. Hazan mentioned three specific areas to explore connections. One is in the Spring Glen neighborhood to connect families to the Spring Glen School. A second is to explore a connection across from the Middle School. Mr. Schaefer mentioned that in Phase 2A, there were a number of homes that were built in the railroad right of way, but the homeowners didn't want the trail near their homes, so we had to go out to Sherman Avenue. There was discussion on access to the Hamden Middle School from Dixwell Avenue pointing out access from the Doctor's Building across from the Middle School and access near the railroad bridge over Dixwell.

Ms. Hazan mentioned that they have a written maintenance plan with photos of the needed repairs taken by Mr. Siciliano, each with their geographic location. We need to prioritize the repairs and some can be done in house. Public Works could do a lot of the repairs if they had a certain piece of equipment, which Mr. Siciliano said would cost approximately \$150,000. There was further discussion on possible connections to the trail.

3. Determine if the Commission should write a letter endorsing the grant application.

Ms. Hazan mentioned that a letter of support from the Commission would be appropriate. There will also be letters of support from the Mayor, our State Delegation, the South Central Connecticut Council of Governments, the Principal of Spring Glen School, and possibly Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro's Office. Mr. Schaefer mentioned that in 2020 Congresswoman DeLuro held a press conference on the trail, and stated that this is what the Federal Government should be supporting. Commissioners agreed to write a letter of support.

Mr. White mentioned that Hamden Public Works has more capabilities than most other Towns along the trail. Mr. Siciliano said that Public Works recently rented a wood chopper at a cost of \$2,700, and trimmed back both sides of the trail.

Ms. Hazan will provide a draft letter for Mr. Schaefer to review and pass along to Commissioners for their review and approval. Ms. Hazan will also provide an edited project description to Commissioners.

4. Review and give input on draft plans prepared by the Town Engineering Department for improvement of street/Greenway intersections in the southern part of Hamden.

Town Engineer Steven White presented engineering drawings of the proposed upgraded street crossings for the Greenway. This is a project of New Haven, Hamden, and the Department of Transportation. Six New Haven crossings will be upgraded along with five crossings in southern Hamden starting at Goodrich Street. Upgrades include raised crosswalks, street markings, narrowing of street crossing at Goodrich, Morse and Hamden Park Drive. Alling and Dudley

Streets do not require narrowing of the streets at crosswalks. Solar flashing lights with sensors and push buttons to activate will be installed, as well as new bollards (like the one Mr. Siciliano purchased for northern Hamden at the Cheshire line. Moving north, the next few street crossings have bridges (Putnam, Treadwell and Mather Streets) The proposed street crossings will require public input. Additional crossings to the north will be upgraded in the future. These drawings are all conceptual and subject to change. Mr. White answered questions from the Commissioners.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Schaefer requested a motion to adjourn. Ms. Larson so moved. Mr. Reger seconded the motion The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Clerk of the Commission