

CITY OF NORWALK  
TRAFFIC AUTHORITY  
REGULAR MEETING  
BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE  
April 19, 2021

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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 Michael Yeosock at [myeosock@norwalkct.org](mailto:myeosock@norwalkct.org) to provide written comment prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Rilling; Commissioner Kelly Straniti

STAFF: Chief Thomas Kulhawik; Deputy Chief Susan Zecca; Deputy Chief James Walsh; James Travers, Director, TMP; Garrett Bolella, Asst. Director, TMP  
Michael Yeosock, Principal Engineer, Transportation; Daniel Stanton, Senior Civil Engineer, DPW

OTHERS: Nancy Rosett; Neil Olinksky

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

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ms. Rosett- 399 Main Avenue

Ms. Rosett said she chair's the Bike/Walk Commission and spoke in favor of item three on the agenda to lower the speed limit on Washington Street, and said the Bike/Walk Commission is generally in favor of lowering speed limits wherever possible because it makes our roads safer for all users because it reduces the incidents of accidents and when accidents do occur the injuries are generally less severe.

Ms. Rosett spoke in favor of item five on the agenda and said the state has redone the intersection of Strawberry Hill Avenue and Westport Avenue which has made it more dangerous for northbound bicyclists on Strawberry Hill Avenue. She said the commission is very much in favor of returning the configuration of that intersection back to its previous configuration.

Ms. Rosett spoke in favor of item seven on the agenda to improve the installation of bike lanes and sharrows under a DOT and Community Connectivity grant as shown on the attached plans. She said they have been a commission for almost four years and this project was started when they were just a task force, but at that time they had no budget which was somewhat challenging to install bike lanes and sharrows so they had "piggy backed" on the ongoing projects for DWP which resulted in a lot of disconnected bicycle facilities around the city. She said the committee has now been working with DPW and TMP to create a continuous east/west route for bicyclists throughout the city as well as a continuous north/south route and very much thanks TMP for all of the hard work they have done to make this almost a reality and hopes the committee will support it.

### **BUSINESS**

#### **1. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY MEETING OF MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2021.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **2. APPROVE THE ROUTE CLOSURE PLAN FOR THE NORWALK MEMORIAL DAY PARADE T BE HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 31, 2021.**

Mayor Rilling said all for of the events that are being proposed for the very near future we have made the applicants aware that the events may need to be cancelled based on the situation regarding Covid-19 and

this is one that may very well need to be cancelled because of the large number of people it draws and can become a super spreader event. Mayor Rilling said for the ease of facilitating this he recommends approving the event with the precautionary note. Commissioner Straniti asked when that decision will be made because a lot of planning goes into the event. Mayor Rilling said very soon.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE THE ROUTE CLOSURE PLAN FOR THE NORWALK MEMORIAL DAY PARADE TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 31, 2021. TENTATIVE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING ABLE TO CONDUCT THE PARADE SAFELY.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**3. RECOMMEND LOWERING THE SPEED LIMIT ON WASHINGTON STREET FROM FLAX HILL ROAD TO WATER STREET FROM 30 MPH TO 25 MPH TO THE OFFICE OF THE STATE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY FOR THEIR APPROVAL.**

Mr. Travers said Norwalk currently operates many roads under a blanket permit which are no longer issued by the CT DOT and they now require that each of the individual roads be submitted to them for review and do not believe this request will be an issue.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE LOWERING THE SPEED LIMIT ON WASHINGTON STREET FROM FLAX HILL ROAD TO WATER STREET FROM 30 MPH TO 25 MPH TO THE OFFICE OF THE STATE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY FOR THEIR APPROVAL.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**4. APPROVE THE REMOVAL OF ALL TRAFFIC RELATED SIGNAGE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF WASHINGTON STREET FROM SOUTH MAIN STREET TO WATER STREET FOR THE REMAINING DURATION OF THE PARKING SPACE CLOSURES.**

Mr. Bolella said this is for the removal of signage on the section of Washington Street between North Water Street and Water Street and also North Main and South Main Streets, the section is currently closed by the use of jersey barriers to create a pedestrian passage and to allow the restaurants to use the sidewalks for outdoor dining. He said they have had several discussions with the Parking Authority and had recommended the removal of on-street meters as well as the parking related signage to approve the ascetics and on-street dining, and the Parking Authority has unanimously approved the removal of the meters and signage in those areas. He said this is simply to clean up the signage on the street which is no longer applicable as long as the Jersey barrier are in place. Mayor Rilling asked if the poles for the meters will also be removed. Mr. Bolella said “yes” but we will make sure there is not a safety hazard in the interim and when the jersey barriers are removed and access is given back to the restaurants they would be re-installed. Mr. Travers said at that point he will be recommending a parking paystation and continue to remove the clutter that currently exists on the street.

**\*\*COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE THE REMOVAL OF ALL TRAFFIC RELATED SIGNAGE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF WASHINGTON STREET FROM SOUTH MAIN STREET TO WATER STREET FOR THE REMAINING DURATION OF THE PARKING SPACE CLOSURES.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**5. REQUEST THE STATE REVISE THE WEST-BOUND LANE ARRANGEMENTS AT THE INTERSECTION OF STRAWBERRY HILL AVENUE AND WESTPORT AVENUE FROM A LEFT AND THRU LANE AND A RIGHT TURN ONLY LANE TO A LEFT TURN ONLY LANE AND RIGHT-THRU LANE.**

Mr. Travers said he has reviewed the future traffic volumes that are anticipated for this corridor and while both lane assignments do work and he appreciates the efforts by the city and state staff in looking at these changes, he does recognize the issue coming from the Bike/Walk Commission on the cycling movement and based on the fact that it will bring relief to the intersection we are asking the Traffic Authority to submit the request to CT DOT to have the lane assignment returned to the way it was prior to the change. Chief Kulhawik said that some people that travel that area have suggested a left turn signal to allow the traffic to clear and asked if that was looked into. Mr. Travers said he will make that recommendation to the CT DOT as well. Commissioner Straniti said she is in favor of the change to a dedicated left turn signal as well because there is a lot of traffic that backs up in that area. Mayor Rilling agreed and said he sees a lot of people getting frustrated and end up cutting through the parking lot for Marshalls which causes problems for the pedestrians so whatever can be done to improve the intersection would be greatly appreciated and welcomed.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE TO REQUEST THE STATE REVISE THE WEST-BOUND LANE ARRANGEMENTS AT THE INTERSECTION OF STRAWBERRY HILL AVENUE AND WESTPORT AVENUE FROM A LEFT AND THRU LANE AND A RIGHT TURN ONLY LANE TO A LEFT TURN ONLY LANE AND RIGHT-THRU LANE.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**6. APPROVE THE ROAD CLOSURE PLAN FOR THE WALK-BRIDGE PROJECT**

Mr. Yeosock said the Traffic Authority had approved the road closure plan for the early breakout project and at that meeting it was requested that the state hold a public information meeting for the neighborhood regarding the plan implantations. He said the state held that meeting last month and did not receive any negative feedback so are requesting to implement that plan through the larger scale project.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE THE ROAD CLOSURE PLAN FOR THE WALK-BRIDGE PROJECT.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**7. APPROVE THE INSTALLATION OF BIKE LANES AND SHARROWS UNDER THE CT DOT COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY GRANT PROGRAMS AS SOWN ON THE ATTACHED PLANS.**

Mr. Bolella said the department has recently reviewed the design plans for the CT DOT Community Connectivity Grant and found a significant opportunity to replace some of the proposed sharrows through the projects in the north/south and east/west corridors to dedicated conventional bike lanes. He said there is currently 7.9 miles of conventional bike lanes in the City of Norwalk and with this project we propose to double them by adding another 7.5 miles of bike lanes. He said we prefer the bike lanes for a number of reasons and they provide a dedicated space on the side of the roadway for cyclists and we see a value of installing bike lanes as part of the project. He said as part of the process to accommodate the bike lanes that 10' travel lanes would be required along the corridor specifically for the north/south route and as part of this grant will be proposing to install 10" lanes throughout the corridor to allow the creation of 5' bike lanes. He said there is an exception to the plan in the area of Fort Point Street between Seaview Avenue

and Van Zant Street and we are proposing to restripe that entire section to 10' travel lanes and would provide a consistent cross section. He said we are also proposing to move a bus stop at that section closer to Seaview Avenue to add a few parking spaces for the community. Commissioner Straniti said she does not see how the lanes could be anymore narrow on a road such as Ponus Avenue where it is already narrow. Mr. Bolella said they reviewed that entire network and by adding the extra foot would allow shoulders that accommodate bike lanes. Mayor Rilling said it was just approved to narrow the roadways 10' lanes and it tends to be a visual road calming measure and he thinks this will have a positive impact.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE THE INSTALLATION OF BIKE LANES AND SHARROWS UNDER THE CT DOT COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY GRANT PROGRAMS AS SOWN ON THE ATTACHED PLANS.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**8. APPROVE THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF 3 PARKING SPACES ON NORTH MAIN STREET IN FRONT OF 15 NORTH MAIN STREET FOR OUTDOOR DINING SUBJECT TO RECEIVING ALL ADDITIONAL REQUIRED APPROVALS.**

Mayor Rilling asked if the businesses in the area were notified and if they had an opportunity to express their concerns relative to removing the parking spaces. Mr. Travers said that he has spoken to a number of the business owners and they have requested a better way to identify spaces that can be used for pick up and drop off so staff is reviewing some options. Mr. Travers also said at this point we have received all the additional required approvals for the temporary closure for the three parking spaces.

Mayor Rilling said we need to find a way to enhance enforcement for the people that are delivering or picking up on Washington Street because he has observed them stopping next to the barriers and blocking traffic. Mr. Travers said that he will work with the Deputy Chief regarding the enforcement but he also thinks the wayfinding signage is an issue so he he is working with the Snyder Group on signage directing people to the parking facilities in a much more efficient manner. He also said that he will reach out the business owners to have them direct their pick up customers on where to find parking.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF 3 PARKING SPACES ON NORTH MAIN STREET IN FRONT OF 15 NORTH MAIN STREET FOR OUTDOOR DINING SUBJECT TO RECEIVING ALL ADDITIONAL REQUIRED APPROVALS.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**9. CONCUR WITH THE ASSESSMENT BY SLR THAT THE PINNACLE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AT 467 WEST AVENUE, 17 BUTLER STREET AND 3 QUINCY STREET WILL HAVE NO SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT TO THE STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM CONTINGENT ON CT DOT'S AGREEMENT.**

Neil Olinksy provided an overview of the project and said they are currently in front of the Office of the State Traffic Administration for a revision of OSTA approval they got a few years ago. He said the current site plan got it's zoning approval a few months ago are seeking the approval from the Traffic Authority that is in concurrence that the development is not impacting any of the state roadways. Mayor Rilling said the square footage on the project increased by 70,000 yet the traffic in all categories decreased. Mr. Olinksy said that is because they removed the theater and fitness center that were proposed in the site development plan a few years back but increased the residential component.

Commissioner Straniti said she does not think she is qualified with the information that she has been provided to make this decision and as she has said on past applications of course there will be an impact to traffic on the roads.

Mayor Rilling said it is a requirement of the CT DOT for the Traffic Authority to look at the applications and the key word is “substantial” impact.

Mr. Olinski said they have gone through the proper methodology and a lot of information is on file with the zoning office. Commissioner Straniti asked if an independent review would still take place. Mr. Yeosock said this project is a reduction in the scope of the project turning it more into apartments rather than commercial use which will generate less traffic and when the project was originally reviewed it was found to be sufficient so there was no need for a third party study. Mayor Rilling asked if this has been approved by the Zoning Commission. Mr. Olinski said “yes” it has been approved. Mayor Rilling asked if they were comfortable with the traffic pattern. Mr. Olinski said “yes” and the whole process was completed through zoning office and approved by the Zoning Commission.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE TO CONCUR WITH THE ASSESSMENT BY SLR THAT THE PINNACLE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AT 467 WEST AVENUE, 17 BUTLER STREET AND 3 QUINCY STREET WILL HAVE NO SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT TO THE STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM CONTINGENT ON CT DOT’S AGREEMENT. \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**10. APPROVE THE TRAFFIC DETOUR PLAN FOR WOODWARD AVENUE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CONCRETE CURB AND SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT PROJECT.**

Mr. Stanton presented the detour plan and said it was proposed from Grasso Construction who is the awarded contractor for the project and are proposing an officer be placed on Concord Street to detour the southbound traffic of RT 136. Mayor Rilling asked if the residents in the area were notified and given ample time about the project so that they can prepare. Mr. Stanton said they were provided notices at the end of last week.

Deputy Chief Walsh said that last summer there was a project in front of Rex Marine and there were major traffic backups in the morning especially with the detours that the officers were implementing. Commissioner Straniti asked if that can be addressed for this project so the same problems don’t occur. Mr. Stanton said they had proposed conventional times during this construction so that they can meet the productivity goals and felt that the northbound traffic volume throughout the day was better served by northbound only. Mayor Rilling asked when the work is anticipated to begin. Mr. Stanton said once they complete the work on Second Street and are waiting on the approval from the Traffic Authority. Mayor Rilling asked if an alternate north and south bound traffic pattern can be used in the work area. Mr. Stanton said “no” due to the truck traffic in that area and felt that the one way traffic with the detour is the best approach for traffic given the volume at this location. Mayor Rilling requested that Mr. Stanton meet with Deputy Chief Walsh to discuss options in addition to this traffic plan to help divert the traffic. Deputy Chief Walsh suggested the timing be adjusted on the light on Concord Street because it is a long light.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRAFFIC DETOUR PLAN FOR WOODWARD AVENUE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CONCRETE CURB AND SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT PROJECT. \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd