

CITY OF NORWALK
TRAFFIC AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE
June 21, 2021

Members of the public can call in and listen to a meeting. They will not be able to speak or see any of the meeting participants. Each meeting will use a unique Meeting/Webinar ID. Please find the information using the link above.

Members of the public who wish to provide “live comments” will need to register in advance and use the Zoom meeting platform. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the “raise your hand indicator” and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. Please find the information using the link above.

Members of the public who wish to view the meeting, but are not participating, can view a live stream on the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. This stream is delayed by approximately 20 seconds. Please find the information using the link above. The meeting recording and minutes will be posted on the City of Norwalk website within seven (7) days after the meeting.

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 to provide written comment prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Rilling; Commissioner Kelly Straniti; Commission-Collier-Clemmons

STAFF: Chief Thomas Kulhawik; Deputy Chief Susan Zecca; Deputy Chief James Walsh; Garrett Bolella, TMP; Michael Yeosock, Principal Engineer, TMP

Mayor Rilling called the meeting order at 4:01PM.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following letter was submitted for the record:

Dear Traffic Authority Commissioners,

I'm an East Norwalk resident writing to you regarding the problematic traffic and proliferation of larger trucks and tractor trailer trucks on East Avenue in East Norwalk, and the dangerous quality of life compromising situations these trucks place us residents in, particularly at the intersections of East Avenue and Fort Point Street, East Avenue and Fitch Street and East Avenue heading toward the I-95 off ramp. I strongly feel that we residents need to hold a Q&A session with you all, perhaps at the upcoming ENNA meeting, to discuss these issues which desperately call for dialogue on collaborating a plan of remediation. While we've been told that the lowering and widening of East Avenue near/under the railroad trestle and a new traffic light system will solve all our problems, we beg to differ. High vehicular volume, increased truck traffic, cut through traffic and less than ideal traffic patterns are more the problems, and despite our years of bringing your attention to them nothing has proactively been proposed to resolve those problems which have exacerbated.

Fort Point Street, a well-known service truck cut through continues to worsen with more and larger trucks sometimes tractor trailer trucks, darting out onto East Avenue haphazardly due to no traffic light at the location, endangering pedestrian daily. I understand that a traffic light will eventually be installed, and while a light will bring some order to the chaotic intersection, it in no way addresses the ever increasing vehicular volume which congests East Avenue. For several years now, I've witnessed large trucks, and on occasion tractor trailer trucks, frequently jumping the sidewalk and cutting through the gas station parking lot from East Avenue to Fitch Street because they don't want to quite at the light like everyone else. I've seen large food delivery/service trucks regularly parking in West Avenue's far right northbound lane with their hazards on, their drivers running across the street into Dunkin Donuts, sometimes not coming out for up to 15 minutes. This routine closes down a lane and clogs up East Avenue, and I've witnessed it because a car to almost drive into the back of a lane obstructing truck, as the driver assumed the truck was moving as it should've been. I reported my observations to the police. St. John's Street, which has functioned as a well-known service truck cut through for South Norwalk for many years, has seen increasing large truck volume, with a constant stream of trucks turning left onto East Avenue and hugely contributing to the gridlock there which has often exponentially worse year over year. Trucks and high density city through traffic are wreaking havoc on East Norwalk's gateway at a huge inconvenience and quality of life compromise to us residents, while critically detracting from East Norwalk's charm and appeal. We now have many new Fairfield County residents from New York since COVID-19, and I'm seeing more young families with young children out and about. Are we happy that their first impression of East Norwalk community is of a traffic congested, exhaust fume ridden, road rage inducing I-95 truck stop? I hope our answer is, No! If it is, together, let's collaborate and seek out what can be accomplished to holistically examine and remediate our situation, before it's too late.

I am asking that you kindly include the above subject matter on the agenda for discussion at your June 21st meeting. I thank you in advance for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing your initial thoughts in your response to my letter.

Respectfully,

Mimi Chang

1. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY MEETING OF MONDAY, MAY 17, 2021.

On page 1, under the attendance, change “Commission Collier-Clemmons” to “Commissioner Collier-Clemmons”

On page 4, paragraph 1 and paragraph 3, change “Commissioner – Collier-Clemmons” to “Commissioner Collier-Clemmons”

On page 6, paragraph 2 change “they” to “the”

On page 6, under Chestnut Street, Paragraph 2, change “Commissioner – Collier-Clemmons” to “Commissioner Collier-Clemmons”

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. CONCUR WITH THE DEPARTMENT’S RECOMMENDATION TO LOWER THE SPEED LIMIT TO 25 MPH ON NEWTOWN AVENUE BETWEEN CHESTNUT HILL ROAD AND THE CITY LIMITS AND FORWARD TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT OSTA FOR APPROVAL.

Mr. Bolella said this was a request from the neighborhood and was forwarded by the Pedestrian Committee and this section of the road has much lower volumes than the state section and is much more residential in character, and also does not have any sidewalks so one of the things we will be doing this summer as part of our maintenance program is to stripe the shoulders on the roadway to be consistent to what is on the state route in the area.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE TO CONCUR WITH THE DEPARTMENT’S RECOMMENDATION TO LOWER THE SPEED LIMIT TO 25 MPH ON NEWTOWN AVENUE BETWEEN CHESTNUT HILL ROAD AND THE CITY LIMITS AND FORWARD TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT OSTA FOR APPROVAL.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. APPROVE ESTABLISH A “NO PARKING ANYTIME” ZONE ON THE NORTH SIDE OF ST. JOHNS STREET SOUTH FOR 110 FEET

Mr. Bolella said as part of the maintenance program will be re-striping the roadway and have done a site investigation due to some complaints at the corner of St. John Street and Osborne Avenue but given the parking regulations it is tight at the corner so staff is requesting a no parking zone at that location and all of the other parking along Osborne Avenue would be maintained. Mayor Rilling asked how many parking spaces will be removed. Mr. Bolella said three to four but they are not always occupied. Mayor Rilling said that a lot of time between St. Johns Street and Fort Point Street there is parking on both sides of the street and suggested that staff also look at that area and make some recommendations to the commission.

**** COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE TO APPROVE ESTABLISH A “NO PARKING ANYTIME” ZONE ON THE NORTH SIDE OF ST. JOHNS STREET SOUTH FOR 110 FEET.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. APPROVE THE INSTALLATION OF A LED RADAR SPEED LIMIT SIGN ON BROAD STREET FOR EASTBOUND TRAFFIC.

Mr. Yeosock said that a speed study was done on Broad Street and found the speeds to be high going eastbound and would like to install the LED speed limit signs to remind the drivers that they are driving too fast through the area. He also said that is the area where the head of the NRV trails starts there will be a lot of pedestrians in the area. Mayor Rilling asked if speed counts were done. Mr. Yeosock said “yes” and the traffic headed westbound is within reason but the speed is a little high when traveling eastbound. Commissioner Straniti said that she has noticed excessive dumping at the start of the trail and asked that be passed along to the correct department to investigate.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE INSTALLATION OF A LED RADAR SPEED LIMIT SIGN ON BROAD STREET FOR EASTBOUND TRAFFIC.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. APPROVE THE ROAD CLOSURE PLAN FOR HENDRICKS AVENUE FROM JULY 22-25, 2021.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ROAD CLOSURE PLAN FOR THE FOR HENDRICKS AVENUE FROM JUNE 22-25, 2021.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. APPROVE THE ROAD CLOSURE PLAN FOR THE 2021 NORWALK OYSTER FESTIVAL FROM SEPTEMBER 10-SEPTEMBER 12, 2021.

Mr. Reilly said that everything will be the same as it has been in the past.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ROAD CLOSURE PLAN FOR THE NORWALK OYSTER FESTIVAL FROM SEPTEMBER 10-SEPTEMBER 12, 2021.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

7. APPROVE THE PARADE ROUTE FOR THE NORWALK HIGH SCHOOL BOY’S BASEBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM CELEBRATION ON SATURDAY, JUNE 26, 2021. THE PARADE WILL BEGIN AT 9:00AM AT VETERAN’S PARK AND TRAVEL THROUGH SOUTH NORWALK, NORWALK CENTER, AND TERMINATE AT THE TOWN GREEN ON EAST AVENUE. THE PARADE ROUTE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING STREET; WASHINGTON STREET, NORTH MAIN STREET, WEST AVENUE AND WALL STREET.

Mayor Rilling said for the first time ever the Norwalk High School boys baseball team who were ranked 24th in the state won the state championship in the Class LL division. He said it was a remarkable team effort and are very proud of them and there have been suggestions received that a parade should be held for them and the details are still be worked out but the parade will be in the right lane only of the route so the street will not be closed . Chief Kulhawik said that Deputy Chief Walsh has been contacted and he is working on it along with the traffic unit and will take place with an escort rather than a road closure. The Commissioners offered their congratulations to the team.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM THE PARADE ROUTE FOR THE NORWALK HIGH SCHOOL BOY’S BASEBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM CELEBRATION ON SATURDAY, JUNE 26, 2021. THE PARADE WILL BEGIN AT 9:00AM AT VETERAN’S PARK AND TRAVEL THROUGH SOUTH NORWALK, NORWALK CENTER, AND TERMINATE AT THE TOWN GREEN ON EAST AVENUE. THE PARADE ROUTE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING STREET; WASHINGTON STREET, NORTH MAIN STREET, WEST AVENUE AND WALL STREET.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DISCUSSION ITEMS/ COMMENTS

1. LETTER TO THE COMMISSIONERS FROM MIMI CHANG REGARDING EAST AVENUE TRAFFIC.

Mayor Rilling said one of the things that was eluded to in the letter is the traffic plan that has been put in place for the Walk Bridge Project. Mr. Yeosock said that some of the traffic has been pushed onto Strawberry Hill Avenue and Fitch Street for the detours in the evening and on weekends when the bridge is closed on East Avenue and are considering moving to stop bars back on Fitch Street to make the turning radius a little easier. Mayor Rilling asked staff if there are any other things that can be done to alleviate the issue and asked if a truck count has been done. Mr. Bolella said they had looked extensively at the truck traffic and agree with Mr. Yeosock to move the stop bar back and potentially staggering the traffic will greatly help to resolve some of the congestion at that corner and will look at new pavement markings and signage. He said that DPW is also in conversations with the state and have provided a number of recommendations for the detour route and are waiting on response for mitigation. Mayor Rilling requested that staff report back on the truck counts and the times and to look at that area to see if they can make any other recommendations and report back to the commission at the next meeting. Commissioner Collier- Clemmons requested that the truck counts are also provided at the next meeting.

Commissioner Straniti said she has not noticed much truck traffic in that area but she has seen a major issue with the traffic coming from the beach going onto East Avenue and people that are in the right lane not turning on Winfield Street. Mayor Rilling suggested that staff look at the area to see if anything can be done to alleviate the issue.

2. Artistic Crosswalk ribbon cutting- June 29, 2021

Mayor Rilling said the time for the ribbon cutting will be send to the commissioners and that they are welcome to attend. He said the crosswalk was approved in the budget but had been delayed due to obvious reasons and the Triangle Community Center had paid for a good portion of the crosswalk. He said the city is also looking at other locations to install crosswalks where other organizations may want to have an artistic crosswalk.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:38PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd