

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING

April 13, 2022

A regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners was held on Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. in the Police Commission Conference Room, 100 Reef Road, Fairfield, CT 06824.

Members Present: Commissioners: Chairman Ronald Pine, Secretary Peter Ambrose, Charlene Lebo, James Millington, Joe Cafferelli

Absent: Commissioner Kevin Kiley and Commissioner Jack Stone

Chief Kalamaras, Captain Granata, Captain Weihe, Lieutenant Esposito, and Lieutenant Irizarry

Public Present: Gary MacNamara, Executive Director of Public Safety and Government Affairs at Sacred Heart University, Edward Greene, Public Safety Lieutenant at Sacred Heart University, Bennett Webster, resident, 144 Pratt Street, Fairfield, CT 06824

The regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner Chairman Ronald Pine at 4:30 p.m.

1) The Pledge of Allegiance – recited.

2) Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 9, 2022

Commissioner Secretary Ambrose motioned to approve the March 9, 2022 regular meeting minutes, as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Millington. Motion passed unanimously.

3) Presentation of Officer of the Quarter (OOQ) Award

Officer Robert Knapp was awarded Officer of the Quarter for the period of April 15, 2022 to July 14th, 2022. Captain Edward Weihe introduced Officer Knapp and said that Officer Knapp was recognized by the Lieutenants and Sergeants of the Patrol Division for his outstanding personality and positive attitude, fitness and appearance, work ethic, high level of initiative and knowledge, willingness to learn new skills, and his job proficiency. Officer Knapp received a certificate signed by Chief Kalamaras, and his name will be added to a plaque, which lists all of the names of officers who have been recognized for this award.

4) Traffic Surveys

Commissioner Secretary Ambrose read the traffic surveys.

TS #1 LOCATION: Intersection of Easton Turnpike & Jefferson Street - Sacred Heart West Campus

NATURE OF REQUEST: Sacred Heart West Campus-Request installing a turn signal at the intersection for traffic turning left onto Easton Turnpike from Jefferson Street.

BY WHOM: Town Engineer, William Hurley

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Intersection of Easton Turnpike & Jefferson Street – Sacred Heart West Campus:

After observing several light cycles with medium traffic conditions, it was determined that “Lead Green Light with a Doghouse Signal” for westbound traffic turning south on Easton Turnpike would be forwarded as a recommendation to mitigate the traffic congestion at this intersection. This recommendation will be forwarded to the Police Commission for approval before forwarding to State D.O.T. for their approval.

No comments were made by the Police Commission or the public.

*Commissioner Lebo motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Cafferelli.
Motion passed unanimously.

Park Avenue at Jefferson Street, Park Avenue at Old Town Road (Bridgeport):

A request by Sacred Heart University for “No Turn on Red” on all four corners of this intersection to increase safety for student/pedestrian traffic was reviewed by those in attendance. It was determined that this request will be tabled so that a further review of the impact on traffic “No Turn on Red” signs would have on traffic at various times of the day. A Traffic Unit study will be conducted at various times of the day (AM/PM) to determine how many vehicles make right-hand turns at this intersection. Specifically, during morning and afternoon rush hour traffic. A concern is that limiting the right-hand turns may cause more traffic congestion during those times. Commissioner Pine and Mr. Hurley, also, noted a clear line of sight for traffic at the crosswalk at Jefferson Street and Park Avenue.

Gary MacNamara, Executive Director of Public Safety and Government Affairs at Sacred Heart University, addressed the Police Commission and identified his concerns regarding the traffic issue. He stated that the number of students, who regularly cross in this location encounter a problem with the traffic that turns at this intersection. He suggested that if a “No Turn On Red” signal/sign was installed which was activated and lit up, when a student hit the crosswalk button, it would eliminate a conflict between pedestrians and vehicles at the four-way stop. He believes that this signal/sign would avoid the needless back-up of traffic and most importantly, stop traffic from moving until people are effectively done crossing the street. Commissioner Chairman Pine mentioned that the crosswalk is not located right at the corner. Commissioner Secretary Ambrose expressed a concern regarding the illumination in that area at night. Gary MacNamara replied that the illumination was not an issue there. Gary MacNamara would like to take a broader approach to ensure the safety of pedestrians and stated that Sacred Heart would be a partner in the expenditures to facilitate improvements at this location.

After much discussion, Chief Kalamaras suggested that the Police Commission agree to move forward with the proposal at this time and base their final decision on this traffic survey request after William Hurley, Engineering Manager for the Town of Fairfield, has the opportunity to review and endorse the proposition made by Gary MacNamara. In addition, the Commissioners felt that consideration must be given to the costs that would be absorbed by Sacred Heart University in this matter.

*Commissioner Millington motioned to approve, based on the suggestion of Chief Kalamaras.

Seconded by Commissioner Lebo. Motion passed unanimously.

Park Avenue at Sacred Heart University main entrance at 5151 Park Avenue:

A request to move the Stop Line back away from the crosswalk to improve line of sight for student/pedestrian traffic was recommended for approval. Additionally, the "No Turn on Red" sign for southbound traffic turning into SHU was also recommended for approval. Attendees, also, acknowledged the crosswalk at this intersection needed to be repainted to highlight the crosswalk for safety. Specifically, on the Bridgeport side of Park Avenue due to the milled roadway with no clear paintings of a crosswalk.

*Commissioner Secretary Ambrose motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Millington. Motion passed unanimously.

TS #2 LOCATION: Pratt Street at/between Oldfield Road and Veres Street

NATURE OF REQUEST:

Neighborhood residents are requesting stop signs to be implemented along Pratt Street, Howard Street, and Charles Street intersections.

Pratt Street & Howard Street - stop signs requested for both north and south-bound traffic along Pratt Street and for west-bound along Howard Street.

BY WHOM: Bennett Webster

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Deny – Reevaluate upon completion of demolition of the residence at the corner of intersection (145 Howard Street.)

Bennett Webster, resident of 144 Pratt Street, Fairfield, CT 06824, addressed the Police Commission and made a case for the approval of this traffic survey. He stated that there is a blind curve at the intersection of Pratt Street and Howard Street, and he noted that the bus stops there, also. In addition, five new homes have been built on the street, and there is new construction occurring, as well as trees which block the line of sight for drivers. There have been close calls with children and the death of a dog because of the visual impairments at this site. Mr. Webster said that he had had a discussion with Sergeant Kaesmann, Lieutenant Irizarry and Captain Koval about the need for stop signs, and they agreed with him. During the Police Commission meeting, Lieutenant Irizarry agreed that currently the line of sight is poor from Howard Street onto Pratt Street, and he felt that stop signs would improve safety. Commissioner Secretary Ambrose asked why it had been first recommended to deny the request. Lieutenant Irizarry said that he had thought that when the house on the corner was demoed, the line of sight would be improved. However, he has since changed his mind.

*Commissioner Millington motioned to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Lebo. Motion passed unanimously.

TS #3 LOCATION: Fern Street - Roger Sherman School

NATURE OF REQUEST:

Request permission to place approximately three (3) "Stop Kiss and Go" signs along Fern Street closest to the exit driveway of Roger Sherman School. They would sit behind the sidewalk in line with but opt to block the "No Parking" signs.

BY WHOM: Angelus Papageorge - Fairfield Public Schools

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approve (3) "Stop, Kiss and Go" supplemental signs to each of the three (3) requested posts. These signs shall not replace the current "No Parking Signs".

Commissioner Millington opposed the signs and urged the other commissioners to vote no to this request because the "Stop, Kiss and Go" supplemental signs are not regulated by D.O.T. and therefore, the taxpayers should not have to pay for them. Chairman Commissioner Pine felt that the "Stop, Kiss and Go" signs did not affect traffic and that they were acceptable. Chief Kalamaras said that placement of these signs was not under the purview of the Police Commission and that these signs should be recognized by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Code Devices (M.U.T.C.D.), which they are not. He believes that the Town's Engineering Manager should review. The option of using a sandwich board was another alternative.

*Commissioner Millington motioned to deny. Seconded by Commissioner Lebo. Motion denied unanimously.

5) Old Business – None

6) New Business

Donation made to Animal Control:

A donation of \$20.00 (check) was received from Jack and Ginny Hogan, P.O. Box 1893, North Eastham, MA 02651, as a gift in memory of Judy Bodie, a long-time contributor and supporter of the Fairfield Animal Shelter, who will be remembered for her love and devotion to all animals.

*Commissioner Millington made a motion to accept the donation, as presented. Commissioner Lebo seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

7) Monthly Report – Accepted

8) Executive Session For Lateral Officer Interviews:

Motion was made by Commissioner Millington and seconded by Commissioner Secretary Ambrose to enter into executive session at 5:00 p.m.

At 5:49 p.m., Commissioner Chairman Pine made a motion to come out of executive session, which was seconded by Commissioner Lebo.

*A motion to extend conditional offers to Brandon Beck and Helder Dos Santos, in that order, was made by Commissioner Chairman Pine. Seconded by Commissioner Lebo. Motion passed unanimously.

9) Adjournment

At 5:51 p.m., Commissioner Chairman Pine motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Millington. Motioned passed unanimously.

Commissioner Secretary Ambrose
Recording Secretary Nancy Fray