



POLICE COMMISSION

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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
BETHEL POLICE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2010
BETHEL POLICE DEPARTMENT-CONFERENCE ROOM

ATTENDING: CHAIRMAN NICHOLAS ELLIS
COMMISSIONER CHRIS McCOLLAM
COMMISSIONER BILL OCHS
COMMISSIONER DAN GROSSO
COMMISSIONER HUGO GRECO
CHIEF JEFFREY W. FINCH

Chairman Nicholas Ellis opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

1. General Public Comments:

James Wright of 21 Sand Hill Rd requested a 90° curve sign eastbound on Sand Hill before the sharp curve. The single left arrow sign at the apex of the turn does not prevent cars from missing the sharp curve and running up onto his lawn, tearing it up and ruining expensive foliage and trees. Mr Wright also spoke out against the proposed Financial Sub-committee. As a long time member of the Police Department he sees it as being "bad for the Department" and questions whether it even "falls in line with Town Charter". At the least Town Counsel should be consulted as to its legality.

Elise Volpati of 21 Judd Av addressed the request she and Mark Goodwin sent to the First Selectman and the Chief of Police which the Commission considered at the 4/21/10 meeting (item 5b). Other Judd Av residents were in attendance. Ms Volpati stressed that the focus of the letter was concern over pedestrian safety and not simply the danger of backing out of driveways onto this busy street. Vehicles accelerate going up the hill and maintain their speed all the way to the Rt58 traffic light. There is considerable school related pedestrian traffic as well as neighbors crossing Judd at its widest point. In lieu of 3-way signs, other techniques should be employed such as flashing speed limit signs, better signage, striping and the like. Ms Volpati pointed out that the Educational Park is not just a campus but also a community park in its own right with a track, tennis facilities and hosts other sporting events.

Neighbors do not feel safe crossing the street walking their children to school or attending special events. Sharon Palmer stated her

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fear of walking her children to school without crosswalks on narrow sidewalks. She asked if crossing guards would be a viable option in the morning and when school gets out. Even volunteers would be better than nothing. Ira Pollock of 35 Judd sees a sidewalk on the town side of Judd as alleviating some of the pedestrian traffic. Cardy Hatzi of 17 Judd stated her 14 year old son nearly got hit twice collecting mail. Chairman Ellis stated Judd Av is an agenda item and will be discussed.

Lt Kennedy reinforced Sgt Wright's comments concerning the proposed financial subcommittee. The establishment of such a sub committee will not be done for the "good of the Department"

2. Review of Past Minutes Apr 14, 2010

Comm McCollam noted an error in item 5e. In the motion the word should be "contract" instead of "contrace". Motion by Comm Greco to accept the minutes of the 4/14/10 meeting as amended; seconded by Comm Grosso – unanimous.

3. Budget Report:

Commission members questioned several items of expenditure where the Comptroller's report lacked necessary descriptive detail. Chief Finch and Lt Dickinson provided the answers to the Commissioner's satisfaction. Motion by Comm McCollam to accept the current budget report as presented; seconded by Comm Ochs – unanimous.

4. Old Business:

a) Monthly Reports

The Chief noted arrests up slightly with the approach of summer. The monies collected report was in error due to an erroneous date being entered into the date field. Comm McCollam complimented the Animal Control Report which includes more resolutions than past reports. Motion by Comm Greco to accept the Monthly Reports as presented; seconded by Comm Grosso – unanimous.

b) Judd Av

Lt Dickinson's presentation described the issues associated with this section of Judd Av (see minutes 4/21/10 item 5b and these minutes General Public Comments) with safety and quality of life as the primary concerns. The safety record is excellent with only one minor one-car accident with no injury in over 3½ years. Gap and speed studies were done three years ago showing a weekday volume of 6,000 cars per day with the high hourly volume of 768 cars at an average speed of 31 mph going north and 34 mph going south. A speed limit study response with approved speed limits

from the State Traffic Commission is still to be received. Effective gaps for pedestrians crossing and residents exiting out of driveways are reduced by higher volumes and lower speeds. In spite of the traffic volume the gaps are sufficiently within guidelines for pedestrians and drivers exiting driveways. Painted crosswalks can decrease safety as pedestrians use less care and the site features here are problematic. Negatives for a painted crosswalk at this location include the slope, sightlines, intersections and a 44 foot road width allows room for cars to pass those stopped for pedestrians. Lt Dickinson offered several suggestions. Paint a center line would indicate it as a secondary road so as not to appear as an extension of Rt58. Reduce the width of the road when it is due for repaving. Install a new school sign southbound on Judd toward Ann Terrace at the hill crest. Check with the State concerning the overdue speed study. Cut bushes which block the existing sidewalk forcing pedestrians into the street. Reposition the northbound pedestrian sign. Eliminate non traffic related signage at the Rt58 intersection. Reposition the Judd Av sign so Rt58 traffic can see it. Reposition Rt58 end sign and raise sign heights to current standards and space them correctly. Chief Finch requested that Lt Dickinson document these suggestions with exact specifications for Commission consideration. Chairman Ellis asked that blinking light signs be added as well. Comm Ochs asked if something can be done immediately rather than waiting for the next meeting. Lt Dickinson will arrange for the sidewalk blocking bushes to be cut as soon as possible and begin improvements. Motion by Chairman Ellis to carry Judd Av over to the next meeting under old business to allow Lt Dickinson to formalize his proposals; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

Motion by Comm McCollam to move agenda item 5c Sky Edge La/Sand Hill Signage to New Business item a; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous

Motion by Comm McCollam to move agenda item 5d Financial Sub-Committee to New Business item b; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

5. New Business:

a) Sky Edge La/Sand Hill - *Signage*

Chief Finch stated he has driven down the street and agrees with Det Wright's request that an additional curve sign be placed where the other sign used to be before it was moved to the apex of the curve. The Chief presented a diagram prepared by Lt Dickinson with specifications for proposed signage improvements. Motion by Chairman Ellis to accept the Chief's recommendation to improve signage at Sky Edge La; seconded by Comm Ochs – unanimous.

b) Financial Sub-Committee

Chairman Ellis stated he had asked the Police Union to send at least one representative to Commission meetings and was disappointed that they fail to do this. Chairman Ellis asked Lt Kennedy to explain his “theory” behind the reason “that this was added”. Lt Kennedy stated his belief that the Chairman was overzealous in “nickel and dimeing” the Department, “meddling rather than managing”, becoming too involved in the Department’s day-to-day operation in an area where the Chief already has “firm control”. Future personal political agenda and “having too much time on your hands” were offered as opinions currently circulating as to the reason for the Chairman’s too close involvement in Department operation. The lieutenant went on to say that overall the Department is very aware of what money should be spent on. We are aware of what is desired against what is needed given the money available. A lively exchange followed between the Chairman and Lt Kennedy until Chief Finch suggested the matter become a matter for the Commission as a whole to discuss. During the discussion which followed both Comms McCollam and Greco stressed the need for Commission members to work together. Motion by Chairman Ellis to remove the Financial Sub-Committee from the agenda; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

c) Department Policy (2)

Chief Finch presented two updated policies to the Commission. No significant changes were made. 2003-03 “Citizen Internal Complaints and Investigation” and 2003-07 “Disciplinary Policy”. The Chief went over the details with the Commission. Motion by Comm McCollam to approve changes to 2003-03 “Citizen Internal Complaints and Investigation; seconded by Comm Ochs – unanimous.

Motion by Comm Ochs to approve changes to 2003-07 “Disciplinary Policy”; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

d) Municipal Parking Lot – Wooster St

Lt Dickinson distributed a diagram with specifications for proposed signage and marking changes for the Municipal Center parking lot, initiated by the Town Planner, which would create “exit only” and “entrance only” existing driveways which connect with Wooster St. Motion by Comm Greco to accept Lt Dickinson’s recommendation for the municipal parking lot driveways connecting with Wooster St; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

Motion by Comm Greco to add “Change of Meeting Starting Time” under New Business as item e; seconded by Comm Grosso – motion passed 3 ayes and 2 nays with Chairman Ellis voting.

e) Change of Meeting Starting Time

Chairman Ellis spoke against changing the time for the benefit of the general public, many of which need time to get home from work before coming to meetings. The Chairman favored a later 7:30 starting time which is standard with other local commissions. Comm Grosso favored a regular starting time of 6:00. The Commission has the ability to make special accommodations for the public if needed. Motion by Comm Greco to change the meeting starting time from 6:30 to 6:00; seconded by Comm Grosso – motion passed 3 ayes to 1 nay.

6. Correspondence:

a) DARE Donation

As part of an estate endowment, a check for \$1063.50 was received by the Department for the DARE program as an expression of gratitude for the 2008 Route 6 highway dedication for Trooper James Lambert, struck and killed by a motorist 10/29/60, a memorial effort headed by Corporal Ralph Deluca.

b) Letter – Waclaw Godziemba-Maliszewski

This letter complimented Off Lynn Morris for her work

7. Chief's Report

a) Training Report

Lt Kennedy's training report was in the hands of the Commission.

The Chief displayed a defibulator with a wall mount case, donated by the Bethel Fire Department for inside use. Lt Dickinson demonstrated how the machine is utilized.

Chief Finch produced a paint ball gun as used in training simulations. Lt Kennedy produced the invoice showing \$1592 for 8 guns; 500 training balls for \$40; \$10 for 25 CO2 cylinders; \$8 for 100 color paint balls all purchased from funds outside of the Department budget.

The Memorial Day parade will be Sunday with the Department flag raising at 12 noon.

8. Commissioner Comments:

Comm McCollam stressed the need for Commission members to get along in the performance of their duties.

Comm Ochs stressed that things discussed follow the chain of command so no one feels left out or that something is going on which is not.

At 8:55 motion by Comm McCollam to adjourn; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ferd Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "F" and "M".

Ferdinand Miller Jr.

Secretary