

**TOWN OF WINDSOR
HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 16, 2016
TOWN HALL – LUDLOW ROOM**

APPROVED MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Jenkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Councilors Simon and Govoni were present. Town Manager Peter Souza, Police Chief Don Melanson and Assistant Town Manager Jonathan Luiz were also present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ruth Fahrbach of 592 Poquonock Avenue spoke in favor of the Town requiring that dogs be leashed at Northwest Park.

3. DISCUSSION OF ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE (Section 12-65)

Town Manager Souza briefly discussed the history of the ordinance and touched upon the details in the agenda item summary provided to members of the Health and Safety Committee.

Councilor Simon said that based on the data provided, his initial thought is that there does not exist a significant problem that requires fixing.

Councilor Jenkins said her initial thought on the matter is that perhaps a longer leash should be required so that the state ordinance is matched. She questioned whether sufficient signage exists at the moment regarding current obligations of people that take their dogs to Northwest Park.

Councilor Govoni said that it is the dog's nature to chase certain things and animals. He said it is better for both dog and owner to have a requirement that the dogs at Northwest Park be on a leash.

In response to a question, Police Chief Melanson said the failure to maintain control of a dog, even when the dog may under the law be off the leash at Northwest Park, can result in an infraction being issued.

Councilor Simon asked how many dog bite complaints there are in town. Chief Melanson said very few.

Chairwoman Jenkins put forth the idea of having the dogs leashed in the park with a fifteen foot retractable leash, and also having additional signage in Northwest Park that states the town's requirements of dog owners. Chairwoman Jenkins pointed out that Northwest Park features a dog park and that other public spaces do not.

Councilor Govoni said he is also concerned about dogs being off leash at the smaller parks in town because at small parks there is a greater chance of people interacting with dogs.

Chairwoman Jenkins said that based on the data provided, she does not see this as a problem that needs fixing.

Councilor Simon said he is also not convinced of the need to change the ordinance.

Councilor Govoni inquired about what other towns allow at their public parks. Chief Melanson said it is all across the board with respect to what other municipalities allow.

Councilor Simon inquired as to the frequency of violations of the ordinance. Chief Melanson explained that very few citations have been issued for violation.

Chairwoman Jenkins inquired about the size of Northwest Park. Town Manager Souza said the size of the Park is approximately 550 acres.

Chairwoman Jenkins said she thinks the matter is one that requires common sense of dog owners.

Councilor Simon inquired about existing signage at Northwest Park. Town Manager Souza said he recalls at least one sign at Northwest Park on the subject of dogs.

Councilor Simon said he is not convinced that a change to the ordinance is warranted.

Councilor Govoni said he would like to start with changing the ordinance so that only Northwest Park has a leash requirement.

Councilor Jenkins suggested enforcing the existing ordinance via additional signage at Northwest Park and perhaps having a designated area at Northwest Park where dogs could be off leash. Town Manager Souza noted that while there are a variety ways to inform the public of the leash requirements at Northwest Park, additional signage might not be the best way to inform people.

Chairwoman Jenkins said she would plan to provide a summary update of tonight's discussion to the full Town Council at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

4. DISCUSSION OF STATE OF CONNECTICUT TRAFFIC STOP ANALYSIS STUDY

Town Manager Souza indicated the State of Connecticut has released the traffic stop analysis study for the period October 2014 through September 2015 and also outlined the

fair and impartial policing training the Windsor Police Department staff went through last summer, and the improvements to data recording that the department has made as a result of better training and new software.

Chairwoman Jenkins asked what types of data submissions may have been overlooked before. Chief Melanson said he thinks officers may have incorrectly entered data in the past due to lack of training and due to the complexities of previous software reporting systems.

Chairwoman Jenkins asked if the software that we presently use can generate reports related to demographics of persons stopped for traffic violations. Chief Melanson distributed a report generated for the month of June related to traffic stops which included demographic information.

Councilor Simon asked if the data presented could be broken down further by age group. Chief Melanson said that he is not sure at this time, since the department has been using the software for about one month.

Councilor Simon said the report provided tonight indicates that the department had a greater propensity to give out warnings to whites and give out tickets to blacks. Councilor Simon said that the real issue is the bias that every single person carries within themselves as a result of living in this society. He said that implicit bias is quite likely what is behind the results of the report. Town Manager Souza and Police Chief Melanson said that the biggest part of the fair and impartial policing training course was on the subject of implicit bias.

Councilor Simon asked about whether or not the police staff undergoes implicit bias training on a repeated basis. Chief Melanson answered yes. He said that the topic of implicit bias is periodically incorporated into the daily roll calls at shift change.

Councilor Jenkins asked if the computer system can drill down to the officer level. Chief Melanson said he is not sure if the town's software can break down the data to the officer level. Chief Melanson said that CCSU does have the ability to drill down to the officer level.

Councilor Govoni said that license plate scanning technologies can provide a neutral way of policing.

Councilor Simon said that what tends to happen is that people's unconscious thinking about things influences their behavior. Councilor Simon said even a black officer could act in a biased manner towards black citizens.

Chairwoman Jenkins said she thinks implicit bias should be discussed often with the officers and that implicit bias should not go to the wayside. Chief Melanson said the department is developing an integrated system to track such items as citizen complaints and use of force complaints against officers. Chief Melanson explained that the tracked information could then perhaps be paired with data from CCSU that drills down to the officer level. Chief Melanson noted that CCSU's estimated driving data is based on a host of data sets with some from the 2010 census.

Chairwoman Jenkins asked what would be the level of discipline that could be brought upon an officer that is not compliant with respect to the report. Chief Melanson said that police chiefs are wrestling with that question right now, but that the initial focus would be on getting the officer training.

Councilor Simon said there is no need to wait for CCSU to issue another report when the Windsor Police Department could run its own reports on a periodic basis.

Councilor Jenkins asked for an explanation of the “synthetic control” test. Town Manager Souza and Police Chief Melanson indicated this is a new element in CCSU’s methodology and replaces the previous “peer town” test. The test is a complex formula that includes variables such as town demographics, land area, and traffic stop data. Town Manager Souza said he expects CCSU staff to meet with town staff in the coming months to begin a more in-depth review of Windsor’s traffic stop data.

Councilor Jenkins asked if other actions are tracked similarly to traffic stops. Police Chief Melanson said that the department does gather arrestee demographic information.

Councilor Simon asked how an officer develops a preference to enforce speeding as opposed to some other type of offense. Chief Melanson explained that every officer is different and that the difference exists because of experiences and desires.

Town Manager Souza said he expects to provide the Health and Safety Committee with more information about CCSU’s report, along with FY 17 traffic stop data after the first of the year.

5. STAFF REPORTS

Town Manager Souza said that the new CAD program has been up and running for about thirty days.

Town Manager Souza noted that three police officer recruits are in the police academy and will be entering field training program late summer / early fall. Town Manager Souza said there are currently two open officer positions, that one employment offer has been made and another candidate is undergoing a background check.

Chief Melanson said one dispatcher that was hired is on his own now and that another dispatcher is undergoing training. Town Manager Souza explained that one full time dispatcher recently resigned due to a state ruling about retirement benefits.

Chairwoman Jenkins inquired about the status of vehicles. Town Manager Souza said the procurement process for new vehicles would begin shortly now that the FY 17 budget has been approved.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) January 21, 2016

Councilor Simon MOVED and Councilor Govoni seconded to approve the unapproved minutes of the January 21, 2016 minutes of the Health and Safety Committee with changes.

The motion passed 3-0-0

7. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Simon MOVED and Councilor Govoni seconded to adjourn at 8:35 p.m.

The motion passed 3-0-0

Respectfully submitted by,

Jonathan Luiz, Assistant Town Manager