

FINAL

THIRD TAXING DISTRICT
of the City of Norwalk
Special Commission Meeting
October 11, 2016

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners: David Brown, Chair; Charles Yost, Debora Goldstein

STAFF: Jim Smith, General Manager; Ron Scofield, Assistant General Manager

PUBLIC: David Westmoreland (Chairperson of Second Taxing District and
Chairperson of Norwalk Historical Commission)
Robert Roberts and Linda Mineo (both of East Norwalk)

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Brown called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Mineo's first and foremost question is why the Walk Bridge cannot be completely refurbished. It is her opinion that the bridge has been reliable for 120 years and is confused why it needs to be replaced with something more stable. The DOT stated that the structure was good, it just needed maintenance.

Mr. Roberts believes the reason the bridge is broken is because they changed the tracks and the tracks were higher, the tracks were not high enough, they turned it and it bent everything. He said he read this information in a DOT report. The report stated everything that was wrong the bridge and why.

Ms. Mineo feels that the bridge is unique and a part of history and by replacing it would remove the history that future children will not be able to see.

Commissioner Goldstein asked if the Commission if they wanted to address all of the possible alternatives that are being advocated by the public.

DISTRICT PUBLIC FORUM ON WALK BRIDGE PLANNING MEETING

Commissioner Yost introduced David Westmoreland from the Second Taxing District and Norwalk Historical Commission.

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Mr. Westmoreland spoke about the bridge from the historical side. The bridge is historic and is listed on the National Register and the last bridge of its particular design in existence. One of the things the DOT told Mr. Westmoreland is that when they open it, the foundation is loose and it does not pivot in a complete circle, it's more of an oval. This is why it does not line up when it is closed.

Mr. Westmoreland continued to talk about what will be done. Because of the historic nature, one of the things to be done is to design an archeology plan to be performed at the site. The DOT also has to reciprocate financially to make up for the loss of the bridge. In Mr. Westmoreland's view, what they have proposed is severely inadequate for something of this magnitude.

Mr. Westmoreland stated that the Federal law requires a Section 106 review. Part of the process is that they have to look at all the alternatives including keeping what's there and repairing it. If that turns out to be the most expensive option, but it's viable, it has to be done. They cannot just take the bridge down because it less expensive and easier to build a new bridge. They must prove that it's not viable.

Commissioner Yost asked Mr. Westmoreland about collaborative participation from the Second Taxing District with TTD. Mr. Westmoreland stated their Charter very specifically limits them to taking actions that directly affect the electric operations, water operations or the real estate that they own. Because of this, Mr. Westmoreland is trying assist through the historical arena.

The Historical Commission is putting together a letter to be placed into public comment stating everything, including that the financial relief is inadequate, items that are not liked in the report and the fact that they feel the DOT is not following the law.

Ms. Mineo asked if they could use Veteran's Park instead of the back area of Liberty Square for the staging area. Mr. Westmoreland stated that there is a law which prohibits the use of parklands for a staging area.

Commissioner Goldstein asked the Commission to move ahead and discuss the planning of the forum.

Commissioner Yost stated that he felt there was not enough time, skills or knowledge, but would like to at least see the Commission write a position paper and conduct an online survey of the ratepayers for their feedback on the subject. As far as doing a full forum, he doesn't know if the results would be any different from conducting an online survey supporting the position paper. After completion of the position paper, submit it to all the media avenues, as well as the public comment on November 17th.

Commissioner Brown would like to see a public forum held. He feels there would be a more robust dialogue face-to-face than through email or a survey.

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Further discussion took place as to what the Commission should do. The decision was to do the forum, as well as an online survey prior to the forum.

A date was set to hold the forum on Saturday, November 12, 2016 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at a venue to be determined. The media should be present at the forum.

Important Dates

- October 17th – Kickoff survey or sooner if complete
- November 4th – Deadline for survey
- November 16th – Position Paper must be complete

Commissioner Goldstein will be the point person between TTD/Jumar. The Commissioners, over the next couple of days, will each work on creating survey questions that are multiple choice on the following subjects:

- What kind of bridge
- How to either repair or make permanent or replace
- Marine issues
- Impact on businesses in the area
- Costs associated with project
- Importance of up river usage
- Properties being taken by eminent domain
- Power lines being moved
- Railroad commuters
- Environmental issues
- Historical issues

Once the questions have been written, they will be handed off to Jumar to upload for the online survey.

Forum

- Brief summary/presentation of current situation
- Speakers
- Q&A Session
- Survey Results

Contact will be made with St. Thomas and Marvin School to see if they are available to hold the forum.

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ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COMMISSIONER BROWN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Tenney
Executive Assistant
Third Taxing District