

NEWINGTON TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION

Public Information Meeting Minutes

June 6, 2016

I. PRESENTATION OF ALUMNI ROAD TRAFFIC SIGNAL PLAN

Chairman Aieta: We have invited the public so that we can get input from you and we know what direction we are going, and try to answer any concerns, answer your questions. Normally in a public hearing we have strict rules that we are not following tonight. We are going to try to answer your questions if you have questions, immediately. We would like to try to keep the comments to about three minutes, try not to repeat yourself when you are coming up so we can get as much information as possible. I'm going to turn it over to the subcommittee, Commissioner Sobieski and Commissioner Pane. I'll turn it over to Commissioner Pane to begin the presentation, and then Commissioner Sobieski.

Commissioner Pane: I want to thank the Chairman for forming this subcommittee, but a special thanks to Stanley Sobieski. He's worked very hard on this. I just want to emphasize that our main goal on this was truly safety, safety, safety. We are very concerned about somebody getting killed at that intersection. It's been a problem for a long time in the town, I know it has been looked at before. One of the other goals was, that Stanley and I talked about, was that we wanted to make sure that whatever plan we came up with did not take anybody's property, and also added buffers and other safety items and concerns where possible. I remember when my older son when to school at the high school twenty years ago, we told him not to exit from Alumni Road and so this problem has been an on-going problem for a long time, and we care about what the residents think. I know that some of you think that we had some earlier meetings with just a handful of people, and that is true, we did, and the reason we did that was just to get a feel with a few people first, and then our intention was to have this meeting here. At this time, I will turn it over to Stanley to make the presentation. Thank you.

Commissioner Sobieski: First of all, I want to give you a little bit of history on what became our roadways today. Back after World War II, after President Eisenhower was sworn into office, he created what was called the (inaudible) Administration to establish an interstate highway system similar to what the German Autobahn was after World War II because he had seen it and was very impressed with it. Basically, I-91 and I-84 in Hartford for instance could go right into the center of Hartford, but they created a kind of belt loop system around the major cities throughout the United States. I-291 which is the one of particular interest to us was started and proposed from Rocky Hill, through Newington, went out through Farmington where the stacks are now, a bunch of roads and bridges not being used, through Reservoir 6 in West Hartford, through Bloomfield, back into Windsor and up to 91. So that is the background there. The background of Route 175, basically there were three major widening projects after I-291 was cancelled and it was widened to what it is today, which is four lanes.

The volume of traffic between Route 9 and Route 15 has increased exponentially. The original plan called for the widening of Route 175 which is from the New Britain town line, the ramp from Route 9 all the way up to Route 15. The intersections were all controlled by signalization and most of the intersections on Route 175 were either a D or a D minus. Recently there was a big project at the intersection of Route 173, Willard Avenue and 175 which brought that intersection up to a C.

The other part that is very important is that this Route is under the control of the Department of Transportation, the town doesn't own it. According to the newspapers, this is the most dangerous intersection in the Town of Newington. To give you an idea of where our proposal came from, the proposed idea used some of the original DOT design as well as a couple of

thoughts from the traffic manager that the town hired to look at, and also to change the pedestrian signal location.

I approached the Mayor shortly after the elections and I showed him my ideas and I suggested to him that we would like to have the Town Council research this. We had a meeting with the Mayor, myself, the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader, and it was put on the agenda, but got sidetracked for some reason.

The driving force behind this is safety. It's not a question of anything else, just safety. If you have an intersection that is barely functional at the present time, and if you have additional traffic, we have, approaching this intersection according to the Department of Transportation figures, between Fenn Road and Maple Hill Avenue, there are 34,500 cars. That is both cars, trucks, tractor trailers, at the present time there are 7,200 vehicles that go down Maple Hill Avenue. That is pretty substantial. From Maple Hill Avenue down to Willard Avenue, we have 20,600 cars. These figures are supplied by the Department of Transportation, they are on line if you want to look at them.

To give you some background, the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation counts the roads every three years throughout the state, so as you can see, the numbers are there. This is the realignment as proposed by the Department of Transportation. As you can see, we are looking to realign Maple Hill Avenue behind the four houses up to where Alumni Road is right now. That will have a fully activated signal, to control the traffic at Alumni Road and Maple Hill Avenue. This part of Maple Hill Avenue will become a cul-de-sac which will serve the four or five houses that are there right now.

There is a DOT project that is in the final design stages where they are going to be widening Route 175 from the Amtrak bridge to Alumni Road. They are putting in a left turn lane into Alumni Road. This project was approved about two years ago, so it is now in the design stage.

Now the idea here was not to take any private property. The people in this area have suffered enough with the widening of the road, the high volumes of traffic, and in general it's not (inaudible.) If I could wave the magic wand and make the traffic disappear I would, but I can't do that, so look at the next best thing. By opening Alumni Road up, it would take about 3,000 cars from Maple Hill Avenue down to Willard Avenue off, and sent around the other way. It would then also take about 3,000 vehicles from in front of the high school which then make a right turn and go up Cedar Street, by using Alumni Road. This would give the high school a break for additional traffic, would give the residents additional breaks from traffic, and would be able to get in and out of their property.

This is the aerial view of the area. You can see where Alumni Road is, off on the left hand side, see the intersection, the existing Maple Hill Avenue, and Old Farms. Now, the other part of this project is to cap off, dead end the westerly end of Old Farms, making it accessible only to fire, police and emergency vehicles. Then you take the signal at Vincent Drive, dog leg it, and put the second part at the eastern junction of Old Farms Drive, which will allow the people to safely exit Old Farms. It will not cause any more stacking of traffic in that area. You would again not be taking any property and you would ease the flow of traffic.

The other issue here is to put sidewalks between Vincent Drive and the east junction of Old Farms. Those sidewalks would be maintained by the Town of Newington as well as putting in a fifty foot walk, or a seventy-five foot walk to the old location of Old Farms and Alumni. The newly relocated Maple Hill Avenue will have sidewalks, again maintained by the Town of Newington, so they would not be a burden on the residents.

The ideal thing would be to try to get sidewalks put all the way down Alumni Road, as far as where the state reconstructs it. That would be a big plus to us, and we would be looking for state or federal funds to try to push the sidewalks forward.

The other issue that I want to stress here is that I did take a part of the traffic engineer's report that had originally been made out and he had (inaudible) up Alumni where the parking lot is for the high school, he had suggested to realign it around the back part. So what that would do in effect would basically stop the speeding of going straight through. We are not touching any private property, we are not taking any wetlands, by doing that, what you are doing is creating a loop around the parking for the high school football field, we would have

speed bumps to slow the traffic down, which are illegal except at a stop sign. Once this road is open it would alleviate a lot of the traffic congestion in that area, and should bring this intersection back up to a C. That's pretty much it. All of the sidewalks will be constructed and maintained by the Town, so no one will be paying for these sidewalks. It would increase the sight line restrictions, give better sight lines for people getting out of their driveways on Cedar Street. Another part of the issue would be to request the state to install guard rails on 175 Northbound which would be westbound actually if you are driving so if someone does lose control a car doesn't go up a bank and flip over. As far as the other areas, in back of those houses, those four houses on Maple Hill Avenue, we are going to be trying to get some type of protection in there to give those people some kind of privacy.

Commissioner Pane has suggested a berm, or arborvitae, some type of planting. I don't want to have anybody hurt by this. I don't want anyone to feel that they are being slighted here. We are trying to make this thing work. I don't want to see somebody get killed out there. Saving a life is more important than someone's thing, I don't want this realigned. There has been a lot of mis-communication on Facebook, I want to make this perfectly clear. This was started by the TPZ, not the DOT as you heard on Facebook. And again, safety is the main thing here, nothing else.

The money would be 80/20, 80% federal, 20% state and that is due to the classification of the state road. All of the roads in the Town of Newington and the State of Connecticut are public roads and are classified. Route 175 happens to be classified as a minor (inaudible) and Maple Hill Avenue is classified as a collector. So that determines what the percentage of the road is funded. That's about it I think.

Commissioner Pane: I just wanted to touch on a couple of things. The cul-de-sac at the end of Maple Hill we would try to make as small as possible so that it won't impact the residents at that end. As Stanley said, behind the four houses, on the new alignment, I would recommend a fence, a berm, and arborvitae. I know that there is some commercial property that is close by, but if someday that became developed, we would demand buffering on that property too to protect the residents just like we always do, when a project comes in and it's next to a residential property, we'd always try to protect the residential property with buffering. There are a couple of spots on Cedar Street where we had, across from Vincent where a car ended up in the back yard, we're going to recommend some wood barriers there, guard rails in a couple of other spots, and possibly some other arborvitae in a few other spots. If there is a spot where it is possible that the lights are going to be reflected in a house on the new Maple Hill, we're not going to let two arborvitae kill this project. If resident feels that they need a little better buffering, then we will put in some extra arborvitae. That cover it right now, I'll turn this over to the Chairman.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (speakers limited to three minutes.)

Chairman Aieta: We have a sign up sheet, and I will have the secretary read the names. When you get to the podium, state your name and address please for the record, and try to keep your remarks to three minutes.

Commissioner Sobieski: We are going to look very seriously at things that you might have to say. This is not a done deal by any means, we want to hear what you have to say, if there is something that I have overlooked, something Commissioner Pane has overlooked, we want to have your input. Again, please remember one thing, the sole driving purpose is safety. I don't want to pick up the paper and see somebody that I know, or one of my neighbors or your neighbors get killed out there. We're looking to get the best of both worlds and get this resolved.

Chairman Aieta: When we go through the list, if you didn't sign up, we will also ask if anybody else would like to speak so everybody will have an opportunity. Like I said before, if there are questions, that we can answer immediately, we will.

Christopher McKinnon, 195 Williamstown Court: Thank you very much for holding this public session. I would like to thank the town Plan and Zoning Commission for holding this public meeting and for the opportunity to speak in front of you today. I'm here to voice my objection to this plan. I understand and completely agree that the traffic safety measures should be implemented at the intersection of Alumni Road and Cedar Street, especially for motorists that are attempting to make that left hand turn. However I don't think installing a traffic signal is the best solution for this. My fear is that if the Commission approves the plan then at a later time, and I think sooner than later, Alumni Road would be opened for thru traffic from Willard Avenue to Cedar Street.

While there is no national data base on vehicles versus runners and joggers, according to the CDC, over four thousand pedestrians died from crash related injuries each year in the United States. Thousands more are injured. Alumni Road is one of the very few roads in Newington which is closed to through traffic. The Newington track is conveniently located near Alumni Road which is great for (inaudible) and safe communities. At least four times a week my wife and I, we like to jog, and we job past the local track and proceed to run on Alumni Road because it contains a very limited traffic flow. It's the one area and the one road in the town that we actually feel safe running on.

As I run on Alumni Road I see other joggers, I see people walking their dogs, as well as coaches from the ice skating rink practicing their skating routines. We all know that we are safer on Alumni Road than any other road in the town.

If the Commission approves this plan, and allows Alumni Road to be open to through traffic this could result in the possibility of me, my wife, or any other resident in the town being struck by a vehicle, just as Sonia Atkins, Sharon Craig, and Walter Arnett were. On February 28, 2015 Sonia Atkins was hit by a car at the intersection of Willard Avenue and Robbins Avenue and tragically died of injuries she sustained in the accident. On September 15, 2015 Sharon Craig was killed after being struck by a car on Willard Avenue after attending to a lost dog. Also on February 25th of this year, Walter Arnett was struck by a vehicle at the intersection of Cedar Street and Mill Street Extension. On March 12th, he passed away as a result of the injuries. These accidents did not happen in a far away land, they happened right here in Newington. That shows that two of them were on Willard Avenue, and one on Cedar Street. Both of these roads connect directly to Alumni Road. I respectfully request that the Town Plan and Zoning Commission not approve this traffic signal plan and keep Alumni Road closed to through traffic for the safety of all citizens. As a solution, I recommend that the town prohibit making a left hand turn from Alumni Road onto Cedar Street which will prevent future accidents. Thank you for your time.

Commissioner Pane: I'd like to try to answer a couple of your questions. First of all, the Town Planning and Zoning hopefully wants to endorse something and send it up to the Council. It will be the responsibility of the Town Council to hold public hearings and come up with a resolution of how to solve this problem. The problem has been going on for a long, long time. We've got two previous Police Chiefs who have said, on the record, that this is extremely dangerous. We've had over 250 accidents and out of that, 35 or so were serious injuries. So, you know, if you look back in the records here, if the town doesn't address this problem, the town could possibly be liable here. I understand your concerns, and I will look into that. We also, we suggested on this plan to move the parking lot on Alumni for the children, for the sports closer to the fields and move the road to the other side because we felt we did not want people crossing the street there, so that is one of the plans, along with some stop bars there for control, and hopefully if the sidewalk is coming in, maybe there is enough room on the shoulder so that we can create a better walking/bike path along there.

Commissioner Sobieski: What is happening along most roads, that road is about thirty feet wide, if they were to put shoulder lines down, you would have a six foot shoulder on the side to jog in. I understand your concern about traffic, but you can't control how someone is driving their vehicle. You can't control it on Williamstown Court either. I understand your

concern, and we are going to look at that if it's possible, to have the town paint shoulder lines down there on that particular road. We can only make it as safe as the person driving that road, and the person walking that road.

Gary Lee, 381 Cedar Street: I think you addressed most of all of the things that I was writing but I want to ask a couple of questions. One is regarding the light at Old Farms Drive which you are proposing to put in, and the light at Vincent. When they added the light at Vincent it made it possible for us to get out of our driveway, although this morning, I work over in Cromwell at an exercise place, and it took me almost ten minutes just to get out of my driveway. This was about twenty past eight. If you are going to have a light at Old Farms and a light at Vincent, they are going to be allowing us to get out of our driveway, or would there be so much traffic that we can't even get in, so we would have to go down and around. That was one of the questions. Another one was addressed when you said the town was going to take care of the sidewalks. I had a triple by-pass, and I have been told not to shovel snow. If you have ever tried to shovel two lanes of ice, and my next door neighbor Maureen is here, and her house was run into by a person that left Foreplay, and I realize that you have no control over peoples drinking and all of that, but when they hit her house, they knocked it off the foundation. It's an older house and it was on a stone foundation. We have had vehicles come through our yard sideways. So when you are talking about a retaining fence, is this going to keep any problems from vehicles from coming through or going over it. The other thing is, we were thinking about the wintertime when they are plowing. Maureen has this plastic fence that they put in, and the neighbors beyond them had a fence put in too, and their fence has been replaced by the State, I believe twice, at least once anyway. Maureen has panels there that have been damaged. The speed that they have to maintain when they plow, and they throw the snow, it has ruined some of her fencing too. We had the snow and ice and pieces of tar, if you will, from the road, up as far as the Chinese maple, which is probably a good twenty-five, thirty feet from the street, pieces have come up. Now a person walking on that side of the road, you have to be very cautious of that type of thing. Cedar Street is not a pedestrian friendly street. Thank you very much for this, and I don't envy you folks one bit. It is a horrendous street. I have lived here since July of 1962 and I have seen a lot of things happen on Cedar. When we first moved in we had farms across the street, we had pheasants in the yard, was wonderful. It's a pretty dangerous place today. Thank you very much for your time.

Commissioner Sobieski: Just to address your concerns, snow removal first. The snow coming off of the plow, what you need to do is to call the Department of Transportation on Goff Road, ask for Adam Bloom, report it. Trucks should not be throwing snow that far up. That should be a maintenance issue, you need to report that to them. As far as the signal, the signals are trip signals basically. What that means is that there is a trip in the road, and when your car goes over that, it causes the signal to trip. It will help you, once these signals are tripped, because it will block traffic from either direction, it will stop traffic at Old Farms and at Vincent. That will give you a little way to get in and out. Reducing the amount of traffic by 2500, 3000 cars will probably help also. Unfortunately, the road is undersize for the amount of traffic. There is nothing you can do about that. As I said earlier, if there was some way of removing that traffic, I would be all for it. Unfortunately it is a cut through because I291 was not built, and therefore the town is paying the price. Again, when I291 was shot down people said, well, that's okay, don't worry about it, well, we do worry about it now. With regard to, as the gentleman talked about earlier, the people who got hit, it's an issue of speed control out there which is a town issue, the police department has to enforce that. They are speeding throughout the town. I don't care what street you are on, it's a never ending process in all cities and towns. How they are going to do it, I don't know. I hope I answered your questions. Thank you.

Maureen Cistare, 55 Burdon Lane: I've been out in the back yard, and have had snow hit the kitchen window, I've had panels on my fence destroyed, and my concern is for the people on

the sidewalk. If they are damaging my property with the plow, I don't know how safe it is going to be for people walking. I talked to somebody in the state about getting a barrier, but nothing happened.

Commissioner Sobieski: As I said earlier, you need to get a hold of a supervisor.....

Maureen Cistare: I have.

Commissioner Sobieski: Then the next step is to get a hold of the town, and let the town pursue it. I know it's a state road, but if there is any damage, they should be replacing it. As far as the sidewalks go, when you are pushing four lanes in snow in each direction, you have no where to put that, so that is why the town the going through and maintaining those sidewalks. Don't not call because it is summer. Make them aware of it before the snow. They will be putting the lists together, talking to the drivers so make them aware of that as soon as possible, because if he is causing damage, he is pushing that snow too fast.

Commissioner Pane: I just wanted to add, the reason that we proposed sidewalks from Vincent up Old Farms east is because we felt that the people in the Vincent Drive area and that area, there are no means for them to get to the center of town, so we proposed that sidewalk so that when they got to Old Farms there, there will be a light so that they can cross the road and walk down the sidewalk that is on the other side of Cedar. There are sidewalks on Cedar, they are just missing in a couple of areas there and we felt that it was extremely important to have those residents that are in that area be able to get out to the center.

Shaheena Shan, 39 Maple Hill Avenue: We are one of the four houses behind which the road will be built, and looking at, and we pass through that road every day, two or three times, it looks like they are going to create another road in about a 500 feet area, and I think, I am concerned because there is a high school nearby, and we also have the residents safety, and it looks to me that they are going to create a bottleneck in a different place on the road instead of the place where we have. The other thing is, will there be outside consulting agencies consulted about the feasibility of this project, in the long run, because what is this project doesn't work, and tomorrow we have to face another road because we these three, Maple Hill, Old Farms, Cedar Street, how all these residents will come out when they have to go in the opposite direction, so I think somebody has to, I think most of the residents, when they go through that area, it's only about a 500 feet area, but we have Dunkin Donuts, we have a restaurant, we have a gas station, and we have two or three streets, and you are creating another street so I am greatly concerned, and I think we should get the consulting agencies also to see if this project is really going to work or is it just going to create another road. The privacy of the houses, I think we really are concerned about the privacy and I know some of the houses are for sale just because of the decision, and I am also looking into it because I have lived there for twelve years, and I moved up to my fellowship here and I like the serenity that this town offers, and I know there is increasing traffic but this town has much to offer, but I think the privacy of the residents is very important, and I think the safety of the residents is also, but it looks like this project, we have not looked into all of the options. I would ask the town that they have to look into all of the options, and I think many residents of Maple Hill Avenue were aware of this project this is going on, so that is what I have to say. Thank you.

Commissioner Pane: Just to address a few of your comments. We're very concerned, we do want to make sure that the four houses there are protected, and that is why we proposed the fence, the berm, and arborvitae there. On the other side, on the existing Maple Hill Avenue that is going to be a cul-de-sac, so you are, in your front yard, you are barely going to have any traffic, and then across the street at Old Farms, that's going to be gated off, so there will be only one light across from Alumni. We did look into other options, there were some options about a road going from Alumni all the way down to Fenn Road, but those are

hundred million dollar projects, and there is no way that the State or the Town were going to be able get that completed. We wanted to be able to address something right away, because if you try to exit out of Alumni Road and you take a left hand turn, you are holding your life in your hands. We don't want somebody from this town, or somebody from out of town get killed there. We have been extremely lucky, and they key to this plan was the gate at Old Farms. When we met with Lt. Morgan and the Fire Marshal, Rick Schroeder, they agreed that a gate at Old Farms would allow emergency vehicles into that development for ambulance, police and fire and it was absolutely necessary to be able to provide a gate there because that is a large development, and we want to make sure that the houses are protected. I hope that answers a few of your questions and I appreciate your comments.

Christopher McKinnon: I'm sorry to interrupt, but you mentioned when you take a left hand turn you take you life in your hands, and I don't think any of the Commissioners answered my last question which is why don't we just put a sign up that says No Left Turn.

Commissioner Sobieski: I'd like to finish answering the lady's questions. We looked at other options as Commissioner Pane had said. A bridge across would never be built because we cannot destroy wetlands, so that's out. As far as somebody put on Facebook, just go through and take private property and take it off the tax roles, that's not going to fly because the State is not going to allow you do to that. So again, that road is under the control of the State of Connecticut, so we are trying to come up with a workable plan, and their engineering came up with this, not us. This plan has been on the table for about twenty some odd years, all we have done is tweak it a little bit, make sure that we don't lose any personal homes in that area, and we want try to make it safer for the residents, and that is our concern. I understand that everybody can say, well don't take this and don't take that out there, but you have to realize that we have veterans that are using that hospital that are older people, and they want to make a left turn out of there. So, I understand, but there is no simple solution.

Chris Deshart: I thought I would start off by thanking everyone who came out tonight. I attended a meeting a few months ago, and the attendance was sparse at the TPZ meeting, and I'm very glad to see the people here tonight. Now that I have watched the project for about a year now, reading the minutes, I do have a few comments on what I have heard so far. Regarding the issue, and I know that the Town of Newington would maintain them, but the berm, who is going to maintain these items. As some of the residents said, they don't last forever, they would have to be replaced or repaired, all things that would be considered by the homeowner. I understand that 250 accidents is a large number, 250 accidents over a ten year period is 25 accidents a year, and I know it could be someone life, but at the same time, we have 35,000 cars that are on the road daily, so I'm just thinking with that amount of traffic, how does that accident rate compare with other roads with similar traffic, is it high, is it less? How does it compare to other major roads in Newington and across the state. We will reduce traffic by about 3,000 vehicles but again, we also know that traffic is growing. How long will we have that benefit? The 3,000 that would be saved by reducing traffic on Cedar Street, how long, is that just a year, and then we will be back up to the 35,000 daily? A few other things, looking at the 2020 Plan, eight to fifteen percent of the land in Newington is vacant, again, if this project goes through will that impact that. I know there is talk about being creative to find commercial development, but again, by opening that up, it will bring it closer to the neighborhood. Lastly I know, looked at the 2020 Plan and it says reconsider Alumni Road and opening it up to realignment, again, not a mandate for consideration.

Commissioner Sobieski: First of all, if you look at the ADT volumes they have increased throughout the State of Connecticut. We're looking at a project that is going to working on the viaduct through Hartford, people are going to be looking for a way around it. You can't control where people go, no matter what you want to say or do. I think taking 3500 cars off of there and taking them down Alumni is going to alleviate the movement and make that workable, and also in front of the high school. It will give the residents in that area an

opportunity to get their quality of life back to normal. You also said we would be taking land out of the open space, that was never figured in. That has always been here as a proposed roadway. Now as far as the, again, you can't predict where traffic is going to go. As far as where it comes out on Willard Avenue, it's not going to go down Fisk, it's not going to go down Harding, it's not going to go anywhere else there, but to continue down Willard Avenue. It's going to eliminate some of the traffic in front of the high school. Again, the safety issue will improve in front of the high school.

Commissioner Pane: This plan is not trying to address the congestion on Cedar Street. We know that it is congested. Our main concern was finding a safe means of egress from Alumni Road that works for the residents, the best it can be. We know that this is not going to be a perfect situation here, we're dealing with existing roads, an existing situation. This is not going to be a brand new project here. We know that it's not going to be a perfect situation, but we just want to make sure that it is the best possible so that when we present it to the Town Council they have something to go by.

Sam Capra, 175 Old Farm Drive: The only thing I want to say is that I want to thank you for your volunteerism, it is appreciated. I think that a light at Alumni in addition to what is there now might alleviate some of the problems.

Peter Arbour, 133 Tremont Street: I was the town engineer when the new location relocating Maple Hill Avenue. I think a solution, it's not the perfect solution as was noted, but I think it probably would be about the best you can come up with for a very difficult situation. My question is, when it comes down to the construction, I think the Commission, before they proceed with this should give it some thought now, on what would be the town's participation. For example, construction this section of Maple Hill Avenue, and then when you get down to Alumni Road it's my personal opinion that the section from Cedar Street down to where the athletic fields are should be reconstructed if you are going to bring truck traffic through, and then the sections from across the fields to the old Fafnir property I believe that road may need reconstruction too. I think there could be some good size dollar amounts related to this project, and I just wanted to see what the town's exposure could be and I think you should think now about the responsibility down the road.

Commissioner Sobieski: Obviously with the reconstruction of Maple Hill Avenue and Alumni and turn that over to the town once it is completed, we are hoping to see if we can get some additional money, Mr. Brecher or someone could talk to the State to see if we could get any additional money to do that section. You are right, there is a portion that is falling apart, that may very well be taken care of by the MDC if they move Alumni Road, because they would have to pave that section, so there is problem with Alumni Road that it has been allowed to deteriorate but the major of this is covered by state and federal dollars. So there shouldn't be any out of pocket expenses at that point. We are, again, it's the best solution we could come up with at the present time with the numbers that we have to deal with.

Sue Goldman, 23 Burdon Lane: I am in support of sidewalks on Cedar Street. My family lives off of Vincent Drive and the access to town facilities would be invaluable. Access to the library and the offerings of parks and rec, and all of the businesses in town would now be accessible by walking or by bicycles. Now it just is not safe. A bus would no longer need to come into the neighborhood for the high school kids because they would be able to walk to high school, so you would save some money there. As far as, we are landlocked where we are. It is not safe for our kids, and as far as safety on Cedar Street, if people would even stop at the light on Vincent Drive we would be safer. Thank you for considering this proposal, I hope it goes through.

Commissioner Sobieski: Just to respond, the speed in this town is like I said earlier, all 169 towns and cities there is a huge problem. Again, this is a police department problem.

Bill DeMaio, 22 Burdon Lane: Good evening everyone. I am in total support and my family and probably between 80 and 100 families in the Cinnamon Road, Burdon Lane, Vincent Drive area are supporting. Often when you have change like this, often only the negatives come out because the people who are happy with what you are doing, they are not here because they are simply happy that you are doing it. I want to commend Domenic and the whole TPZ, and Stan for moving this forward.

As far as safety goes, it's a no brainer, it's a genius idea. Having the State and Federal government pay for this and not cost the tax dollars and still make it safe for both residents, traffic, cars, and for the kids in our communities and people with disabilities, senior citizens and children. We still use Cedar Street, we walk on Cedar Street, we ride our bikes on Cedar Street, and it is inevitable that someone is going to get killed, but you can't stop it because we are totally landlocked in that neighborhood. In addition, we think that people from the high school that are using the track and football field and lacrosse and soccer will have a great opportunity to be able to get back into the community and make a connection. Having Old Farms Drive area be blocked off and having a cul-de-sac, that is unbelievable. That increases property values. On Maple Hill Avenue, a cul-de-sac at the end of that, that's is happy days. That increases property values. It increases property values for our Nutmeg Community. It gives us opportunities to walk into the center of town, the library, the senior center, it connects everything. If we haven't realized this yet, we have to look around and see what is happening across the country. Pedestrians and bike travel is the biggest thing going across the country. Look at West Hartford, New Britain, Berlin, Wethersfield, every one is starting to put pedestrian walk ways and pedestrian opportunities throughout the road. Some people agree and some disagree and they look a little funny, but we are going to get used to it, and we are the last town moving in that direction. I think you guys are doing something mind boggling, and it's fabulous what is going on.

As far as the saving of school buses as Sue brought up, that is a tremendous asset also where the high school late bus and the regular busses don't have to come in. There's plus savings there, over twenty years or thirty years, whatever you want to mark it out. So as far as people saying you are going to get hit by snow plowing, we will gladly in our neighborhood give up the seven, eight, ten days that it snows, and if it is snowing at the time that you are going to walk, you just don't do it, but we will take the other 360 days a year and be able to travel and walk safety.

As it stand now, people with disabilities, we have about four or five people, we have a lot of seniors also, and children, what we are doing is illegally cutting through the Grace Episcopal Church and as probably many of you know, they put up a fence to stop us, they threatened a law suit at one time, they put up, they took the path out, the asphalt path, and planted grass so nothing against that church, and I know that there is a change in feeling over there now, so not knocking them, but in the past, we are not legally able to get out of our neighborhood, so as walking on the streets of Maple Hill, Old Farms, Alumni Road, I'm very familiar with that, and as far as fitness and exercise, I think we probably have about thirteen miles of paths throughout the town and the parks and the school systems that we maintain already, and those are great jogging areas and walking paths which we strongly encourage. I don't think you are going to get anything, I don't think it is going to get more dangerous, it's going to get safer. So, with that, there are a whole bunch of reasons why, but I think one of the greatest things is getting the federal government and the state to pay for it, and to make something a little bit better. It's not the perfect answer like you said, it's not, we're not building from new, we are trying to make something bad at least become a little bit safer, and if you do it a little bit safer, you are going to help all of the residents of this community. It's a no brainer, thank you very much for pursuing this.

Michelle Tine, 7 Locust Drive: I do have one question. You are going to have a traffic signal at Alumni, you are going to have a traffic signal at Vincent, and you are going to have a traffic at Old Farm, is that correct?

Commissioner Sobieski: The east junction of Old Farms will be closed off.

Michelle Tine: So the one across from Maple Hill will be closed, and then the other end will have a traffic light.

Commissioner Sobieski: That's right, and they would be sequentially timed, so if one vehicle trips it on Vincent Drive and Old Farms, it stops the traffic and allows them to get in and out.

Michelle Tine: How will that impact the people going to work in the morning, because right now, as it stands when we are trying to take a left, going west on Cedar Street to Maple Hill, there are about four cars that can get over in the morning, and traffic is backed up unbelievably. So, and I'm just questioning, so there is going to be a light at Vincent and another light at Old Farms.

Commissioner Sobieski: The lights at Vincent and Old Farms would be all timed together so they trip, they stop, and they untrip they go forward, so you are not going to have stacking there. As far as the intersection that's designed, they can probably put an exclusive left turn lane in maybe, for allowing vehicles to make a left turn onto Cedar Street from Maple Hill, and Old Farms you can put what they call an advanced green signal to allow those vehicles more time to get out. Again, you have to realize one thing, by the time this gets done, every phase that you put in there takes time off of another phase somewhere else. I understand that it is difficult in the morning, but if we can reduce that by those 3,000 vehicles on Cedar Street, it will be a plus for everybody.

Michelle Tine: Will the green light continue to have a longer green light going that way?

Commissioner Sobieski: It would depend on what the final design is, the signal that would be done by the traffic engineers, when it gets to the final design.

Commissioner Pane: We're hoping here that we can come up with a plan here that the Commissioners are happy with after we hear plenty of input from you that we will make a presentation to the Town Council and will urge them to hire a traffic consultant to do the final details on it, and then present it to you guys at a public hearing. There may be some other tweaking of the plan.

Commissioner Sobieski: You also have to realize that there is an on-going construction project that will start at the end of this year or early next year on Route 175, the railroad bridge. That's already been approved and that is being designed. That is why we are trying to get this so we can tack this onto the back of that so there will be little disruption to the residents there. I'm more concerned about the quality of life and their safety than I am anything else at this point in time.

Gary Bolles, 28 Burdon Lane: Good evening. I full support the safety improvements of the Alumni Road intersection at Cedar Street. Documentation shows that this has been on the drawing board since 2002. Think back to September 11, 2001, if we knew that this tragedy would happen, is there anything that we would have done differently to prepare for it. Of course. We would have tried to prevent that horrible loss of innocent people. To a lesser degree, what should we be doing about the Alumni Road situation to prevent a serious accident and tragedy? We need to take measures now to correct a serious situation before a deadly accident takes the lives of innocent people. The Alumni Road improvements have been in the town's 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development adopted on June 9, 2010, effective June 30, 2010, as mentioned on page 46.

To quote, realign Maple Hill Avenue to align with Alumni Road to improve traffic flow and safety. This is why vacant land remains for this proposed alignment behind the four houses and between houses four and five on the west side of Maple Hill Avenue. The developer knew this when he built those houses and sold them. This should have been conveyed to the prospective buyers. We must also consider the safety measure before the construction of I84

though Hartford begins. Right now Cedar Street is the only east/west through street from the Berlin Turnpike to Route 9. The traffic on Cedar Street is horrendous now, what will it be when the I-84 construction begins. This traffic light and the realignment will be a huge improvement and a real time life saver. Without these improvements someone is going to lose their life, it's only a matter of time. I know it, you know it, and the citizens of Newington know this is a ticking time bomb. These improvements need to happen, and they are not going to hurt anybody. Thank you.

Hal Whitney, 31 Old Hatchery Lane: I just had a quick question, you expect that once this is done and Alumni Road is reopened, it's going to absorb 3500 vehicles a day, is that correct?

Commissioner Sobieski: Approximately.

Hal Whitney: To the best of my knowledge, there are no houses or residences right now along Alumni, but I notice on the zoning map that I looked at the other day, both on the east and west side of Alumni, just north of the Old Farms development and between that and where Memorial Road is, it's zoned, both sides are zoned for residential. I was wondering if you had given any thought to changing that because I don't know of anybody who wants to put a house on a road that is going to absorb 3500 vehicles a day. Thank you.

Commissioner Pane: I don't think that there is residential property there, but I could be wrong. We'll look into that.

Frank Wlodkowski, 170 Old Farm Drive: To open up Alumni Road, it's just going to be a raceway. Cedar Street used to be a nice street. I've lived here my whole life, and when you opened that up, of course, there is economic development, I'm sure it is in the back of the town's mind, on Alumni Road that is going to hurt the town. Right now we have two times of day when we have traffic, in the morning and in the evening, when everybody want to pass through our town. The rest of the time, it's quiet. You talk about quality of life, the people on Maple Hill Avenue, you make a cul-de-sac, you're going to say, it's safe in their front yards, but don't go in their back yard because now you are going to put trees, it's going to be loud, it's going to be noisy, it's going to be a pain. Now you are going to tell me that on Old Farm Drive you can only go out one way and you are going to sit behind waiting at a light to get out of our neighborhood. Opening up Alumni Road is a bad idea and the quality of life, I think there are alternatives to improving Cedar Street or the safety. Put up a light at Alumni Road and cutting across people's back yards that have open space right now, and Alumni Road for the Old Farm Drive residents across there is quiet, but there is going to be a raceway there. You are going to have more accidents and more problems.

Commissioner Pane: Just to answer a couple of your points. The land behind those four houses there is not open space. That is commercial land behind Maple Hill.

Frank Wlodkowski: That's fine, build on it, but 291 was going through, our land is still not being used, but Rocky Hill and Wethersfield, they built on it, nothing is every going though there again, but Newington has been a dumping ground for the state for a long time, Cedar Street, since they widened it to four lanes, they created a problem, we didn't have the problems that we have now. People who go from one end to the other to New Britain and out of town. Once that traffic is done two times a day we are quiet and peaceful. It's peaceful on Willard Avenue near Alumni Road. I can pull out of Alumni Road without a stop light onto Cedar Street right now.

Commissioner Pane: I want to thank you, you are right, we do have a tremendous amount of traffic on Cedar Street. As I was saying, the land behind the four houses is not open space, it is developable land. We're not here trying to get development, that is the farthest thing from our mind. We want to make sure that somebody doesn't get killed exiting out of Alumni

Road. Now you say that we could add an extra light there, and be done with it, well, then you would have two lights very close to each other and it just would not work. The DOT would not accept that. The other thing mentioned was the speeding traffic on Alumni. Stanley has proposed several traffic calming speed bumps, stop signs, and speed bumps there at the stop signs, so that would present the speeding on Alumni Road. I know this isn't perfect, and we aren't saying that this is the final plan. We'd like to tweak this and come up with something that works for everybody.

Commissioner Sobieski: Just so you know, every time you add a light, you are going to be stacking traffic up on Cedar Street. The more lights that you add, and you have to realize that these are not timed lights, they are trip lights, not like they are on the Berlin Turnpike where they are run by computer from DOT. They are trip lights. If you think a light is the solution, because they don't want it widened or whatever, so be it. We're trying to get some information, that is what we are looking for.

Frank Wlodkowski: I just don't want our town to be just another road, I don't want it to be convenient for everybody to pass through our town. These are alternatives for people who are going through town, not living in our town.

John Bachand, 56 Maple Hill Avenue: I just want to start off by saying I'm totally in support of this, yes, Alumni Road going to get a lot of traffic, but all that is there is an industrial road, it's the perfect place to put 6000 cars, take them off of Cedar and Willard and put them on that back road. I don't think there is going to be any more traffic on Maple Hill, I haven't seen any evidence of that at all. There is not reason for people to use Alumni to use Maple Hill, unless they are already planning on going on Maple Hill to begin with. I want to thank Commissioner Sobieski, he did an excellent presentation. One thing that I would suggest that there could have been a handout, printout of a map showing this, so if we have another meeting, I hope we can get that. Glad you clarified also, first you said this was conceived by the TPZ, but then you clarified that the core of this plan was from DOT traffic engineers, the best and the brightest. I'm in the middle of this, I'm stuck in the middle, literally and physically. I have my neighbors here, good friends and neighbors, with the opposition and with the proponents. I physically am in the middle of it, my driveway comes right out in the middle of the intersection of the new and old Maple Hill. So I'm looking at it very objectively. I live there, I'm in the middle of it. I don't see any negatives, I haven't seen any negatives yet. A little bit maybe on some of the development fronts, and from speaking with the Planner, I see nothing that this proposal does to enhance development. In other words, there is no reason why Alumni can't be developed now. There are lots that are available. They can develop if they want, and even the one that is off of Cedar, that's a little bit more questionable, but as far as I can tell, if they can get a driveway off of Cedar they can develop that just the same, so I don't see how this enhances development.

There seems to be a little bit of misguidance here. I think we're so used to, when we fill this room it's "us against them". It's not "us against them". This is not the Town against Big Brother, or Save Mill Pond, or Save Cedar Mountain. This is responsible, serious improvements on two major fronts, traffic and safety. We're talking 6,000 cars a day taking off a major artery. No one has brought up when they start the construction of I84, how much traffic is going to be coming to Newington. We need every ounce of help we can get to alleviate a little bit of traffic on Cedar Street. Again, when people start seeing a group develop on Facebook, our tendency now from experience is that we want to join in, and join the fight, but I think we are a little bit misguided. This is not the Town against this Commission, in my opinion that is not right.

As far as joggers on Alumni, I see the track team every season running on all of the major roads. They run on Maple Hill, they run on Willard Avenue, they run on the sidewalks. Maybe we could put a sidewalk down Alumni and that will make things a little safer. Alumni is going to be very busy, so you are going to have to coordinate that parking lot. I think what I have heard about moving the parking lot to the east, closer to the field so that there is no

crossing of the road there that seems like a no brainer. They do have a part of the high school field there that has some available space, and I think we could bring the road around it to the west.

Another thing we talked about, the convenience to the town residents, the biggest threat is to out-of-towners who are coming to use the venues, the sports venue, the skating rink and the VA. They are not familiar with that intersection, or how dangerous it could be. We are all pretty familiar with it, but that is the biggest risk right there to them, in my opinion. You talked about the lights at Vincent and Old Farm. I believe you referred to them as a jog, or a dog leg, in other words, there is only one light on one side, and one light on the other, so you couldn't get stopped if you were going one way or the other at those intersections because there is only going to be a light on one side and they will work together.

As far as the woman who brought up that the oncoming traffic has a longer green, that has been a pet peeve of mine for a long time, that is a head-on collision waiting to happen, and most people are not familiar with that. There are very few of those in the state, I know of only one other one in West Hartford, so I hope we can eliminate that. It should be eliminated regardless of what happens. I'm in support, I sympathize with some of the people, again, they are my neighbors and friends who are opposed to it, but I think they might be misguided and maybe misinformed so hopefully more of these meetings will help to straighten it out. Thank you.

Thomas Elwood, 67 Saddle Hill Road: I've been dealing with Cedar Street, 175 in one form or another since about 1983. I was one of the original owners of property on the north side of Cedar Street. I asked for variances from this board so that the Town could make our lots undersized and could widen the road. That was quickly followed by additional sidewalks on the north side of Cedar Street, which we all said no, so it was put on the south side of the street, room was put in for a shelf so that you could put a sidewalk down there. I rise to support the sidewalk from Vincent Drive to east Old Farms. I figured that those people have to have some egress and they have been trying for years to do that.

When the Town Manager, Mr. Chapman broached the subject of taking two houses on Saddle Hill Road and putting a road in opposite Vincent Drive, I was definitely against that. Same thing with two houses on Old Farms Drive when they wanted to take that with the original spur of Maple Hill and allow Arrowhead to empty out onto Alumni Road. That didn't make any sense, because the sidewalks that they were going to put in there at that time would not have gone to the high school like they were proposing, they would have ended at Oxford Drive. There was no sense in that. Then last year we had the incident where the traffic engineer came in here and tried to tell us that the small stretch between Maple Hill and Alumni Road would allow cars to exit Alumni and then make turns onto Old Farms and onto Maple Hill. It wasn't going to work. I went around the neighborhood, there are 167 some odd houses, and I talked to my neighbors, and we had quite a turnout here. Kind of disappointed that there aren't more here because I have talked to a lot of people, I rise in support of this proposal. I want to thank Commissioner Pane and Commissioner Sobieski for the work on this. They are men of honor. They told me way back when, during the winter when they first called and said, hey, this is what we are looking at. I said, make sure that everybody's mail box has a flyer in it, and they did that because last year when the first proposal came out, everybody was in the dark. It was social media that kind of spurred, but I want to thank those two gentlemen, and to finish up, this makes a lot of common sense. Closing off Old Farms Drive, and then putting that light on a dog leg on the other side, timed with Vincent Drive makes an awful lot of sense. It's not going to take anyone's property, that's the main thing. Every time the town has come to us before, it's involved some taking of property, and it just won't happen this time. The sidewalk from Vincent Drive, everybody should be happy with that, and the fact that the Town is saying that they are going to maintain the sidewalks and put arborvitae or whatever in there, I have the same arborvitae that was planted thirty years ago when they widened the street, and it's growing very nicely. It does last if it is taken care of, which we do. So again, I'm in favor of this proposal, thank you.

Mr. Leiner, 176 Old Farms Drive: I learned a few things tonight. Can someone tell me where "Old Farms Road" is? I don't have a clue. I've lived on the street for fifty-two years, on Old Farms Drive. Where did Old Farms Road come from? I learned a couple of other things tonight. I found out that they are going to close off Old Farms Drive at one end. Where did this come from? This is the first that I have heard of it. I never heard of a light at the other end. I wrote a lot of things here, but I guess I'm going to talk in circles. Bear with me, I'm not a public speaker. I was a firefighter in this town for twenty years in my younger days. I'm in my eighties now. I belonged to Company Two on Maple Hill. Our plan of attack for Old Farm Drive was Maple Hill. I'm really disappointed in the Fire Marshal saying that that is a safe intersection where the connector is going to go through. As a fire fighter, the first few minutes of a fire is crucial. Now what you want to do is put a street behind these houses, on the left side of Maple Hill. The first few minutes of a fire is very serious. Now what you are really asking Company #2 to do is go down Old Farms Drive. They have a problem with children running out into the street, so now you want them to slow down even slower so they can make a left hand turn on this connector. Maple Hill Connector. Come around a bend, and then you want them to come to a light, and then you are asking the fire truck, which is huge, in a thirty foot span to turn left, and I just found out, it's gated. How the hell is that going to open up? I'm confused on this gate. So anyway, bear with me, I'm going to read what I have written. I'm here to say I'm not in favor of realigning Maple Hill Avenue with Alumni Road. I believe what I am going to say is going to fall on deaf ears. I watch on TV all of your meetings, and I'm convinced your mind is made up that Maple Hill Extension is going to be done. I believe you are after the commercial property behind those four homes on Maple Hill. It was said at one of the meetings how nice it would be for the people to live on a cul-de-sac, that it would increase their property values. All the while, you are going to put a road in the back to decrease their property value, so what a balancing act. For the poor people, actually there is five houses, there is five because there is a space between the fourth and fifth house, to put a road in there. Good luck, because you aren't going to be able to have a barbeque in your backyard any more because if they put the commercial building back there, you are going to have trucks in your back yard. Before I found out about the gate on Old Farms Drive, I felt sorry for those people coming out of Alumni Road because they had to turn left, and cross, in a 130 foot span, four lanes of traffic to try to get into the right hand lane to turn right on Maple Hill. Now, do I feel sorry for people passing through my town? Hell, no. Do I care about the people who live in the Old Farm Drive area? You better believe I do because you know what you are going to do, you are going to reverse that now, and like I said, I didn't know about this gate that you are going to put in. You are going to make us reverse, take a right, cross four lanes of traffic to try to get onto this connector to try to go up Maple Hill Avenue. In 52 years I have traveled Maple Hill Avenue an awful lot. I own a business in East Berlin and every day, seven days a week I go there. Now all of a sudden, you are going to make me go a different way to satisfy that people that are passing through our town. Then I just found out tonight about a light. So I resent the fact that I have to turn right, cross four lanes of traffic to turn left on this connector and go down to Maple Hill Avenue. As you all know about the traffic between four and six o'clock at night. I don't have the luxury of jumping on Route 9, which I could from East Berlin and come home by East Cedar Street. I can't do that. So I have to wiggle my way out of East Berlin, up Church Street, Maple Hill and very nicely cross Cedar Street to get onto Old Farms. Now, what you want to me do is, I don't know, I haven't figured out a way, and I would like any one of you up there, one day, between four and six o'clock go from west to east on Cedar Street and try to make a left hand turn onto Old Farms Drive. Pretty impossible. You have people wanting to go into Dunkin Donuts, the gas station, Alumni Road. You can't get into the right hand lane, because all of those people coming through this town have gotten it figured it out, they stay in the right hand lane, and that lane goes all the way from Willard Avenue up to the connector because they know if they get in the left hand lane they are going to have to sit there and wait for everybody to make that left hand turn. I heard someone say a light could solve the problem. That's a band aid for now. Some one said put up a sign that says No Left Turn. To me, that sounds like a home run.

Like I said, I believe your mind is made up. I understand what you are saying, we don't own the road, like I said, and I've lived in this town 52 years and my wife, every time something happens she says, what is happening to my poor little Newington. When we moved there, all you old timers know what Cedar Street was. A beautiful two lane road, beautiful trees all over the place and then they came in and knocked it all down and they put a roadway in. I was kind of bitter. You know, this woman from Rocky Hill, one little lady stopped that road, right? I figured well, maybe a little old guy from Old Farms Drive could stop the Alumni Road connector, but I guess it's not going to happen. You know, John Bachand, I watch all of the meetings, and I admire this guy because he and Rose, they both get up and they speak like I would like to speak. I lost ten percent of my feelings for John tonight, but I'll still watch him on television because he does have a lot of great ideas and he is a lover of this town like most of us are, but I lost a little faith in him. Is there an answer? I don't think so. It is a state road, and I guess Connecticut has a lot of connecting state roads, and I guess they do control us. I do feel sorry for that woman who lives on Cedar Street, I don't think she lives on Cedar Street, but her back yard with that big nice plastic fence, it's forever being damaged. You are not going to tell a state driver, you can't get the cars to slow down, so you aren't going to get a state truck to slow down.

Commissioner Sobieski: The gate that you are referring to is going to be electronically controlled, so emergency and authorized vehicles can do in. So fire apparatus will be able to go in there. It's not going to be a dead end. We did take that into consideration. I've seen the town grow, I've seen the traffic grow, and again, part of our biggest problem here is back when I291 was cancelled. That would have taken the traffic from Route 91 to Route 9, so when something is stopped, somewhere else the traffic has to go. You also know how much traffic has increased in this town. I can remember Willard Avenue, there were cows from Holt's Dairy out there, and the speed limit was very reasonable, 25 to 30. Today. It's 35 to 40. You can't control what someone does on these roads. No matter how much you try, 24/7, 365, you still can't control the speed. I understand that there is a lot of misinformation, and we are taking everything that everyone says, we will look at it, and this is a recommendation to the Town Council. They are the ones who are going to say yes or not, and as far as the State of Connecticut is concerned, they are looking at safety also. Again, we can't control, and I agree with you, we have a lot of thru traffic going through town. It's an east/west connector. There is no way you are going to stop it. It's a public road, you can drive on it any time, day or night, 365 days a year.

Mr. Leiner: I don't understand why these people want to go to Hartford from New Britain via Cedar Street? Why wouldn't they stay.....?

Commissioner Sobieski: It's not so much Hartford to New Britain. I know that was on Facebook and that was erroneously put on there because people were saying the busway would take care of it, but this is the east/west connection for people coming off of 9, across to 15 south. They are not going to Hartford. Hartford has about 7500 cars a day taking Route 15 northbound into Hartford. The Berlin Turnpike is handling in excess of 30,000 per day, that road wasn't designed for that.

Mr. Leiner: I found that the lights from the base of Cedar Mountain to the connector on Route 9, there are nine light. Why would anyone want to go through all of those lights? Thank you for your time.

Betty Capparelli, 175 Old Farm Drive: I want to thank all of you for having this forum to hear the proposal of your ideas. I think you idea of sidewalks is ideal because we do have a lot of neighbors in our area that do walk, and you are taking you life in your hands. I do have a suggestion, and I know it's not a favorable one, but because the problem is with Alumni Road, I would think having a light at Alumni Road would solve a lot of problems. I know it's an extra light on Cedar Street, but we have a similar situation like that on New Britain Avenue

in Hartford, so as a result, we are talking about safety and speed. To me, that would help a great deal with safety and speed because people cannot go crazy when they drive on Cedar Street, and it would also be very cost efficient, you wouldn't have to do all of these other plans. I know that many years ago they talked about taking two homes on Old Farm Drive, and you would have to go out onto Alumni Road. At that time they said you have 200 homes at Old Farms Drive, you need to have two exits out of there. Now, putting your gate at one end of Old Farm Drive would take away one of our exits. Now you have explained about how it is a remote thing where emergency vehicles will be able to open it, I wasn't sure how that was that going to work. You explained that. Alumni Road is where there is a problem. Why couldn't you come down Alumni Road from the fields, and have a cut-off like in back of the gas station, in back of Dunkin Donuts, in back of the restaurant, back of any businesses that are there, and have it come out and align with that light at that company that used to be called Atlantic Tool. This way it would alleviate the problem of having to redo Maple Hill Avenue, have a gate, and so on and so forth. People would have to slow down, that is the problem, they are driving too fast. I thought that might be a good option. I don't know if you can do that, if that is state land or whatever, but I do appreciate you time, and thank you again.

Commissioner Sobieski: There is a project in the works now to replace the bridge over Amtrak. That is going to be putting a left turn lane into the existing Alumni Road is now. That's been approved, and it is in the design stage right now. So, in effect, that is going to be a problem. Secondly, where you proposed putting that is all private property, it's all taxable property. You would have to start taking part of the old lottery building, you would have to take the property where the old Crest Pontiac was, and you would have to take the property off the tax rolls. The idea of this was to take no property off the tax roles, so the town doesn't suffer. Now you also suggested putting another signal in like on New Britain Avenue in Hartford. The problem with signals, they are not designed to slow the traffic down. You can put up a stop sign, and if someone doesn't want to stop at that stop sign, they aren't going to. Put a signal in, I see it every day, people fly through signals. So again, the signals are not going to stop the traffic on Cedar Street. The more signals you put on, as I said earlier, you are going to increase traffic stacking time.

Mike Fox, 1901 Main Street: For the last ninety minutes or so, almost two hours, you have heard a lot of comments, most of them intelligent comments, however I have to agree with the young woman over here, I really think you should hire a traffic consultant and before you go any further, via this Commission or the Town Council should look into hiring a consultant and take all of the comments that you have gotten tonight, and recommendations from the traffic consultant, I think you will be able to do a great job. Congratulations to Commissioner Pane and Commissioner Sobieski on the hard work that you did.

Karen Dempsey, 224 Old Farm Drive: First of all, I have a question. Do any of you live on Maple Hill Avenue or the Old Farm Drive area? Would it affect you at all? I didn't think so.

Commissioner Serra: I do not live in the area, but I can tell you this, with my job, I drive over 200 miles a day, I am on Cedar Street, I have customers on Old Farm, I have customers on Maple Hill, I drive that area constantly, so I do know and I do drive it between.....

Karen Dempsey: I didn't ask you if you drove there, I asked if you live there.

Commissioner Serra: No I don't, but I.....

Karen Dempsey: So it's not going to affect your front yard or your back yard. Another thing, if this is all about safety, why would we put 6,000 vehicles next to a soccer field, a baseball field, a football field, I don't know, it just doesn't make sense. I don't care if you curve the road around the parking lot or anything, a few hundred cars versus 6,000 cars and you are talking

about safety, speed bumps or anything, it just doesn't make sense. As far as the sidewalks for Vincent Drive, the people have been fighting that for years, all of a sudden now you are going to do it, kind of like throwing the dog a bone. Make them happy so that you can get some people from Vincent Drive to approve of this idea. The only thing this is going to do is add more traffic. It's going to make it easier for people who don't live in Newington. People who live in West Hartford, it's a good old cut-through. When Cedar Street was a two lane road the people were told, if we make it four lanes, it will ease up the traffic, there will be less pollution, believe it or not, and the people fell for it. Let's not fall for this again. 6,000 cars on that road, it's ridiculous when it is meant for children, skating rink, I don't see where the safety comes in. Thank you.

Tony Amaral, 263 Old Farms Drive: I second that lady. I am afraid of walking on Route 175. (Unable to understand)

Kevin Vanderveer, 28 Hemlock St: I support taking this project for further consideration. As far as taking this project to the Council for further consideration, a lot of people said this is not a perfect solution, but there is a perfect solution, waive a magic wand and make all of the traffic go away, and no one would have to change anything. No one likes to change anything. There is a lot of concern about the community. Communities are not what they used to be. A long time ago you used to put a wall around your community and keep out the people you didn't want in there, we don't do that any more. I don't work in Newington, I live in Newington, I work in another town, and those "other people", that's who I am to somebody else. The fact is, everybody is just people, not "those people, the words "those people" have been applied to people with different religions, different faces, different backgrounds, and we're talking about those from out of town as if they are "other people." These are people, whether you save somebody's life from out of town, in town, to me it doesn't really matter, and we have to figure out some way to work with these other communities around us because we are not an isolated island. The traffic is not going to go away, it's going to get worse because the United States hasn't shown any sign of decreasing population; it's not a subject that anyone wants to talk about. Newington's motto says growth and progress, that's not just an idea to grow and get bigger, it's an acknowledgement that, that's the way things are going to go and we have to somehow meet those challenges. I think you're doing the best you can to do that, and the perfect solution is a forum like this, it is a group of people trying to figure out how to help other people, and I think you should go forward with it.

Peggy Walsh, 15 Arrowhead Circle: Thank you for inviting us all here to listen to this very important item. I didn't intend to speak tonight, because I have been here for only about a year, but I bought my house there with a very specific intent of the type of neighborhood that I wanted to live in. If it hadn't met that certain criteria I wouldn't have purchased my house there. I would assume that is the same for the people living along Old Farm Drive backing up to Alumni Road, as well as people who purchased their houses on the other side of Cedar Street on Maple Hill Avenue. I feel badly for those people because I would be furious if I had bought my house and then an extra thousand cars every day are going to be going by my back door. Having lived there for a little less than a year, I do see the problem with Alumni Road. There has to be other solutions if we want to create the type of traffic flow that you are anticipating. You mentioned the project coming up that would create a left turn lane into Alumni Road, and first of all, that is going to help. Half of us are trying to zip around the people who are waiting to turn into Alumni Road. A left turn lane there would be a great idea. A traffic light at Alumni Road wouldn't be a bad idea as it stands now either, and you are talking about having more traffic lights, well, that is exactly what you are proposing to do at the other end of Old Farm. You are putting in another traffic light, so put it in at Alumni. I'm not firmly for or against this idea, but I'm glad to have the opportunity to hear both sides, so thank you.

Resident, 43 Maple Hill Avenue: I live in the third house, so I will have a street in the back of my house, on the side of my house and in the front of my house. I live on Maple Hill Avenue so I go to the gas station there all of the time. When I am coming back from the gas station I take a left hand turn. So are you putting a light there so I can take a left turn? I leave Dunkin Donuts, take a left turn, and a right onto Maple Hill Avenue. I cannot see the property value of my house going up when I have a street in back of my house, on the side of my house, in front of my house, so I'm not going to have a back yard any more. So, coming out of the gas station I take a left turn, and then take a right to my house. Putting a light there, that would solve the problem.

Commissioner Serra: I know several people have said, let's just put up a No Left Turn sign, but the gas station on Cedar, there is a no left turn onto Fenn Road; coming down the Berlin Turnpike, turning right onto East Robbins, going into McDonald's, there is a no left turn sign there. Everybody turns at McDonald's. Again, this is about safety, we're looking for your ideas. We want your input, nothing is premeditated, nothing was made up, and we're trying to get your input. I wish No Left Turn signs would work. But this gentleman just said, he comes out of that gas station, he takes a left turn, and there is a No Left Turn sign. No Left Turn signs do not work. You can't put this on the Police Department, they are very busy. Yes, we need traffic control, but they have a lot of area to cover. There are accidents, everything going on, you can't station a police officer to watch these No Left Turn signs. So while I wish they would work, we know it is not going to. We're trying to propose something that would work, something that would help this situation be safer, as the other Commissioners have stated, for our residents, for us, and yes, for the people passing through. We have to make this as safe as possible. I'm telling you now, nothing is set in stone, this is why we are having these meetings. To try to figure out, with your help, what the best solution is. Thank you.

Mr. Leiner, 176 Old Farm Drive: Commissioner Pane, I detect a note of frustration in your voice, and I sympathize with you, you are fighting for safety, but look what you are taking away from us. We have been there for fifty plus years, and all of a sudden you are changing everything. Could I ask this woman a question who lives on Maple Hill?

Commissioner Pane: Sure.

Mr. Leiner: When you bought your home, did the realtor tell you that there could be a road behind that house? I would stake my life on it, that those people who live in those five homes, the realtor probably never told them that a road could be built behind her home, because I'm sure if she knew that a road could be built, that she wouldn't have bought it.

Chairman Aieta: It is unfortunate, but I can tell you, it's been in the plans for about twenty years.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: What happens on Cedar Street does not affect me directly, but I do know people who live on Old Farms, Burdon Lane, Cinnamon Road, I understand how they feel about what is happening here. I do feel that something needs to be done, and I also feel that you have to look at the big picture on Alumni Road. We have not only Alumni Road traffic to take into consideration but what is coming from the high school, and I know a lot of these kids cut through the Veterans Home when they shouldn't be going though. We have Victory Gardens, we have Veterans Landing that is proposed to be built up in that area as well, and I'm just wondering if there has been any study of the traffic pattern through Alumni Road. It's just something that I'm thinking about as I was listening to other people speak. I myself have been at sporting events at the football field, and had to direct a tractor trailer out of that road. I know people have asked for a No Outlet, or some kind of a (inaudible) on Alumni Road. There is a situation there not only with the traffic coming out onto Cedar Street, but what is happening within. So, as you look at your plans, as people give input,

please look at what is happening within that complex itself with the high school, with the Veterans Hospital, with whatever sports, the ice rink, whatever is happening in there now is only going to increase the traffic going into Alumni, but something has to be done. My daughter graduated in 1998, at that time one of her classmate's mom worked for the Department of Transportation. She assured me that the dangerous situation on Cedar Street would be resolved soon. The woman left, went to work for the federal transportation, and here we are, 2016 and the situation still exists. This may not be the best plan, if somebody has a better plan, or can come up with something, present it, show it to the TPZ, and maybe there can be a compromise of some sort, but something must be done. It's hard to follow what you are trying to project without a handout. I thank you for your efforts, you put a lot of time into it, and let's try to work together to make this happen so we are not standing here ten years from now with the same questions in the same room without town hall being renovated and without Cedar Street being settled. Thank you.

Thomas Elwood: I was reminded by my better half that I didn't ask my question. Eastbound at Cedar and Old Farms, the new light, will there be a left turn lane into the development?

Commissioner Sobieski: If when it is designed, there may be a left hand turn into there. You could have an advanced trip light which would allow a couple of cars into there

Chairman Aieta: Anyone else wishing to speak?

Bill Prentice, 61 Maple Hill Avenue: Rose was correct, let's pass this up to the Town Council. I think it's an exceptional plan. My wife even said, why don't you make Alumni Road a dead end and not even exit onto Cedar Street? There is going to have to be some serious timing done with the lights, because I live on Maple Hill Avenue as I said, and as I come down Cedar Street, if I'm not one of the first three cars, I'm not making it, I'm just sitting waiting for someone to rear end me. So timing has to be, (inaudible) works for the DOT and he says that sign is two feet by two feet coming the other way, maybe it is, but it's twenty-five feet in the air too, so out of towners have no clue what is going on there. They are sitting there, they have a green light, now our light turns yellow, and they figure they can go, and there can be accidents right there. The sidewalks for Vincent, brilliant. Those people have to be able to get out of there. I appreciate your effort. I was here when the DOT was told, fold up your blueprints and walk away, that was probably ten years ago at the least. Thanks for your effort, and I appreciate your time.

Commissioner Sobieski: Bill, just to respond to you, you are right, that sign is probably two feet by two feet, but up in the air, nobody can see it. There have been some advances in traffic engineering, there are some new ideas out there for that type of sign.

David Marsden, Maple Hill Avenue: I wasn't going to speak until I became the last person, I hope I am. A thought just ran across my mind when we were talking about closing off the cul-de-sac on Maple Hill. Where are the people going to cross the street who are walking down Maple Hill to go across, like the kids that go across to the high school? How are they going to cross? There isn't going to be a traffic light there any more. Are you going to have a designated walk light at that intersection, how are you going to get them across the street?

Commissioner Sobieski: When the relocation happens at Maple Hill Avenue the walk phase will be put in there. So you will be able to cross at Alumni which is a better area. You have a level land, you don't have a problem with a sight line. It would be a cross walk which the DOT would install.

David Marsden: There wouldn't be a sidewalk on that side of the street, there isn't now between Alumni and Arrow Road there.

Commissioner Sobieski: No there wouldn't be, I'm not sure but they could put a two foot sidewalk between where the barrier would be and the private fence there which would allow them to walk back up a hundred feet or seventy-five or whatever it is, and then walk down the old right of way to Saddle Hill and Arrowhead, so you are not putting any additional walk on that hundred feet or whatever it is, I would have to measure it, on that one side.

David Marsden: All right, but now I'm very envious that the people from Vincent are going to be able to have a walk, a sidewalk on their side of the street to get down so that they can cross over at the new light. Where we live on Maple Hill Avenue, we have to walk in the street if we wanted to get down there, and that is very dangerous. I've come to these meetings and always advocated having a sidewalk, somewhere, so I hope it can get figured out in a way that satisfies, and by the way, thank you all for the thankless job that you do.

Chairman Aieta: Anyone one else wishing to speak?

III. CLOSING REMARKS

Chairman Aieta: We will take the information that we have heard here tonight, take it back to the TPZ Commission, take it under consideration, all of the thoughts of the people here tonight, as the Commissioners said, it is not a done deal. We were looking for information, for you to tell us what way you want to go. This is just the first phase, from here it goes to the Town Council. The Town Council will have to make the decision, and we would suggest to the Council that they hold their own public hearing to get their own input like we got tonight. It's basically up to the Town Council. We will be providing the information to move this forward, and it will be up to the Council to make the decision if they want to go forward with this, hire an engineer to draw up plans and send it to the DOT.

Commissioner Pane: I would like to thank everybody for coming, it was extremely helpful to have you come here, the negative comments and the positive comments will be very helpful to us. As the Chairman stated, we have verbatim minutes which we can analyze so we can present the best possible plan to the Town Council. It won't be in our hands, it will be in their hands. I feel sorry for them, the Town Councilors, but I hope that they think about the entire town, and think about safety, and I hope that we will be able to tweak this plan and hopefully be able to satisfy as many people as possible, so thank you very much for coming, it was very useful. Thank you.

Commissioner Sobieski: I also want to thank everybody for attending, it was very informative, we have the notes that we will be looking at, again, this is not a done deal, this is only a suggestion, an idea that has been put out. We tried to reach out to everybody. Again, no plan is one hundred percent. The idea again here is safety. That is the key. I personally drove that road many years ago when it was two lanes, watched it widened to four, and watched the ADT's increase. They are going to constantly increase, because the United States has one problem, it's in love with its cars. Mass transit in this state has not taken off, will never take off until they come up with a better plan. The busway has, and I was not in favor of that, and I still am not, does not set a solution to this decision. This is an east/west connection, again, we are trying to make the neighborhood safer, for everyone to use, and improve the quality of life, so it's going to help everyone. It may not help you one hundred percent, but it's going to help somewhere down the line. Again, when I first brought this up, and I'll say it again, I went to the majority leader, the minority leader and the Mayor, so this is not something that just dropped out of the sky. Again, I want to thank everybody, and we will consider your comments.

IV. ADJOURN

Chairman Aieta: Thank you all for coming.

Chairman Aieta adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Norine Addis".

Norine Addis,
Recording Secretary