



**TOWN OF WINDSOR
TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
HYBRID MEETING
JANUARY 6, 2025
PUBLIC HEARING**

APPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Black-Burke.

Present: Mayor Nuchette Black-Burke, Councilor Ronald Eleveld, Deputy Mayor Darleen Klase, Councilor Mary Armstrong, Councilor Kristin Gluck Hoffman, Councilor Ojala Naeem, Councilor William Pelkey, and Councilor Lenworth Walker

Absent: Councilor Leroy Smith

Mayor Black-Burke read aloud the notice of the public hearing to hear public comment on:

AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$6,100,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH BROAD STREET TRAFFIC CALMING AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$2,100,000 BONDS AND NOTES, \$1,000,000 FROM STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT URBAN ACT GRANT FUNDS AND \$3,000,000 FROM UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT FUNDS TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION.

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

Hilary Carpenter, 45 Bradford Drive, stated that she has been following this since the beginning. When it was first announced she was very interested in this project and what it meant for the Town of Windsor. She can say now after all she has learned about the project that she is thrilled about it. This project has such implication not only for public safety but for increasing public traffic and pedestrian traffic in town. It will also increase the business development in town as well. She stated she has been traveling around the country and has noticed that many of the communities have been doing similar projects and they have had wonderful results. She has seen some communities where they could also use what we are proposing to do. She knows that a lot of people feel an inconvenience by this project or they have complaints about it, but she encourages everyone to take a step back and to think about public safety first and foremost. She believes this project will save lives and will prevent injury as well as increase safety in our downtown area and that is good for everyone. She thanked everyone for their time.

Neil Chaudhary, 21 Hillcrest Road, stated that he strongly supports this proposal on the table. He feels very strongly about the need for the improvements for public safety that this project presents and he is also hopeful that it will have a positive impact on the business climate downtown. He also stated that he has been following this project for some time now and is happy that it is coming to this stage and wish to register his enthusiastic support.

Paul Panos, 48 Brookview Road, said that the downtown area needs the double lanes both ways to promote a greater volume of cars getting through. The road diet works in former industrial cities and towns where the industry has gone but the buildings are still standing. He stated that traffic is light now and at least one lane each way can easily be converted into pedestrian traffic and still have plenty of room for parking. He said that Windsor was never an industrial town, it was just a farm town. In the 1950's it was converted. It used to have just a single lane but of course with the increase of traffic they had to make it two lanes both ways. He stated that they made a double lane to match the three roads coming in from Palisado, Poquonock, and Bloomfield Avenue as well as the two lanes going south to Hartford. He believes that the road diet will slow the traffic down and there will be unnecessary backup of traffic during busy times. Speed will be dominated by the slowest drivers and patience is not something that will promote safety of the pedestrians trying to cross the roads. We do not need special bike paths just for downtown bike riders. Mr. Panos said this shouldn't be the reason you build roads. Bikes can use current sidewalks. The roundabouts are a different issue. They may promote more of a flow of traffic but they will get backed up with a single lane of traffic when it is busy. He believes this will not promote foot traffic. Roundabouts are good where there is not that much foot traffic. He feels that it would be better to expend our efforts on something that we really need, where we have really seen the massive increase of litter. He doesn't feel that this project is a good idea.

Adam Gutcheon, 19 Mechanic Street, said that he has lived and worked in Windsor center for about a quarter of his life. He has seen many businesses close and it tore a hole in the heart of our town. He has seen great improvements though. He named a few of the great improvements he has seen. He believes there are better days ahead of us. He is not satisfied with just any mediocre effort, he wants Windsor to have the best. He also believes that it is important to us not only economically, but in terms of morale that our civic core be livable, walkable, and be a gathering place of pride. He lives and works on the east side of the green. So, if he wanted to go to the Bean or one of the restaurants on the west side, he would have to walk across Broad Street and that is taking his life into his hands every time. What are his choices? There is the crossing with the button that you push with the ineffectual flashing lights and there's the little sticks with the orange pennants that you can cross the street with which is like waving a matador's cape at cars that are determined to go 50 MPH through the center of our town. He will not apologize for the inconvenience to the people who want to go 50 mph. He said that he wants our town center to be safe, livable, walkable, and he thinks we have memento that the road diet will help us with.

Mark Harrington, 1217 Windsor Avenue, stated he also is a local business owner at 34 Bloomfield Avenue. He is on the board and chair of a Windsor Street Safety Advocacy Group. He has experienced the increase of traffic volume speed and accidents along Broad Street and Windsor Avenue for 30 years, the horrific accident that happened back in October 2023 and many other accidents, but that was the one that pushed himself and his neighbors to take action. They believe that the data presented for this project proves that this will reduce the speeds through the center which would also positively impact Broad Street and Windsor Avenue south of the center. He drives to and from the center about 2 or 4 times a day. Since taking action in 2023, he has closely been observing that while he is traveling the speed limit, he has been passed by at least one car and at times multiple cars at speeds significantly higher than the speed limit. He said that he has been talking with friends and business associates in town about this problem and they all agree this is not a safe street for pedestrians' bikes, and even drivers. He also said that we must do both if we want to have a vibrant Windsor Center. He would argue that even if we have the businesses that people want in the center, these businesses would not achieve the full economic benefit with an unsafe and unfriendly street.

John Dunn, 15 Strawberry Hill, asked about parking. He has seen all the sketches, etc. for the project as a whole. What is the net number of increased or unlikely decreased total number of available parking spaces upon completion? Mr. Dunn stated that it will only be a matter of time before drivers figure out how to use another street instead of going onto Broad Street. He feels this will create a backup on these other small streets. He also stated that he is voting against the road diet as it exists but he encourages the developing to continue.

Keller Glass, 72 Hayden Avenue, said he believes that projects like this one are the government's primary responsibility to maintain the physical safety for its residents and citizens. There is a street going through the main commercial district here that is not safe. He also stated there is rarely a month that goes by without a pretty serious accident happening. He knows multiple people who have been seriously injured on this road. We need to do better. A lot of people need to cross these roads. We owe it to them to have a safe environment to move through this part of town. He spoke on how the retail environment has changed dramatically since the road configuration was put in place. People don't need to come to a commercial district like this to do their shopping anymore. He also stated that he feels that this project would be a major win for Windsor, the residents, and for the local businesses and he urges them to send this out through to a referendum.

Jeff Lance, 1203 Windsor Avenue, wants to tie in the need to control traffic through the center of town with the four-road traffic that feeds into Broad Street. He has worked with the highway engineers and there were things they did to make it safe to drive at faster speeds such as straightening the road curves and having a longer line of sight to make it safe to drive at 50 or 55 mph. He stated that when people leave this intersection in front of the library, people are hitting the speed of 50 or 60 mph as they go around the

curb. He's not sure how much this will improve businesses but he thinks that people gather here in Windsor just for the social aspect of it. He also thinks that they should protect the pedestrians above all else.

Sam Savelli, 7 Warren Lane, stated that at his end of town, they did the road diet and it has been terrible. It has been more of a problem than a blessing and there have been more accidents because of people being impatient. He understands the purpose for it but there will be more to the project than it seems. He has done road construction for five years and has worked with the State of Connecticut. He feels that we should keep the street the way it is. We have enough resources available to slow people down. He doesn't feel that changing the landscape will change any of that. He is concerned about the roundabouts and fitting an emergency vehicle between them. The emergency vehicles won't be able to get into the center if there was a fire without popping a tire, then you would have a whole other issue on your hands. In his opinion, he feels we just need to put more Police Officers down there.

Liz Dupont-Diehl, 78 Palisado, stated that she wants to express her support and also congratulate the town officials and town engineering department for the study and research that they have put into this project. She wants to echo what a lot of people have said about the town center not living up to its potential right now and not being safe for anyone. She felt that way when the four lanes near her house were widened even then it doesn't feel safe to cross the street when drivers drive really fast. She has been satisfied with listening to the plans the engineers have presented. There has been a lot of thought put into this project and the roundabouts have been successful in other communities. She's absolutely confident that the public safety requirements will be met and the quality of life and the businesses will be much improved with this.

Linda Rickard, 62 Sycamore Street, stated that she supported what they want to do in downtown Windsor and she thinks that the road diet makes very good sense for all the reasons that were stated, but she wants to discuss her dismay about the roundabouts. Her understanding was that the roundabouts were going to be a separate construction and separately funded and now they will be voting on the whole package. She understands what everyone is saying about the roundabouts but just doesn't agree with where they want to put them.

Bridget Harrington, 1217 Windsor Avenue, said she wanted to remind everyone that there is a \$4 million grant that is already outstanding for this project. She believes that we are way beyond leaving the road as is and doesn't agree with leaving it the way it is because it is dangerous. They have been doing exhaustive studies for the past 10 years on this project. They also looked into how it will impact the emergency vehicles and they said the vehicles will not be slowed down going through there as well as a bike lane if we go with the proposed road diet #3. She is for the road diet and for safety.

3) ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Black-Burke declared the Public Hearing closed at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rachel Collins
Recording Secretary