
for the board's consideration

1 message

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To the Board of Directors

I'd like to offer the following observations and suggestions for your consideration.

Speeding

Concerns about vehicles traveling at excessive and unnecessary rates of speed in the very limited confines Stony Creek have been raised for perhaps four decades. (Many years ago, one of our neighbors became so incensed about a car flying by his house, he stopped the driver on his way out of the village and offered to put a trash can through his windshield if he did not slow down.) Those concerns were the motive for our installation of the "Please Show Down" sign on Thimble Islands Rd., which has proven to have little or no effect on driving behaviors. Upper Thimble Islands Rd. once featured two fairly abrupt changes in elevation - virtual jumps - that tended to force a moderate rate of speed in that section. Former public works director Ed Masada had those jumps removed, smoothing the roadway and arguably causing a perceptible increase in speeds. One neighbor of ours estimates that some cars hit 50 mph as they pass his house. My own estimate is that 90 percent of cars and trucks travel down Thimble Islands Rd. at speeds of 35 mph or more, especially during the winter, when the village is not as crowded as during the summer months. Anyone who walks here with regularity will tell you that the rate of speeds is alarming and crossing the street can be a perilous undertaking.

Knowing that various speed dampening measures have found little favor with the board, I asked a friend with over 40 years of experience in local, state, and even federal law enforcement how we might address the situation. His response was immediate: enforcement by police vehicles with radar units. He said speed bumps and stop signs are of little effect, much like our signage, but stationing a police car at random times to issue citations will have a definite impact. Branford police do this elsewhere in Branford, and on streets that have nothing like the amount of foot traffic and confined space that we have here.

That said, I also think the installation of an electronic speed sign would be beneficial. Two of them are used in Madison on Route 1 and other communities use them on a sporadic basis to impress on drivers how fast they are traveling. Perhaps Branford owns one of the machines; if not, I know police departments often borrow them from departments that do have them.

I would hope that the board would address both of those remedies with the police department.

Parking

In years past, the board commissioned a traffic study that largely found what we already knew: there is no enough room in this little place for the number of cars that come here in the summer. As I recall, it did bring a few small changes in on-street parking. The board appointed a committee, which included Mike Infantino, Sandy Fischer, and myself, among others, to study the situation, and we spent about a year doing so. We rejected the ball field and fire house parking lot as inadequate and too distant, and proposed instead renting the Amtrak rail yard, which was feasible at that time, for parking, with a shuttle running to the dock area. That idea was vehemently opposed by residents and abandoned. Amtrak last year installed fencing and a locked gate along the northern boundary of the rail yard and I can assure you that they would not entertain our use of it today.

The largest improvement in the availability of parking has come with the opening of the church parking lot to the public and that would seem to be the only remedy available to us. The board did come to the realization in past discussions that the lack of major parking areas has a self-limiting effect on the number of cars and people who come here: once Stony Creek is full, it can't accommodate any more cars and people.

Where is Stony Creek?

Has it occurred to anyone that we live in a place called Stony Creek, but that it lacks a waterway of that name? Old maps - I have a railroad map showing this - do have a Stony Creek on the eastern boundary of the village, running for Saw Mill Road down to the harbor between Stony Creek and Guilford. For reasons unknown and supposedly done by the railroad, I understand Stony Creek was renamed Jaris Creek. From what I have been told, the state Department of Transportation renamed Jaris Creek as Jarvis Creek (perhaps a spelling error by the DOT sign maker?), which it remains today. I wonder if anyone on the board would be interested in enlisting Sean Scanlon's help with the DOT to have the creek's historic name restored to it.

Thanks for your time,
Stan Fisher



railroad map Stony Creek.pdf

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