

TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

April 8, 2025, 7 p.m.

Legislative Chambers

**RE: ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE USE OF AUTOMATED
TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT SAFETY DEVICES**

Reporter: Lisa L. Warner, CSR #061

A p p e a r a n c e s :

Council Members:

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR

DEPUTY MAYOR BEN WENOGRAD

CAROL BLANKS

ALBERTO CORTES

MARY FAY

TIFFANI MCGINNIS

DEBRA POLUN

BARRY WALTERS

MARK ZYDANOWICZ

Town Manager:

RICK LEDWITH

Corporation Counsel:

**DALLAS DODGE, ESQ.
GINA VARANO, ESQ.**

Town Clerk/Council Clerk:

LEON DAVIDOFF

Department of Community Development:

**DUANE J. MARTIN, P.E.
PARKER SORENSON, P.E.**

West Hartford Police Department:

**ASSISTANT CHIEF ROBERT RICCOBON
ASSISTANT CHIEF LAWRENCE TERRA**

1 (Commenced at 7 p.m.)

2 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. We are now at
3 7 p.m. I am calling to order the Ordinance
4 Authorizing the Use of Automated Traffic
5 Enforcement Safety Devices.

6 We'll begin with roll call, Mr.
7 Davidoff.

8 MR. DAVIDOFF: Good evening, Madam
9 Mayor.

10 Councilor Blanks.

11 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Present.

12 MR. DAVIDOFF: Mayor Cantor.

13 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Here.

14 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Cortes.

15 COUNCILOR CORTES: Here.

16 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Fay.

17 COUNCILOR FAY: Present.

18 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor McGinnis.

19 COUNCILOR MCGINNIS: Present.

20 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Polun.

21 COUNCILOR POLUN: Here.

22 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Walters.

23 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Here.

24 MR. DAVIDOFF: Deputy Mayor Wenograd.

25 DEPUTY MAYOR WENOGRAD: Here.

1 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Zydanowicz.

2 COUNCILOR ZYDANOWICZ: Here.

3 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
4 Mr. Davidoff.

5 Okay. Mr. Ledwith, we are going to go
6 to you to kick off the presentation.

7 MR. LEDWITH: Yes. Thank you, Madam
8 Mayor. Good evening, everyone, Town Council. For
9 the record, Rick Ledwith, town manager. With me
10 this evening is one of our engineers, Parker
11 Sorenson, Director of Community Development, Duane
12 Martin, and Assistant Chief Terra with Assistant
13 Chief Riccobon in the background in case he needs
14 to bail Assistant Chief Terra out.

15 ASSISTANT CHIEF RICCOBON: Here for
16 support.

17 MR. LEDWITH: So tonight we are
18 presenting a proposed ordinance that would
19 authorize the use of automatic traffic enforcement
20 devices in designated areas of our community. The
21 primary goal of this ordinance is to support safer
22 roadways in West Hartford.

23 Across our community, we continue to
24 see concerning trends. High speed and red light
25 violations are creating dangerous conditions for

1 drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. These
2 behaviors put lives at risk and compromise the
3 safety of our streets.

4 Automatic enforcement such as speed
5 cameras and red light cameras act as deterrents to
6 dangerous driving behaviors that we know
7 contribute to serious and fatal injuries. This
8 ordinance provides the legal framework to deploy
9 such devices strategically in school zones,
10 pedestrian zones, and areas that we know are
11 heightened traffic risks.

12 The ordinance directly supports our
13 town's Vision Zero goals, a commitment to
14 eliminate all traffic related fatalities and
15 serious injuries. Automatic enforcement is a
16 proven strategy that encourages safer driving
17 behavior by holding drivers accountable in a fair
18 and consistent way. These devices don't just
19 reduce violations. They help us build a lasting
20 culture of safety throughout our town. By
21 reinforcing safe habits and consistent
22 expectations, this ordinance helps shift the
23 mindset on our streets making safety the norm, not
24 the exception.

25 Studies from cities around the country

1 show that automated enforcement reduces crashes,
2 particularly the most severe ones. In fact,
3 studies show a 40 percent reduction in fatal and
4 serious crashes. These results show us what is
5 possible when technology is used thoughtfully and
6 strategically.

7 It is important to know that this
8 technology supplements, not replaces our police
9 officers. As we've heard our chief say often,
10 this is a "force multiplier" for our community,
11 allowing us to deploy our enforcement efforts to
12 areas not covered by technology.

13 Under the proposed ordinance, a sworn
14 officer or authorized town employee will review
15 and approve recorded images. A first violation
16 carries a fine of \$50 and subsequent violations of
17 \$75. The ordinance will allow us to charge a
18 processing fee not to exceed \$15, and vehicle
19 owners may appeal the fine within ten days of
20 receiving the citation.

21 The ordinance will apply to two types
22 of violations, exceeding the speed limit by 10
23 miles per hour or more or failing to stop at a
24 steady red traffic signal. Our plan will include
25 a 30-day grace period when it is first implemented

1 which will give the public time to adjust and
2 allow us to provide widespread education.

3 A little more background on the
4 violations. And similar to parking tickets,
5 citations are issued to the owner of the motor
6 vehicle, not the driver. And secondly, the
7 citations are not a moving violation, and
8 therefore not reflected in their driving record.

9 Anyone who receives a citation may
10 appeal through an administrative hearing process.
11 Defenses may include an operator who was driving
12 an emergency vehicle, the traffic signal was
13 inoperative, the violation was necessary to comply
14 with a law enforcement officer, the violation was
15 necessary to allow passage of an emergency
16 vehicle, the violation took place during a period
17 of time which motor vehicle had been reported
18 stolen, or the automatic traffic enforcement
19 safety device was not in compliance with
20 calibration checks.

21 Funds collected from fines will be
22 reinvested directly into the community.
23 Specifically, they will continue to support our
24 Vision Zero efforts through transportation safety
25 changes, mobility improvements and infrastructure

1 engineering enhancements. This ensures that any
2 revenue generated is aligned with our Vision Zero
3 and public safety goals.

4 The ordinance also includes strong
5 privacy safeguards. No personally identifiable
6 information will be stored or shared unless it is
7 necessary for charging, collection or enforcement
8 purposes. Our focus is 100 percent on safety, not
9 surveillance.

10 In summary, this ordinance is not just
11 about enforcement, it is about helping us build a
12 lasting culture of safety where all residents feel
13 protected and safe driving is the community
14 standard.

15 If adopted, next steps include
16 developing an Automated Traffic Safety Device Plan
17 which will include two separate forms of public
18 outreach. We would then bring this plan to our
19 Community Planning and Economic Development
20 Committee followed by the Town Council for
21 approval. Following that approval, we would
22 submit the plan to the Connecticut Department of
23 Transportation for their approval.

24 And our plan must also -- once we
25 receive approval from Connecticut Department of

1 Transportation, we also have to send it to the
2 Federal Highway Administration for their approval.
3 Both our speed enforcement program and our red
4 light program we received federal grants, Safe
5 Streets for All grant for both of those programs,
6 so we have the extra layer of going to the Federal
7 Highway Administration for their approval.

8 So thank you for your time and
9 attention and commitment to safety in our
10 community. And at this point, through you Madam
11 Mayor, I can turn it back to the Council for
12 questions. I don't know if you want to go to the
13 public first for comments.

14 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you. I think
15 we will go to the public first and then we can
16 answer all the questions.

17 Mr. Davidoff, Mr. Clerk, have you
18 received any written comments on this?

19 MR. DAVIDOFF: No written comments.

20 (Pause.)

21 PRESIDENT CANTOR: I have a few people
22 signed up, but it was for the Council meeting.
23 Maybe it was regarding either this hearing or our
24 previous hearing, so I don't know. So if any of
25 these are not, just give me a wave. First is

1 **Lauren C-R, 97 Vera Street.**

2 **(No response.)**

3 **PRESIDENT CANTOR: No, okay. Stephen**
4 **Sack, I know he spoke at the last meeting, so I**
5 **don't see him.**

6 **And Allison McConnell. Okay. Come on**
7 **up. State your name and address for the record,**
8 **and three minutes, please.**

9 **ALLISON MCCONNELL: Good evening. I'm**
10 **Allie McConnell, 31 Gillett. I just want to thank**
11 **everyone for opening this to the public and**
12 **everyone who is involved. It's a very thoughtful**
13 **ordinance. I do have a couple of issues and**
14 **questions.**

15 **I will just note on my way here I**
16 **passed through at least six cameras that I noticed**
17 **starting at my very back door. There was an**
18 **undisclosed camera installed by my landlord. So**
19 **there's a lot of cameras in one mile. Just noting**
20 **that these types of, particularly like third-party**
21 **surveillance software, is notoriously vulnerable**
22 **to hacking.**

23 **So while there is some thoughtful**
24 **language in the ordinance that I noted, it is kind**
25 **of boilerplate. I'm interested in knowing, like**

1 really drilling down how long will the data be
2 stored, is it recording all traffic and then like
3 sort of ex post facto being checked for violations
4 or is it sort of real time? That's not specified.
5 And I think that's really important because
6 everyone who passes through will have identifiable
7 information recorded, if not, and then stored for
8 how long.

9 And then just noting from a social
10 justice standpoint, like across the country we
11 know that these technologies do have an adverse
12 impact, but it's disproportionate to poor people
13 and to people of color. And while, again, there
14 is some thoughtful language in here, it is a
15 little bit general. And I would like to see
16 something that is a bit stronger, particularly
17 given the current regime which is utilizing
18 surveillance to go after people who are not of
19 accord with them.

20 So I'll conclude there. Again, it is
21 very thoughtful. I do appreciate it. I live in
22 that corner of, like, Oakwood and Park, which is
23 like a freeway. It is very dangerous. There are
24 at least two memorials within walking distance. I
25 pass by them on my daily walk right there. So

1 this is very needed.

2 I would also rather see us exhaust the
3 other tactics available to us before resorting to
4 just kind of hammering on surveillance. I would
5 like to see a lot more behavioral messaging, some
6 regionalization of the responsibility here. I
7 suspect a lot of the speeders are not from our
8 communities. So how do we address that with a
9 town ordinance?

10 And I think that concludes my remarks.
11 So thank you very much.

12 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Ms.
13 McConnell, appreciate it.

14 All right. Anybody else?

15 (No response.)

16 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. I don't see
17 anybody. All right. Now we can open it up to the
18 Council. We've done a little introduction and
19 community planning on this, you know, talking
20 about obviously it's going to go back to community
21 planning, so I don't know, Ms. McGinnis, if you
22 want to start with any questions.

23 COUNCILOR MCGINNIS: The only question
24 that I had, so the state only allows for two
25 levels of fees, is that correct, the 50 and the

1 75? So if you were to get -- if you were a repeat
2 offender that ended up having 20 tickets a year,
3 you would only be -- there's no level, they don't
4 allow for any levels higher than that?

5 MR. LEDWITH: Correct. It's 50 and
6 then \$75 for each subsequent violation. These
7 programs do seem to in other parts of the country
8 do deter repeat offenders, but you're right.

9 COUNCILOR MCGINNIS: Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
11 Ms. McGinnis.

12 Ms. Blanks.

13 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Thank you, Mayor.

14 I do have a question similar, or one of
15 my questions, similar to Councilor McGinnis on
16 that point. And I'm bringing this up because I
17 won't call out any names but maybe some relatives,
18 going through certain areas of where they reside,
19 can you pick up more than one violation in the
20 same time period with these devices?

21 MR. LEDWITH: So yeah, we talked
22 through this particular scenario. So you're
23 coming into town and you hit one camera and then
24 further down the road you hit another one, and
25 then you certainly could hit multiple cameras. It

1 would be one -- the first violation would be 50.
2 Each one after that would be 75.

3 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Okay. Thank you.
4 And then, Rick, when you were speaking of the need
5 for approval from DOT and the Federal Highway
6 Administration, so given that you would meet all
7 those criterias, when would the expected time
8 frame be in terms of when we could implement and
9 roll it out?

10 MR. LEDWITH: So we will, we're in the
11 process now of hiring a consultant. We should
12 have someone on board within the next couple of
13 weeks, actually by the end of April, and we will
14 take the adopted ordinance and begin crafting our
15 plan. We expect to hold two public meetings over
16 the summer. The first meeting will be an
17 introduction of what we're doing and then seeking
18 public input in terms of people may have ideas
19 where good spots for these cameras would be, et
20 cetera.

21 Then we would draft the plan, bring
22 that drafted plan back to a public meeting as
23 well. And our plan would be to have it booked for
24 Community Planning and Economic Development at the
25 meeting in September and then at the Council

1 meeting, the second Council meeting in September.

2 And then we send it off to DOT for
3 their approval. We're being told, I think there's
4 one plan in the state that's been approved.
5 There's two more in front of DOT right now. We've
6 been told they will turn these around in seven to
7 ten days. You know, hopefully that would be a
8 timeline that we would expect to hopefully be able
9 to adhere to.

10 And then we'd send it off to Federal
11 Highway Administration, and they've essentially
12 said the same thing, seven to ten to 14 days. So
13 it will be later in the fall before we have formal
14 approval on everything and we can begin, you know,
15 identifying -- well, through the drafting of the
16 plan we'll identify where we're putting the spots,
17 but then start to do the outreach in terms of,
18 okay, the plan is coming, here's is the date.
19 There is the 30-day grace period that we would
20 have. So once the cameras are live, we don't
21 start the violation process for 30 days. I
22 believe we would have a warning system set up for
23 those first 30 days. And then -- so yeah, it's
24 going to be several months.

25 COUNCILOR BLANKS: A couple more

1 questions through you, Madam Mayor. How will the
2 data be managed and evaluated once we begin to
3 have it implemented and start collecting?

4 MR. LEDWITH: So we will hire a vendor
5 that will assist us with the data collection. And
6 there are state statutes that we have to adhere to
7 in terms of how long we can hold that data. The
8 data, to the speaker's earlier point, can only be
9 held, I believe -- we're still kind of determining
10 exactly what's happening with the law or the
11 statute that we read and interpreting it as best
12 we can. It will be part of our plan. I don't
13 think we have that exact information right now in
14 terms of how long we hold the data.

15 COUNCILOR BLANKS: One more.

16 MR. LEDWITH: It is 30 days? Okay. So
17 it is 30 days after the citation is issued we're
18 able to hold it for.

19 COUNCILOR BLANKS: And then one final
20 question through you, Madam Mayor. So for folks
21 who receive the violations, and maybe they got 50
22 and 75 and now it's accumulating, and if they
23 don't pay what happens, like, are they unable to
24 register their car or what are some other kinds of
25 violations?

1 MR. LEDWITH: So we will work through
2 that with our -- I'm looking for our deputy
3 corporation counsel. Do guys recall what that --
4 we had that conversation about --

5 ASSISTANT CHIEF TERRA: Through you,
6 Madam Mayor. So we are discussing the fact that
7 there are other things that we can look at within
8 the town because either town tickets that are
9 being issued, like town parking tickets, so there
10 might be other things that the Council might want
11 to consider to implement. But remember also, if
12 they want to fight it, they need to come before
13 the town for an appeal as well. So there's many
14 other little things that we need to look at to
15 address that. Considerations, if you want them to
16 re-register their car, that's within your
17 authority. So there's many other things possibly.

18 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Thank you.

19 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
20 Ms. Blanks.

21 Just to follow up on that question. So
22 that will be incorporated into the plan, those
23 ultimate consequences or avenues for --

24 MR. LEDWITH: I suppose we could build
25 it into the plan, but I think we just can follow

1 our normal ordinances in terms of steps we can
2 take when someone doesn't, you know, pay their
3 citations, for example, parking tickets. Yeah, I
4 just don't know exactly what it is off the top of
5 my head.

6 MR. DODGE: Madam Mayor, my expectation
7 is that it would follow the same process that we
8 use for parking citations, which is similar. If
9 we want to pause on this for a moment though,
10 Deputy Corporation Counsel Varano is our office's
11 foremost expert on the citation process, and here
12 she appears.

13 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Ms. Blanks, would
14 you like to repeat the question?

15 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Thank you. Through
16 you, Madam Mayor, and through you, Deputy Corp.
17 Counsel Varano. My question was with motorists
18 that are, let's say, habitual violators and now
19 they've accumulated a number of tickets, so
20 they're up to their 50 and multiple 75, and they
21 still haven't paid. What would be the
22 consequence? And I threw out the example of not
23 being able to register your car, but are there
24 other penalties that we've thought about issuing
25 or considered?

1 MS. VARANO: So we're assuming that the
2 driver did not appeal the citation and therefore
3 is liable for however many, 15 or 20 citations.
4 So if the driver doesn't appeal the citation, then
5 it goes to a hearing officer who will enter a
6 judgment on the particular violation, and then it
7 goes to a collection agency. And if there's no
8 payment on the collection agency, at some point we
9 would go to the superior court, and there is a
10 procedure by which we can obtain a judgment by
11 enforcing a municipal violation.

12 Once we get a court judgment, the
13 driver does have the ability to go to superior
14 court and object to that as well. Usually they
15 don't really win at that point and a judgment
16 enters. And then we have the ability to file a
17 lien against the individual's property. The lien
18 is good for 22 years.

19 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Thank you.

20 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you. Is that
21 different than our parking tickets? That is a
22 different process because the parking tickets have
23 late fees, doesn't it?

24 MS. VARANO: Well, the hearing process
25 is the same. So we currently have a hearing

1 process in place for parking tickets but all other
2 municipal violations as well, so zoning
3 violations, health district violations, they all
4 go through the same hearing process. The parking
5 tickets are a little bit different because they do
6 get reported, so the failure to pay your parking
7 ticket does present a problem for trying to
8 register your car. But all of the other municipal
9 violations do not have a similar impact.

10 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you. All
11 right. I'm going to go to Mr. Zydanowicz then
12 Mr. Walters.

13 COUNCILOR ZYDANOWICZ: Thank you, Madam
14 Mayor.

15 Rick, you talked about summer
16 communications for putting this forward. I'm just
17 concerned. A lot of people travel or on vacations
18 in the summer. You know, just we've heard in the
19 past even on like recycling, oh, I didn't know
20 about that, didn't know about this. I think that
21 communication process has to be robust through
22 social media and other avenues if we're going to
23 do it in the summer. Even our meetings we only
24 have one a month because our schedules are so busy
25 and we're out of town. So I just want to kind of

1 reiterate it, if that's your process.

2 And then in the presentation for an
3 appeal on a emergency vehicle, that kind of struck
4 me as odd because in the process you talked about
5 that a sworn officer or some employee would be --
6 right there, but if you go back a couple more -- a
7 sworn officer or authorized town employee will
8 review and approve recorded images before issuing
9 citations. So if they see a fire truck coming
10 through, why is that statement even on there in
11 that bullet statement. That sworn officer or
12 authorized town employee should say, oh, that's an
13 emergency vehicle, I am not issuing a ticket. So
14 it's kind of counterintuitive of why that other
15 bullet is up there on an emergency vehicle.
16 That's more of an automated piece than it would be
17 an appeal or a process going through a sworn
18 officer. So I'm just confused on that.

19 MR. LEDWITH: Chief.

20 ASSISTANT CHIEF TERRA: Through you,
21 Madam Mayor. We have various vehicles that are
22 not marked responding to serious calls and what
23 have you. An employee from the vendor may not
24 know those cars, but that's why we have the backup
25 of having a member of the police department also

1 involved. They'll pick them out right off the
2 bat.

3 COUNCILOR ZYDANOWICZ: Okay. So it's a
4 vendor, not an employee in our police station
5 here, right, and the sworn officer is part of the
6 vendor, not of our own town?

7 ASSISTANT CHIEF TERRA: It's a
8 combination. The vendor will be involved, and
9 then we have a second person assigned under the
10 ordinance, and it's required under statute as well
11 to review that with them. It's a team. And they
12 might say, hey, you know what, that's an
13 undercover detective going to a robbery or
14 something like that.

15 COUNCILOR ZYDANOWICZ: Okay. Fair
16 enough. Thank you.

17 And then we all have ridden around
18 town, and I kind of remember when some of these
19 cameras, I think they are, went up. Are those the
20 ones we're talking about, the ones that are up
21 there, or are these going to be new ones, and what
22 are those cameras doing, how do they differ?

23 MR. LEDWITH: So we have several camera
24 systems set up around town. The chief can
25 certainly get into some of them. Just at a high

1 level, we have a Flock camera system that's up
2 there, and then we also, we're starting to
3 implement camera systems at certain intersections
4 around town that we utilize for public safety
5 purposes. So these will actually not be -- these
6 will be cameras on the side of the road that will
7 take a snapshot. If you're going ten miles over
8 the speed limit, it will take a picture of your
9 license plate, and it's a recorded image of your
10 car. That's what our police department and staff
11 will be looking at when they're issuing the
12 citation. So it's not an actual camera that's
13 recording every car that's moving through. It's
14 taking a picture of the license plate of the
15 offending vehicle.

16 COUNCILOR ZYDANOWICZ: So it's
17 electronically activated either through speed or
18 by the light going red?

19 MR. LEDWITH: Yes.

20 COUNCILOR ZYDANOWICZ: Thank you. And
21 then we talked about consultant, vendor, hearing
22 officer, court, appeal. What's the return on
23 investment? And if this is supposed to eliminate
24 a lot of speeding and a lot of red light tickets,
25 are our costs going to overrun us on this and we

1 wouldn't have a return on investment and now it's,
2 I don't want to say an unfunded mandate, but we
3 just got done with several of our constituents
4 talking about how high our taxes are, and this
5 might just be another one of those things that our
6 taxes are higher because we know we're a safer
7 town.

8 MR. LEDWITH: So the statute -- good
9 question. Through you, Madam Mayor, to Councilor
10 Zydanicz. So the statute does allow us to
11 implement up to a \$15 per ticket processing fee,
12 and we could utilize that fee to pay for the
13 vendor that's implementing the camera system. We
14 also keep the citation, the fee. So the \$50 or
15 the \$75 per ticket is revenue that goes directly
16 to the town. Now a speeding ticket goes to the
17 state, we get a small percentage of that speeding
18 ticket sent back to us as an administrative fee,
19 but 100 percent of the funds will come back to us
20 to the town. We envision utilizing those funds
21 for continuing our Vision work, our Vision Zero
22 work around town implementing traffic enhancements
23 and safety enhancements town wide and then using
24 that processing fee to pay the vendor.

25 So we don't envision an impact on the

1 general fund. We envision a surplus, at least
2 initially. And then, like I said, we want to
3 build a culture of safety, and a couple years from
4 now no one is getting a speeding ticket and red
5 light ticket, and that will be great.

6 COUNCILOR ZYDANOWICZ: Thank you. And
7 I think we need to track this because I've been in
8 a lot of meetings, and we've all been guilty of
9 this, but, oh, it's been like that for 20 years,
10 we haven't done anything about it, oh, it's been
11 like that for 17 years. So if we become a safer
12 town, right, and these speed enforcements, and
13 it's working like advertised but we're still
14 paying the vendors, the consultants and the
15 hearing officers and the court judgments for those
16 smaller, it might be a burden on our tax base.

17 So we need to keep -- you know, I don't
18 want to have a Council that looks like us 20 years
19 from now saying, oh, my god, we're spending a
20 million dollars on red light traffic and we're not
21 taking any money in. So I think we need to have
22 in that process some sort of delineation of where
23 we are with funding and such, and hopefully it
24 becomes a safer thing.

25 Then back to what some councilors asked

1 is that, like the registration of the car,
2 parking, taxes, if they haven't paid taxes on
3 their car, is that all part of that process, and
4 are we going to ding them for that? Even if they
5 get the first ticket but yet they haven't paid
6 taxes on their car in a year, is that a red flag
7 or is this like a parking ticket and it's just a
8 fee? So is there anything -- you know, say they
9 do pay on time. Is there any liability there
10 because they didn't pay their taxes either?

11 MR. LEDWITH: Through this process, no.
12 But certainly we always keep in touch with the
13 folks that owe us taxes. I could be a little more
14 aggressive in the way I say that but --

15 (Laughter.)

16 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Mr. Dodge.

17 MR. DODGE: Thank you, Madam Mayor.
18 And by virtue of the statute that enabled us to
19 adopt this, it is very prescriptive and
20 restrictive in terms of how the information that's
21 collected from these devices can be used. It can
22 only be used for enforcement of the traffic
23 violation here. So the answer is no we couldn't
24 use personally identifiable information that was
25 collected to, say, check if you had tax liens or

1 something like that. It could only be used for
2 enforcement of the ordinance.

3 COUNCILOR ZYDANOWICZ: All right.

4 Thank you. Appreciate it.

5 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.
6 Zydanowicz.

7 Mr. Walters.

8 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Thank you. And
9 through you, Madam Mayor. I have actually a few
10 questions. One, going back to the enforcement and
11 going down the road, would we have to adjust
12 another ordinance to include -- so if we have --
13 what I wrote is would we need to modify the
14 existing ordinance to include these violations.
15 So it was described to us how this system would
16 work, but it would be folded into another, the
17 same way we do another, or do we have to modify
18 that ordinance that called for that?

19 MR. DODGE: Through you, Madam Mayor.
20 The answer is no we would use our existing
21 citation process for typical violation -- or
22 typical citations in order to enforce this
23 ordinance that has general applicability which
24 would include violations that were caught, just
25 happen to be caught through the use of a traffic

1 safety enforcement device.

2 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Okay. Thank you.
3 Another question that I had is kind of
4 piggybacking on something that Councilor
5 Zydanicz had mentioned, the education period.
6 What I wrote actually was why a 30-day grace
7 period. Why would we tell everybody that we're
8 going to start this 30 days from now and you're
9 free to drive as fast as you want through whatever
10 red light you want? And why wouldn't we want to
11 start that education piece as soon as possible as
12 soon as, you know, we have a plan described and
13 everything is set, you know, perhaps even ready to
14 go to the state, why wouldn't we just say that's
15 when we start our education piece when we get it
16 back 30 days from now, that's when --

17 MR. LEDWITH: Through you, Madam Mayor.
18 So the 30-day grace period is a state statute
19 requirement. So we're required, any town
20 implementing this plan is required to implement a
21 30-day grace period as part of this program.

22 Certainly the public outreach, this
23 meeting is a good start to, should the Council
24 adopt this resolution, is a good start to that
25 education process that we can continue as we move

1 through the summer, and then we have those public
2 outreach meetings. And then, once we're ready to
3 roll the plan out, we have to notify everyone that
4 the plan is live on that particular date. We also
5 have to notify everyone where the cameras will be
6 located. That's part of the state requirement as
7 well. We have to go as far as to notify Waze as
8 to where these cameras will be located. So it
9 will be --

10 COUNCILOR WALTERS: It will be no
11 secret anyway.

12 MR. LEDWITH: It won't be a secret.

13 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Okay. Thank you.
14 Last question. Now, the camera will be taking
15 pictures, and I'm sorry if this was said, but the
16 camera will be taking pictures of the license
17 plate only? What exactly -- how much will be in
18 the frame? And the reason I ask that is will it
19 be able to actually identify the person driving
20 the vehicle?

21 MR. LEDWITH: It would not. So it's
22 just a picture. Mr. Martin, I think, received one
23 of these tickets in a neighboring state and told
24 me about it.

25 (Laughter.)

1 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Way to call him
2 out.

3 MR. LEDWITH: Just kidding, just
4 kidding. It is a snapshot. We don't know who's
5 driving, and that's why the ticket goes to the
6 owner and not the driver.

7 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Okay. I just -- it
8 occurred to me.

9 MR. LEDWITH: It can't be used for any
10 other reason other than issuing that ticket. So
11 the police department can't use it because
12 something else happened in the neighborhood and
13 they want to -- like I said, it doesn't take a
14 picture of every car that goes by. It's just the
15 offending vehicle.

16 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Just the violation.

17 MR. LEDWITH: Yes.

18 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Thank you. That's
19 all I had.

20 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.
21 Walters.

22 Mr. Cortes.

23 COUNCILOR CORTES: Thank you, Madam
24 Mayor. Through you, Madam Mayor. So I just want
25 to be clear on the -- the cameras are used for, is

1 it one camera can do the speeding and running of
2 the red light or is that two separate things? I
3 know we've discussed speed enforcement cameras and
4 we've also discussed red light cameras as well.

5 MR. LEDWITH: So through you, Madam
6 Mayor. Good question. So Councilor Cortes, we
7 will initially roll out a speed enforcement
8 program, safety program, first. And that will be
9 15 cameras set up around town in areas that we
10 know are high-risk areas as well as a school zone
11 and pedestrian zone.

12 The red-light cameras will be set up at
13 red lights. And yeah, we will not have a speed
14 camera and a red light camera in the same
15 intersection. The speed cameras will most likely
16 be set up somewhere along Albany Avenue. It's a
17 state road, we would need approval for that, but
18 just use that as an example, not, you know, at the
19 intersection.

20 COUNCILOR CORTES: Thank you. And then
21 for me just a comment. I will always speak out
22 against this. I think, you know, we're not unique
23 in Connecticut, but we're a pretty big, sizable
24 town, lot of roads in here. We do share a lot of
25 roads with the State of Connecticut. And I know

1 DOT is not as responsive as we are, you know, and
2 so the issues that we have are not just on our
3 roads but our state roads that we don't have
4 control.

5 You know, and as someone stated before,
6 it's like, you know, it's not -- it's people out
7 of our community who increase it, but I disagree,
8 it's people in our community as well.

9 So I've always discussed about right
10 sizing government, you know, and that doesn't mean
11 cut. You know, everybody always assumes like
12 where do you cut. And I think that, you know,
13 once we right size the police department, that's
14 how you address these issues, not by relying on a
15 camera, right, or relying on an outside vendor,
16 you know, something that costs money. But if we
17 were to right size the police department, add a
18 true traffic division, you know, that that's their
19 one job, they cannot be pulled for other staff
20 other than traffic, you know, like you do in other
21 communities. I mean, we are growing and there's
22 going to be that need. And I think if we right
23 size certain departments, you can address these
24 issues and be as effective. And once there's not
25 a need, reduce that team.

1 And we ask a lot of our PD with what
2 they have, and they do an amazing job. And I
3 think that, you know, we should look at doing that
4 right sizing that department so we have a true
5 traffic enforcement division, you know, like we
6 used to do at some point. I've always stated
7 before, I used to be, you know, when I didn't live
8 in West Hartford, I'm like, oh, man, I've got to
9 go through West Hartford, and you had that cop on
10 Trout Brook Drive that you had to worry about all
11 the time, and it slowed people down. I don't see
12 it enough. I know it's out there, you know, I see
13 our guys out there, I just don't see it enough.
14 You know, I just, every time I have an
15 opportunity, I'm going to say how, you know,
16 concerned I am the direction we're going and going
17 to this whole camera state. I see it in the
18 schools, and not to see it in the community is
19 kind of scary. I'd rather see a person in real
20 time address these issues than a camera. Thank
21 you.

22 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.
23 Cortes.

24 Ms. Polun.

25 COUNCILOR POLUN: Thank you, Madam

1 Mayor. Just a couple of questions. One is, I
2 assume the cameras can take picture of multiple
3 lanes at the same time. So I'm thinking
4 specifically like the intersection of Trout Brook
5 and Farmington where, you know, multiple cars next
6 to each other are probably going to go through
7 that red light at any given time, and the camera
8 can capture both of those cars doing that, right,
9 it's not just one or the other?

10 MR. SORENSON: Yes.

11 COUNCILOR POLUN: Thank you. And then
12 we've talked about this. I just want to clarify.
13 So let's say a license plate is flagged and a
14 photo was taken, the car was speeding or did go
15 through a red light, and it turns out that the car
16 was stolen. So when the officer is at the police
17 station reviewing the photos, it turns out, oh,
18 we've been looking for this car because it was
19 stolen or we've been looking for the owner of this
20 car for some other unrelated reason. And I think
21 what I'm hearing, and I just want to be 100
22 percent clear as possible for the public, is too
23 bad, we cannot use that photo to help locate that
24 owner or recover that car. Is that correct?

25 MR. LEDWITH: That is correct. It can

1 be only be used -- unless you want to clarify.

2 MR. DODGE: No.

3 MR. LEDWITH: So it can only be used
4 for the enforcement of this program.

5 COUNCILOR POLUN: Thank you very much.

6 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
7 Ms. Polun. That is a good question.

8 Okay. Ms. Fay.

9 COUNCILOR FAY: Thank you very much.
10 Just a couple of questions. I have some concerns
11 about the civil liberty aspect of this as well,
12 more surveillance coming our way. But we do have
13 to address something with our roads. They are
14 dangerous, and it's probably now one of the top
15 complaints we get about traffic and traffic
16 violations, so we do need a solution. And I do
17 appreciate all the work the police officers do,
18 and they can't be everywhere all at once, I
19 understand that.

20 Do we have a goal of how many sites we
21 intend -- I actually have a couple of questions --
22 that we intend to implement? Is there a number of
23 sites that we have in mind?

24 MR. LEDWITH: Through you, Madam Mayor.
25 So this is a pilot program that we're

1 implementing. So we can implement up to 15
2 cameras. Each camera could look in both
3 directions. So it could be -- am I correct on
4 that one, 15?

5 MR. MARTIN: Duane Martin, director of
6 community development. Through you, Madam Mayor,
7 to add to Manager Ledwith's comments. We have up
8 to 15 locations that we are allowed to install the
9 speed management cameras. But it's important to
10 denote the distinction between locations and
11 cameras. So you'll have 15 locations. That will
12 mean you'll need at least 30 cameras in total.

13 COUNCILOR FAY: Do we have a set
14 criteria of how we'll establish the particular
15 location's volume or accidents or some other
16 metric of how we're going to choose those?

17 MR. MARTIN: Through you, Madam Mayor,
18 to Councilor Fay. Yes. So with regards to the
19 speed management program, that's the reason we're
20 hiring a consultant is to do all the data analysis
21 that we need to get a plan approved by the state
22 and through our grant with the Federal Highway
23 Administration. So they're going to look at a lot
24 of data, meet with town staff, and come up with a
25 plan based upon that data where to put the speed

1 management cameras.

2 Red light running is a little bit
3 different. It's more specific to safety and
4 crashes and issues that have arisen through the
5 years with the help of our police department. So
6 it's a little bit different data than speed
7 management. But similarly, there will be data
8 driven behind where these cameras would be
9 located.

10 COUNCILOR FAY: And then I think you
11 guys said that, would we be first in Connecticut
12 to, so there's another -- could you tell me the
13 other location that has these cameras and what
14 kind of experience they've had? And I guess
15 folding into that, as a pilot do we have criteria
16 that we would deem this as not successful and we
17 would actually suspend the program? Thank you.

18 MR. LEDWITH: Through you, Madam Mayor.
19 So the Town of Washington has an approved plan,
20 but it was just approved recently, if I'm not
21 mistaken. So we don't have any information to
22 glean from that plan. And then Stamford and New
23 Haven have submitted plans to the state, but
24 there's one working plan in the state right now.

25 COUNCILOR FAY: Okay.

1 MR. LEDWITH: And then the question in
2 terms of -- I mean, we as a pilot program we have
3 to compile data, report back to I think both the
4 state and the federal government the results of
5 this program. And I do believe this plan will
6 work and will make our streets safer, but
7 certainly we will look at the data and see how
8 that data supports that.

9 COUNCILOR FAY: I guess what I'm trying
10 to address is we need to do something. I
11 understand that the results are poor. We need to
12 do something. And I just want to make sure that
13 with these programs we do have criteria of when we
14 would deem this is not working or we need to pull
15 it, we need to take it down. And I think that
16 would give a comfort level to residents who share
17 concerns about civil liberties and more
18 monitoring. So thank you for that.

19 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Ms. Fay.
20 Any other questions?

21 (No response.)

22 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. I do have a
23 couple. Most of my questions were asked. The red
24 light cameras, is there a number on that or
25 locations for that specified in the state statute?

1 MR. LEDWITH: Through the grant program
2 is that -- I know the speed was clearly identified
3 in terms of the number of locations we could put
4 it, but how about the red light? Parker.

5 MR. SORENSON: Parker Sorenson,
6 engineering division. Through you, Madam Mayor.
7 So I think just talking, like remembering, trying
8 to remember the grant application, we were in the
9 vicinity of like five intersections, if I
10 remember, not 15 for the red light running
11 cameras.

12 PRESIDENT CANTOR: And that is because
13 of the grant application, right?

14 MR. SORENSON: There's no restriction
15 from state law in terms of the total number of red
16 light running cameras.

17 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you. And New
18 Haven and Stamford did not have federal grant
19 money so their process is going to go faster than
20 ours so they will be up and that will be helpful.

21 MR. LEDWITH: (Nodding head in the
22 affirmative.)

23 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Just to
24 Mr. Zydanowicz's question on the consultant. The
25 consultant we are using for the speed cameras,

1 speed enforcement cameras, would we then, once
2 those are implemented, would that consultant then
3 be done consulting and we would no longer have
4 that, or is that an ongoing, do we know?

5 MR. LEDWITH: So through, Madam Mayor,
6 not through you but to you.

7 (Laughter.)

8 MR. LEDWITH: So we are utilizing the
9 grant to hire the consultant, and there's no
10 budget impact in us rolling this program out.
11 It's completely funded by the grant. And at some
12 point, the grant will go away. We do believe that
13 the fines will, you know, manage the costs of the
14 program and there wouldn't be an impact on
15 taxpayers as we move forward.

16 In terms of that second question, do
17 you guys --

18 MR. SORENSON: What was the second
19 question?

20 PRESIDENT CANTOR: I think it was all
21 kind of combined. I think that the consultant is
22 in the initial phase of the --

23 MR. LEDWITH: Yeah, so they will --

24 PRESIDENT CANTOR: And ultimately it
25 would not be necessary for that consultant because

1 the cameras are --

2 MR. SORENSON: Correct. So the
3 consultant that we're bringing on board in the
4 next few weeks is only for the plan itself which
5 will ultimately be submitted for approval. That's
6 their job to get it through the finish line of
7 state approval. Once that's done, we can go out
8 for a camera vendor out to bid for that. So that
9 would kind of terminate their services at that
10 point.

11 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. And just to
12 clarify, the consultant fee is included in the
13 grant application?

14 MR. LEDWITH: (Nodding head in the
15 affirmative.)

16 PRESIDENT CANTOR: That \$15 processing
17 would be used for maybe other administrative
18 costs, right?

19 MR. LEDWITH: Correct. We would use
20 that to pay the camera vendor.

21 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. I just wanted
22 to, maybe you can just do a very brief summary of
23 the cameras that exist, and, I mean, we did
24 mention it, but just sort of how they're used. I
25 mean, kind of to add on to Ms. Polun's point about

1 a stolen car and how this limited use is truly for
2 speed enforcement, but we do use cameras for other
3 things.

4 ASSISTANT CHIEF TERRA: To you, Madam
5 mayor, we have 33, is it, 33 other cameras to find
6 missing people, wanted people, stolen vehicles,
7 people who are wanted for shootings. Clearly we
8 have highways. People come from different
9 jurisdictions can come through. That's how we get
10 a lot of them. These cameras will be independent
11 of those. These are only -- these are similar to
12 when you, if you've driven on the tolls you get
13 that little envelope in the mail with a picture of
14 your car with a license plate. You can't even see
15 who's driving. And unfortunately if you have a
16 lot of kids, you don't which kid is driving your
17 car. So if you're the registered owner, you'll
18 get the ticket from us just for that violation.
19 So again, we have other cameras for those other
20 purposes, and they're actually very good at
21 locating missing people, wanted people, you name
22 it.

23 PRESIDENT CANTOR: And can you just
24 talk about the storage, the personal, the storage
25 on those cameras, is that something that we keep

1 for -- on the other cameras, not the speed
2 enforcement cameras.

3 ASSISTANT CHIEF TERRA: Those other
4 cameras, of course, we have retention periods on
5 those just like we would with the state library.
6 So we keep those based on whatever it is and then
7 they go away. And we can only -- we've had
8 situations where we have, say, for example, we
9 have a robbery or a shooting or something like
10 that, we try to go back as far as we can, and
11 sometimes it's not there for us. We might go back
12 30 days, maybe 60 days, and then it's gone. So we
13 have to do the old fashioned police work basically
14 and get ahold of the other jurisdictions to see if
15 they have that vehicle that we're looking for. So
16 we're limited too.

17 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you. I think
18 that clarifies some other concern.

19 We did get an email from -- we did get
20 some feedback. I received -- I guess I should
21 have sent it to you because it was regarding this.
22 But the ped bike did have some questions on a
23 definition on the device. And corporation counsel
24 looked at it. The answer is we're consistent with
25 state statute, and that's why the terminology is

1 the way it is.

2 There was a question about use of
3 funds, also why the town manager mentioned that
4 the use of funds would be primarily to Vision Zero
5 but they wouldn't be limited to that. And
6 especially if we are, you know, maybe doing some
7 things in coordination with Vision Zero and
8 something that might be helpful in Vision Zero but
9 might be a reconstruction of a street or I don't
10 know. But could you just expand on that a little
11 bit on how that would be --

12 MR. LEDWITH: So our focus will be
13 completely on, at least initially, on
14 supplementing all of our Vision Zero efforts. But
15 tying a specific term to the ordinance and a use
16 to the ordinance, I mean, essentially we filed the
17 state guidelines and the state verbiage, but if we
18 were to be -- if we received a \$12 million Safe
19 Streets for All grant for Vision Zero and then we
20 were getting this revenue in, we could use this
21 revenue for some other, you know, infrastructure
22 project, not necessarily tied directly to Vision
23 Zero, but it gives us a little more flexibility in
24 the event that we needed it. But for right now in
25 the foreseeable future our focus for the next nine

1 years is getting to zero deaths and zero serious
2 injuries as a result of traffic crashes. So
3 that's where our focus will be.

4 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you. And I do
5 think there was also a question on how data can be
6 used. I think that's clear. It's also very
7 spelled out in state statute as well.

8 And to Mr. Zydanowicz's point, programs
9 that exist for especially newer programs, it
10 probably is helpful to look at every five years
11 and to track it on a unique line item would be, I
12 think, a helpful exercise for us, as it would be
13 for other communities that are interested, because
14 we have been on panels and discussions with many
15 communities that are interested to see our
16 experience.

17 MR. LEDWITH: And it is a pilot
18 program, so we have to maintain all this data and
19 share this data with both the state and the
20 federal government. So we will just -- we can
21 continue that process beyond the pilot program,
22 but we'll have -- and we can keep the Council
23 updated through finance and administration and, I
24 guess, community planning as well.

25 PRESIDENT CANTOR: And the pilot period

1 is for?

2 MR. LEDWITH: Public safety, sorry.

3 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Yes, important. And
4 the pilot period is?

5 MR. LEDWITH: Two years is it? Do you
6 remember?

7 MR. SORENSON: To you, Madam Mayor. So
8 the pilot period is 18 months. So at that point,
9 you know, we'll have some reporting to do not only
10 for state statute but for Federal Highway
11 Administration as we close out that program. And
12 then at that point, you know, we'd anticipate
13 contracting a vendor just for the 18 months with
14 an option to extend.

15 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you. And this
16 is a new, this is relatively new statutorily for
17 the state. And a very small town of Washington
18 has been approved, but larger communities than us
19 are in the pipeline. And so I think the state
20 might have some need and expect some feedback from
21 us on how it works and how the deterrent is
22 working because that is the goal, right, is to
23 make our roads safer. But I think that will be
24 important.

25 I thought there was a third tier for

1 the number, but I guess it's just the 50 and 75.
2 I thought it had gone up to 100, but I must have
3 thought that in some way.

4 I know the state is also looking at
5 those excessive speed, but that was for speed
6 enforcement tickets from our police, correct,
7 only, the over 100 miles per hour?

8 ASSISTANT CHIEF TERRA: To you, Madam
9 Mayor. Yeah, they're looking at the -- because
10 we're seeing the extreme speeds, not here, knock
11 on wood, but like on a highway of 150, 200 miles
12 an hour. It's just too dangerous, so they're
13 looking at upping it to make it a more serious
14 violation.

15 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. All right.
16 Are there any other questions or comments?

17 (No response.)

18 MR. DAVIDOFF: Madam Mayor, before you
19 close the public hearing, I'd like to correct the
20 answer I gave you, have I received any written
21 comments. Late today, I did receive an email
22 forwarded from Mr. Ledwith that you had provided
23 him from Ed Pawlak, the chair of the West Hartford
24 Ped and Bicycle Commission which was dated March
25 27th, and I think those are the concerns that you

1 illustrated. So I just want to make sure the
2 record is accurate. Thank you

3 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.
4 Davidoff. Okay. All right. Again, any other
5 comments, questions?

6 (No response.)

7 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Before we close, I
8 want to thank engineer Parker Sorenson who has
9 really been such an incredible asset to the town
10 in implementing our Vision Zero plan and so much
11 moving forward. So Parker, thank you. You're a
12 real leader, and we're really lucky to have you.

13 And Duane, who really has done so much
14 work all through the Vision Zero process, thank
15 you so much.

16 And of course to our police, our
17 leadership, both chiefs that are here, assistant
18 chiefs that are here, and all of our police that
19 do all the hard work of making sure our streets
20 are safe every day.

21 So thank you all very much. And with
22 that, I'm going to -- well, before I close, I
23 really want to thank Mr. Ledwith too because none
24 of this would happen without his leadership. And
25 with that, I'll close the public hearing. I don't

1 **need to make a motion on that, so we are good.**

2 **(Whereupon, the above proceedings**
3 **concluded at 7:55 p.m.)**

CERTIFICATE

**I hereby certify that the foregoing 49 pages
are a complete and accurate computer-aided
transcription of my original stenotype notes taken
of the WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING
IN RE: ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE USE OF AUTOMATED
TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT SAFETY DEVICES, which was held
before THE WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL, 50 South
Main Street, Legislative Chambers, Room 314, on
April 8, 2025.**



**Lisa L. Warner, CSR 061
Notary Public
My commission expires:
May 31, 2028**