



## Committee on City Services and the Northampton City Council

### Committee Members:

Councilor Dennis P. Bidwell

Councilor Maureen T. Carney

Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge

Councilor Ryan R. O'Donnell

### MEETING MINUTES

Date: January 9, 2017

Time: 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Location: City Council Chambers  
212 Main St., Northampton, Massachusetts

1. Meeting Called to Order and Roll Call: At 4:00 pm Councilor Carney called the meeting to order. Present were: Councilors O'Donnell, Bidwell, LaBarge and Carney. No other City Councilors were present.
2. Public Comment: None
3. Approve minutes from the December 5, 2016 meeting: Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the minutes; Councilor Bidwell seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstention (Councilor O'Donnell).
4. Items Referred to Committee
  - A. Various Appointments to committees - Referred to Committee on City Services on 12/01/2016:

### Community Preservation Committee:

- Linda Morley, 244 Prospect Street, Northampton – January 2017 – June 2019  
(reappointment) **(reviewed by Councilor Bidwell)**

*Councilor Bidwell spoke with Ms. Morley last week. He has known her for some time. He believes that she served as General Council to H.A.P. She is tremendously experienced in her field and now that she is retired she is able to fill the affordable housing slot on the CPC. Ms. Morley is very happy with the committee and her reappointment. She pleased about the projects that have been coming before the committee. Councilor Bidwell supports a positive recommendation for her appointment.*

### Council on Aging:

- Donna Park, 205 Prospect Street, Northampton – term November 2016 – June 2019 (replacing the expired term of Walter Bak) **(reviewed by Councilor LaBarge)**

*Councilor LaBarge spoke with Ms. Park by phone; she has lived in Northampton for over 50 years. She is a retired school teacher. She has enjoyed using the services of the Northampton Senior Center and was encouraged to apply for the open board position. She feels it is important to be an active member of the community. Ms. Park feels that by serving on the board she will be able to help the elderly in the City engage in many services available to them. Councilor LaBarge supports a positive recommendation back to the full City Council.*

- Mark NeJame, 47 High Street, Florence – term November 2016 – June 2019 (replacing the expired term of Margo Welch) **(reviewed by Councilor Carney)**

*Councilor Carney reports that Mr. NeJame is an attorney with the firm NeJame and Kling. Mr. NeJame has previously served on the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and on the Conservation Commission. He is especially interested in this committee as the times of the meeting agree with his schedule. He looks forward to becoming a user-member of the facility. His firm also does a lot of work with the state and probate law. He feels that this may be helpful to the director or members of the COA. Councilor Carney supports a positive recommendation for Mr. NeJame.*

### Historical Commission:

- Barbara Blumenthal, 39 Chapel Street, Northampton – term September 2016 – June 2018 (reappointment) **(reviewed by Councilor Bidwell)**

*Councilor Bidwell spoke with Ms. Blumenthal. He notes that all of the Historical Commission appointments are reappointments and the terms expire at the same time and that this is a bit unusual. In speaking with Sarah LaValley, he discovered that these terms came about when the Historical Commission merged with the Elm Street Historic Commission. This may be fixed at some future point so that term expirations are staggered.*

*Councilor Bidwell reports that Ms. Blumenthal has enjoyed her stint on the Commission. She brings a perspective including her involvement with Historic Northampton for 12 years. She is happy to be reappointed. Councilor Bidwell supports a positive*

*recommendation for Ms. Blumenthal's reappointment.*

- Bruce Kriviskey, 23 Ice Pond Drive, Florence – term September 2016 – June 2018 (reappointment) **(reviewed by Councilor LaBarge)**

*Councilor LaBarge reports that Mr. Kriviskey is a registered Architect and a certified Urban Planner. He is able to work with individual historic structures as well as historic neighborhoods. He has been a very active advocate in the field of historic preservation since 1960. Based on his experience, he has come to believe that preserving both the cultural and the natural environment of cities is the best way to encourage and guide sustainable development. He has been a member of the Commission for several years and would like to continue his service. Councilor LaBarge supports a positive recommendation for the reappointment of Mr. Kriviskey to the Historical Commission.*

- David Drake, 321 Locust Street, Florence – term September 2016 – June 2019 (reappointment) **(reviewed by Councilor LaBarge)**

*Councilor LaBarge reports that Mr. Drake has been a member of the Historical Commission for at least twelve years. As Chair of the Commission, Mr. Drake has helped guide the City's stewardship of its rich heritage. The Commission has done this through management and enlargement of the local Historic District on Elm Street and Round Hill. The Commission will examine whether the existing historic district ordinances are sufficient to respond to new challenges the District has faced. Mr. Drake would like to be reappointed to the commission and will continue to provide his highest level of commitment and judgment; Councilor LaBarge supports a positive recommendation back to the full City Council for Mr. Drake's reappointment.*

- Martha Lyon, 313 Elm Street, Northampton – term September 2016 – June 2019 (reappointment) **(reviewed by Councilor Bidwell)**

*Councilor Bidwell reports that Ms. Lyon is currently the Vice-Chair of the Historic Commission. She is known in the City as a landscape architect and has been involved in cemetery projects, including those at the Bridge Street Cemetery and West Farms Cemetery. She would like to see greater attention brought to cemeteries; there is talk of re-visiting the related ordinances and at some point in the future those ordinances could come before the City Council. Councilor Bidwell supports a positive recommendation for Ms. Lyon's reappointment.*

- Dylan Gaffney, 23 Marshall Street, Northampton – term September 2016 – June 2019 (reappointment) **(reviewed by Councilor O'Donnell)**

*Councilor O'Donnell reports that Mr. Gaffney works at Forbes Library and has lots of experience historical documents and archiving. Councilor O'Donnell has known Mr. Gaffney for a while; he is a resident of Ward 3. He feels it would be a good idea to reappointment Mr. Gaffney to the Historical Commission and supports this as a recommendation.*

### **Zoning Board of Appeals:**

- Bob Riddle, 47 Water Street, Leeds- term March 2015 – June 2018  
(reappointment) **(reviewed by Councilor LaBarge)**

*Councilor LaBarge reports that Mr. Riddle has previously served as a member of the Planning Board for many years. He enjoyed serving the City in that capacity. He has been on the ZBA for about 15 years, most recently as an alternate. He has a Construction Supervisor's License and is familiar with many of the projects being discussed.*

- Sara Northrup, 147 Hinckley Street, Florence – term March 2016 – June 2019  
(reappointment) **(reviewed by Councilor O'Donnell)**

*Councilor O'Donnell reports that Ms. Northrup's appointment is a reappointment. She has considerable experience on the ZBA. By profession she is a Civil Engineer and is a very involved community member. He supports the reappointment.*

- David Bloomberg, 86 Vermon Street, Northampton- term March 2015 – June 2018  
(reappointment) **(reviewed by Councilor Bidwell)**

*Councilor Bidwell reports that he has not had the opportunity to speak directly with Mr. Bloomberg, however he has known Mr. Bloomberg for a long time. Mr. Bloomberg has served on the ZBA for 10 years and is highly regarded by members of the Board. He brings 31 years of practical experience as a real estate attorney. Councilor Bidwell feels that Mr. Bloomberg is tremendously well qualified for the reappointment.*

*Councilor Bidwell moved a positive recommendation for all appointments back to the full City Council; Councilor LaBarge seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No.*

- B. 16.217 Appointment of Molly Hale of 96 Oak Street in Florence to the Public Shade Tree Commission - Referred to Committee on December 15, 2016** Term December 2016 - June 2018 (Filling the unexpired term of Andrew Smith)

*Councilor Carney reports that she has known Ms. Hale primarily through her work with the Broad Brook Coalition. She has been involved with the numerous acres of conservation land that has been acquired over the years in the Fitzgerald Lake and Broad Brook regions. Ms. Hale is also very active as a wildlife biologist and naturalist. An appointment to the Tree Commission seems appropriate. She is very active around issues of climate change and is specifically interested in promoting the use of street trees as they have a positive impact on climate. She supports a positive recommendation for the appointment of Ms. Hale.*

*Councilor LaBarge moved a positive recommendation back to the full City Council; Councilor O'Donnell seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No.*

#### **5. Discussion regarding 2017 Committee focus:**

Councilor Carney reminded the committee that there had been a decision to postpone the departmental presentation from the IT department as they are in the midst of reorganizing. Councilor Carney asked committee members which departments they would like to bring in over the next eleven months.

Councilor LaBarge is interested in hearing from the Department of Public Works. Residents in her ward are interested in hearing about the money that is set aside for stormwater utility. People would like to know what the department has been doing with the money that is placed into that fund.

Councilor Bidwell reports that it is mandated that there be such a report and that there is a report forthcoming about the use of those funds. In speaking with Councilor Dwight, it was suggested that the opportunity for discussing this topic would be when the report comes forward and that it might be appropriate for the discussion to take place during a meeting of the Committee on Public Works and Utilities. Councilor Bidwell is unsure if the report needs to be formally accepted by the Council; however he does expect to see the report come forward within the next several months. Anyone can come to the meeting, regardless of which committee hosts the discussion.

Councilor Carney reviewed the City Council Rules and notes that the related departments for this committee are Parks and Recreation, Veterans Services, Council on Aging / Senior Services, Forbes and Lilly Libraries, Police, Fire Rescue, Health Department, Board of Health, Parking Enforcement, Information Technology, Public Safety Communications, Emergency Management, Building Commissioner.

Councilor Carney read the committee's duties as listed in the Council Rules: "The Committee may develop, review and recommend policies on matters including public safety and public health, veteran's affairs, social services, libraries, disability, aging and recreation, among others. The Committee shall serve as the standing committee to review all candidates for appointment to boards and commission in accordance with Section 2-10 of the Charter."

Councilor Bidwell would prefer to have departments come based on issues, rather than have one department come to talk to the committee about several topics. One example would be the topic of opioid crisis as it is hitting Northampton. This topic touches several departments in the City. Another example is sanctuary city status and the City's relationship with the federal government.

Councilor Carney asked the committee how to proceed logistically. If the committee began with the opioid crisis, how would this happen?

Councilor O'Donnell noted that regarding the Parks and Recreation Department, there are questions, such as how they are settling in at their new location and what are the plans for programming at Pulaski Park. Perhaps the committee could ask them to come to a meeting first before combined departments came. Maybe at that meeting the committee could bring issues and topics for future meetings.

Councilor Carney indicated that it would be preferable to give departments advance warning that the committee wanted to talk about specific issues. If the committee wanted to re-visit the opioid issue it would be a good idea to include the Health Department, Fire Rescue, and Police. The departments would be asked to focus their remarks around the one issue.

Councilor LaBarge would like the school department and IT department to talk about how the changes are going. Councilor Carney suggested that Antonio Pagan might be the only person required to come as he will be the overall department manager responsible for IT for both the City and the Schools.

Councilor O'Donnell suggested that with IT there is an internal use across all departments but maybe there is also a public use, with questions about how well we are doing with requests for public information. He recalls Councilor Dwight talking about tracking where bills are in the City Council process. He notes that if you go onto the Massachusetts Legislature's page there is a way that you can track state house bills. You can find out which committee is handling any piece of legislation at any point in time. It also shows the results of the committee's deliberations. He wonders how the Council can improve transparency in what it does.

"Public side of IT" was suggested by Councilor Carney as the overarching theme. She wondered if other departments should be involved along with IT. Councilor Bidwell stated that there is another issue, and that is how we accommodate a variety of services provided by IT while assuring confidentiality of sensitive information. We were told that that is a paramount objective. Councilor Carney asked if it made better sense to have the IT come to a different meeting as a sole presenter; the committee agreed.

Councilor O'Donnell asked about public art. He notes that when thinking about public art it is often considered within the jurisdiction of one department, however, he feels it should be part of the mission of every department, including Planning. Councilor Carney suggested that Parks and Recreation and the Libraries may be able to speak to this issue. The Arts itself falls under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Community Resources. Councilor O'Donnell would need more preparation before multiple departments are called in.

Councilor Bidwell mentioned sanctuary city status. Perhaps sometime down the road when this issue is better understood the committee might consider a meeting dedicated to this topic. This might involve more than one department's participation.

Councilor LaBarge would like to consider the Veteran's Services. They have a lot of functions coming up and also receive money from the City. Usually Steve Connors comes to speak to the issues.

Councilor Carney suggested that the committee could ask the Parks and Recreation, IT, and Veteran's Services departments to come and present to the committee. In the mean time the committee could plan on the overarching topic of the opioid crisis with planned participation from Health, Fire Rescue, and Police. The former Public Safety Committee addressed purchases of the former Fire Department; however, this is something that is now addressed by the Finance Committee.

Councilor O'Donnell commented that with the budget process, he has often thought that the Council should re-examine how the budget hearings work. There are these big two day hearings in which departments come to speak to their budget. He wonders if those hearings should be more focused on the Finance Department and Susan Wright, but if we wanted to have meetings in our committees about certain departments, they could happen in committee perhaps. That might be a way to have a more focused conversation. This idea may be more conceptual; Councilor O'Donnell feels that there may be no easy way to plan for this.

Councilor LaBarge feels that having budget hearings for just two days is really cramming a lot of information in a short period of time. She recalls that in the past the meetings took place over three to four days.

Councilor Bidwell agrees that the next three meetings should be focused on department meetings and then the fourth meeting could address the overarching topic of the opioid crisis. Councilor Carney suggested that Parks and Recreation Department be asked to present at the February meeting, Veteran's Services be asked to present at the March meeting, and IT Department be asked to present at the April meeting. In May the themed topic of the opioid crisis can be planned to include the Fire Rescue, Police, and Health Departments. The committee will use time in February and March to refine the topic.

Questions for the Parks and Recreation Department:

How are they settling in at their new location?

What are the plans for programming at Pulaski Park?

What role does the department see themselves playing in the area of "Public Art"?

**6. New Business; None**

**7. Adjourn: At 4:45pm Councilor Bidwell moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor O'Donnell seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No.**

*Prepared By:*

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