



Committee on Legislative Matters and the Northampton City Council

Members:

Councilor David A. Murphy, Chair

Councilor Ryan R. O'Donnell

Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra

Councilor James Nash

MEETING MINUTES

Date: February 13, 2017

Time: 5:00 pm

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

1. Meeting Called to Order and Roll Call: At 5:05 pm councilor Murphy called the meeting to order. Present were Councilors Murphy, O'Donnell, Sciarra and Nash. No other City Councilors were present.
2. Public Comment: Susan Swift of the Montessori School of Northampton was present to hear the discussion concerning school zones.
3. Approve Minutes of January 9, 2017 Meeting: Councilor O'Donnell moved to approve the minutes; Councilor Sciarra seconded the motion. The minutes were approved on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No.
4. Items Referred to Committee
 - a. 17.233 An Ordinance Relative to School Zones - Referred to Committee on 1/5/2017 (and to TPC)
This ordinance was referred to Transportation and Parking Commission which has not yet reviewed and provided feedback. The committee decided to discuss the item since there was a member of the public who was interested in hearing more about the ordinance.

Councilor O'Donnell explained that this ordinance would establish new school zones and alter others. In geographic locations around school zones, traffic must reduce speeds to 20 mph when children are present. He notes that Section A was amended at the last committee meeting to eliminate the current language.

The table has been amended:

- The Bridge Street School Zone has been changed by adding Bridge Street as part of the zone. This extends the zone along Lampron Park.
- The College Church School name has been changed to Cutchins Program Campus.
- The Montessori School Zone would extend to Bradford Street to a point 380 northerly. On Bates St. it would extend from Bradford all the way to North Street.
- The Smith College Campus School abuts two streets: Prospect Street (no change proposed) and State Street to the northern end of Bedford Terrace to a point 60 north of the northern edge of Trumbull St. The speed limit on State Street is normally 25 mph; Councilor O'Donnell feels that dropping it to 20 mph is not a big deal.
- Councilor O'Donnell plans to amend the table to add the Lander-Grinspoon Academy on Prospect Street. He plans to introduce the change at the TPC meeting.

Councilor O'Donnell explained that regarding all of the proposed changes, the measurements came from the DPW. The deletions within the ordinance propose to eliminate language that is already in state law.

Councilor Murphy recalled that school zones can only be established for schools serving grades 1-8 only.

Councilor Nash has received a number of e-mails expressing enthusiasm about the changes. He notes that there has been an on-going issue with pick-up / drop-off at Bridge Street School. Traffic seems to get congested at the school during these times. He notes that this is due to the fact that fewer kids are walking. He feels that by making it safer for kids to walk, more might be encouraged to do so.

Councilor O'Donnell noted that not only do the changes address school needs, but they also address broader traffic calming needs as well. He notes that at the Montessori School area there is a big traffic problem there anyway because people cut through the industrial park to get across town.

A member of the audience asked if the designation of a school zone also came with an allocation of funds for a school crossing guard. The answer was "no" but more signs would likely be installed by the DPW and the speed limit would be reduced throughout the zone. Signs would be paid for by the City.

Councilor Nash noted that he was on the Board of Cutchins and wanted to be sure that this information was disclosed. Councilor Murphy explained that only changing the name of the school to accurately reflect the current name would not raise an issue.

The Committee will bring this back at the next meeting to discuss and send a recommendation forward to the City Council after TPC has had a chance to review. Councilor O'Donnell moved to continue the ordinance to the next committee meeting; Councilor seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No.

- b. 17.244 An Ordinance regarding Fair Minimum Wage - referred to committee on 2/2/2017
Councilor Murphy explained that this ordinance was going to be taken up by the Committee on finance on 2/16/2017. Ordinarily the Committee on Legislative Matters waits to weigh in on an item until all other committees have had a chance to review the item. He wondered if this committee would agree to address this ordinance tonight and send it forward to the Council for a 1st Reading on 2/16/2017. It would only come back to this committee if any changes were made by the Committee on Finance.

Councilor Sciarra was fine with approach but cautioned that at the last meeting members of the public spoke about how they were concerned about how things moved through committees. Councilor Murphy was not in favor of keeping things held up in committee unless there was something meaningful that needed to be done. In this case, he did not feel that there was anything that the committee could add. He is fine with moving it forward.

Councilor O'Donnell explained that there is a state minimum wage law in Massachusetts which is typically \$0.50 higher than the federal minimum wage. The minimum wage law applies to the private sector, but not to the public sector, as interpreted by the Attorney General's Office. In a different section of state law, there is language explaining that cities and towns could set policy about wages. It is under that authority that Councilor O'Donnell is proposing the ordinance. This ordinance essentially states that the policy of Northampton will be to pay minimum wage. He notes that any collective bargaining agreement will not need to be re-addressed should there be any wages paid below minimum wage through a collective bargaining agreement. Also, the ordinance will not apply to elected officials. As a practical matter the City does not have any employees that receive less than the minimum wage; however, the schools has in recent past and Councilor O'Donnell thought "substitutes" fell into this category. Councilor O'Donnell explained that this ordinance would not apply to the School Department. Councilor Murphy checked on this; the only control that the Council has over the School Department is to approve their budget in aggregate.

Councilor O'Donnell explained that this ordinance will codify a policy that the current Mayor has adopted. Councilor Murphy suggested that if the City wanted to attract employees to do its bidding, then it is a good idea to pay at least the minimum wage.

Councilor Murphy suggested that if the Finance Committee chose to make any changes to the ordinance then this committee should review it again. If not, then the ordinance should move forward to the full City Council for 1st Reading. The committee agreed.

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

5. New Business: None

6. Adjourn: At 5:35 pm Councilor O'Donnell moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Sciarra seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No.

Prepared By:

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