



## *Committee on Economic Development, Housing and Land Use*

*Councilor Paul D. Spector, Chair  
Councilor Owen Freeman-Daniels  
Councilor Pamela C. Schwartz  
Councilor Eugene A. Tacy  
Kevin Lake, Conservation Commission liaison  
Ann DeWitt Brooks, Planning Board liaison*

### **Tuesday, June 4, 2013 Minutes**

**5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.**

**City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street  
Wallace J. Puchalski Municipal Building  
Northampton, MA**

1. Members present/absent: **Councilor Spector, Councilor Freeman-Daniels, Councilor Schwartz, and Councilor Tacy. Kevin Lake and Ann DeWitt Brooks were absent. Mayor Narkewicz was also present.**
2. Meeting Called to Order **Councilor Spector called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.**
3. Announcement of Audio/Video Recording of Meeting **The meeting was audio-recorded. North Street Association, Ruth McGrath, videotaped the meeting.**
4. Public Comment **None**
5. Approval of May 7, 2013 Minutes **Councilor Tacy moved approval of the minutes; Councilor Schwartz seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).**
6. Update from Mayor David J. Narkewicz on Redevelopment of Roundhouse Parking Lot property, including formation of Ad-Hoc Roundhouse Redevelopment Committee

Mayor Narkewicz noted that he last came to this Committee seeking endorsement for an Order to City Council, which was adopted. The schedule is now to use the summer to come up with an ad-hoc committee of citizens to discuss the redevelopment of the Roundhouse, modeled after the Florence Community Committee. That committee was made up of Finance Committee and citizens. This ad-hoc committee would be made up of EDHLU and citizens. Committee members supported this plan. End result would be to get to the RFP process. Mayor Narkewicz would like to bring forth names of an architect, downtown central business, with arts and business sectors represented. Mayor Narkewicz may have names ready for the next EDHLU meeting (September 3) for joint sponsorship of the Order.

#### 7. Northampton Downtown Economic and Cultural Vibrancy

Councilor Freeman-Daniels requested this item be placed on the agenda. There has been little discussion from City Council on the state of affairs in downtown, as in the benches controversy. Councilor Freeman-Daniels noted the presence of Terry Masterson, Economic Development Director, and Peg Keller, CDBG & Housing. Councilor Spector noted the discussion could begin at this Committee.

Mayor Narkewicz noted the work downtown of Peg Keller on social issues and housing, and Terry Masterson's work on outreach to businesses. There is a working group related to downtown issues; the drop-in shelter may have to move.

Councilor Spector noted the newspaper article about the benches restored and resolved. The benches' issue is one small piece of economic development. Mayor Narkewicz noted the Resolution pending on the June 6, 2013 City Council agenda. Councilor Tacy noted a letter in today's newspaper regarding the bench outside Haymarket.

Councilor Schwartz noted her participation in the downtown meetings, and the tenor of how do we assist those in need. The streets must be safe and friendly, but we must raise consciousness, not remove benches. The community responded to that action very clearly. Issues are how to provide shelter to homeless, those with substance abuse, mental illness. These are

human beings in front of us.

Councilor Freeman-Daniels noted the downtown as important to live, work, have business, shop – all are important here. There is a need for data and good policy of how to use downtown space for all these plus parking, consider expanding sidewalks and more benches.

Amy Bookbinder spoke of the need for a community discussion with the BID. Councilor Spector noted that a forum of economic discussion could be done. Councilor Schwartz noted the forum could be the launch of community dialogue. Mayor Narkewicz noted that all parking revenues stay in the Central Business District. Councilor Freeman-Daniels would like more conversation about parking revenues, including additional ideas.

Terry Masterson noted the need to consider all perspectives and to discuss how everyone feels to enjoy and visit downtown. There are indicators such as rental increases/decreases, retail mix, quality of retail, attractions. There is need for consensus of what we all want in the downtown, including the Chamber, BID, City Hall, and business owners. Councilor Schwartz noted that information should frame the discussion and is worth understanding.

Terry Masterson noted a survey for the Chamber and store owners regarding downtown, preferences, suggestions for improvements. Councilor Freeman-Daniels noted this is an excellent reason that the City has a full-time economic director; the City Council must rely on input from the Executive branch to guide us in policy making and progress.

Patricia Forman , Ward 3, homeowner and was a teacher at Clark – why no survey of those on the street to help or mentor? There is a fear factor of those who are using drugs. We don't want to be targeted or hassled. Friends will not want to retire here if this atmosphere.

Peg Keller noted the downtown resource workgroup includes Mayor, Terry Masterson, police, chamber, residents, and merchants. People know that Northampton is a caring community. We have printed resource cards with information about the shelters and available services. There is a police grant to increase police visibility, and discussion with the BID is taking place. There are multiple approaches to use.

Councilor Spector noted the need for a vision for the downtown, and data is needed for that discussion. Councilor Freeman-Daniels noted that the discussion and plans should be based on the Northampton Sustainability Plan.

Mike Lowell suggested that the City look at how other cities handle this, as in Latin America or Scandinavia, for use of green space and areas such as Pulaski Park.

Charles Embry noted the bench issue was intimidating to the merchants, with calls for boycott or stealing. The City Council statement or resolution should show support to the merchants.

Amy Bookbinder cautioned the Committee to not profile and be mindful of privacy issues. Councilor Freeman-Daniels noted that the conversation is a statement including the merchants, and it is a mutual relationship. Councilor Tacy stated he was not convinced a forum was the best venue, as it may lead to people just venting frustrations. Councilor Tacy noted that the Bean/Allard project started as a forum and was well laid out which brought a successful outcome. Councilor Freeman-Daniels suggested Councilors should do some education of ourselves and collect information before the forum; people will come and vent, but many will want to hear ideas.

8. NEW BUSINESS –*Reserved for topics that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.* **None**

**At 6:35 p.m., Councilor Spector moved to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Freeman-Daniels. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously (4-0).**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Mary L. Midura  
Executive Secretary*

