



## **Public Works Committee of the City Council**

**Councilor Paul D. Spector  
Councilor Jesse M. Adams  
Councilor Alisa F. Klein**

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

6/29/2015 - Minutes

### **1. Meeting Called to Order**

At 4:45 pm Councilor Spector called the meeting to order. Present at the meeting were Councilors Klein and Spector. Councilor Adams was absent.

### **2. Approve Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Councilor Klein moved to approve the minutes of April 9, 2015; Councilor Spector seconded the motion. The minutes were approved on a voice vote of 2 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Adams).

### **3. Discussion: Reconsideration of the Taking of Center Court**

There are questions about the process since the council voted not to accept the former BPW recommendation to not make Center Court a city street. Councilor Klein will follow up with the Mayor's Office and with Public Works.

### **4. Request for Update on Solar Array at the Glendale Landfill**

Councilor Spector gave an update on what is happening with the solar industry, particularly free-standing solar arrays in the western part of Massachusetts. Northampton has been a leader for its solar systems per capita, mostly rooftop models. When the legislation came through requiring utility companies in the state to purchase a certain amount of solar from the free-standing units, no one could have predicted that the solar energy market would have taken off the way that it has. In western Massachusetts, utility companies have reached the cap amount of electricity that they must purchase. As a result, they are no longer guaranteeing that they will purchase electricity from rooftop solar panel owners. Multiple projects will be affected by this, including Northampton's solar array project at the former landfill. Until something happens, this project, along with other projects state-wide, will not move forward. Since there is now corporate interest in solar, there may be more clout to lobby for solar energy purchases, which may push the Governor's Office to develop a plan to address this issue. In defense of the utility companies, the utility company built the infrastructure that is being utilized by the solar industry and they feel that it is unfair to ask that the utility companies compensate for energy produced by the solar industry.

Councilor Spector acknowledged that a comprehensive energy plan needs to be developed for gas, solar, electricity and wind energy. The Northampton Energy Commission is keeping an eye on any

developments.

## **5. Downtown Florence Beautification Committee**

Betsy Alden is a ward 7 resident who frequents downtown Florence. During her travels she has noticed that there have been some opportunities to spruce up the area. She has observed some dying trees, weeds in the tree belt area, etc. As an avid gardener, she can identify opportunities to spruce up downtown Florence and would like to volunteer her time.

Robert Ross attended the meeting as a Florence Civic and Business Association representative. He offered that the association is always interested in volunteers to do things like weeding and other beautification projects. He also informed the committee that other community members have been helpful in planting projects, including Mr. Shea of Doyle's package store.

Councilor Klein talked about other community members who might be willing to help Ms. Alden with her efforts. Lilly Lombard is the current chair of the Northampton Public Shade Tree Committee; she might be a good resource to identify appropriate plantings to replace the trees that have recently died.

## **6. New Business**

None

## **7. Adjourn**

At 5:30 Councilor Klein made a motion to adjourn; Councilor Spector seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 2 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Adams).

*Prepared By:*

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