

Committee on Public Safety

Councilor Maureen T. Carney, Chair

Councilor Jesse M. Adams

Councilor William H. Dwight

Councilor David A. Murphy

Committee on Public Safety **Wallace J. Puchalski Municipal Building** **212 Main Street, Northampton, MA**

4/13/2015 - Minutes

1. Activate NCTV Camera To Record Meeting

At 4:03 pm Councilor Carney called the meeting to order.

2. Members Present/Absent

Councilor's Present: Councilor Carney, Councilor Murphy and Councilor Dwight

Absent: Councilor Adams

3. Announcement Of Audio/Video Recording Of Meeting

Councilor Carney announced that the meeting would be video and audio recorded.

4. Public Comment

None

5. Approval Of Meeting Minutes

Councilor Dwight moved to approve the meeting minutes of March 2, 2015; Councilor Murphy seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Adams)

6. Departmental Presentations

6.I. Building Commissioner's Report

Mr. Hasbrouck presented information from the Building Commissioner's Office. He reported that the building activity continues in the City at a steady pace, however, permits will be less than FY2014. There are projects that estimate \$65 million; 50% of the projects are less than \$10,000.

Mr. Hasbrouck predicts that there are likely two projects on Pleasant St. that will be brought forward later this year: projects at the former lumber yard and lodging house.

The Building Department is working with the Northampton Fire Department to identify potential building hazards which might affect emergency responders. Potential hazards might include:

- buildings where electrical power is present even if electrical service is disconnected (such as in the case of a hooked-up generator).
- buildings where photovoltaic solar systems are present.

The building Commissioner is working with Dispatch to find ways to make this information more readily

available.

The department is also working with Chief Deign to identify buildings with wooden and light gauge steel trusses. The concern here is roof collapse; with approx. 8,000 structures in the City, the project will be on-going.

With development happening at Smith Campus on the horizon, the question came up about how the Dover Amendment affects the zoning restrictions. While educational institutions are exempt from certain zoning regulations, there are certain development characteristics in which cities or towns may have a say: building height, setback or parking are three areas.

Councilor Murphy asked whether there have been any concerns regarding Air B & B's. Mr. Hasbrouck explained that there are two sides of air B&B regulation: zoning and building code. The building codes are somewhat ambiguous, but for practical purposes 3 or fewer rooms are treated as a single-family residential bed and breakfast; 4 or more bedrooms are treated as a bed & breakfast lodging establishment. Requirements are defined for each type.

Zoning looks at it a little differently. If you want to identify your home as a bed and breakfast, you need a special permit through Planning. A bed and breakfast will have to go through the site plan approval process.

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The **Dover Amendment** is the common name for [MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW](#) (MGL) Chapter 40A, Section 3. This law exempts agricultural, religious, and educational corporations from certain [ZONING RESTRICTIONS](#).

7. New Business

8. Adjourn

Councilor Murphy moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:45 pm; Councilor Dwight seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 absent (Councilor Adams).

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