

Committee on Rules, Orders, Appointments, & Ordinances

Councilor David A. Murphy
Councilor Maureen T. Carney
Councilor Ryan R. O'Donnell

Minutes of Meeting Date:

Meeting Time:

City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street
Northampton, Massachusetts

****Activate NCTV Camera to Record Minutes***

11/9/2015 - Minutes

1. Announcement Of Audio/Video Recording Of Meeting

Councilor Carney announced that the meeting would be video taped.

2. Members Present/Absent

Councilor Murphy would arrive a few minutes late to the meeting. Present at the start of the meeting were Councilors Carney and O'Donnell. Councilor Carney chaired the meeting until Councilor Murphy arrived.

3. Meeting Called To Order

Councilor Carney called the meeting to order @ 5:02 pm. Councilor Murphy arrived at 5:10 pm.

4. Public Comment

None

5. Approve Minutes Of The Previous Meeting

A. Minutes Of October 13, 2015 Meeting

Councilor O'Donnell moved to approve the minutes of October 13, 2015; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 2 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Murphy).

6. Orders And Ordinances For Review

A. 15.377 Zoning For Significant Trees

Councilor O'Donnell moved to recognize Sr. Land Planner Carolyn Misch who was present to review the changes to the Ordinance regarding significant trees. It was noted that the version that was attached to the agenda did not include changes that were proposed and agreed upon by the Planning Board and by this committee at its last meeting. Ms. Misch will review the document for missing language and provide to the Admin. Assistant. Once updated, this ordinance can go back to City Council for approval. Specifically, the sentence "The section is not meant to regulate work performed by a utility company in maintenance of its rights of way or in its maintenance repair or replacement of infrastructure that is unrelated to a development project requiring zoning relief" should be moved to section D. 5.

Other changes: capitalization of Warden; under E. remove the website address and replace with Planning Board.

Ms. Misch indicated that at the last meeting Councilor Murphy had indicated that he wanted better language to address continuity of ownership. Ms. Misch suggested that to address this, she recommends that the standards should apply if trees are removed within 12 months immediately prior to a site plan or zoning relief. This length of time would replace the current 18 month stipulation. (section C). Given the amount of time it takes to plan a project and get it in the approval pipeline, 12 months seems realistic.

Councilor O'Donnell moved to continue to the next meeting; Councilor Murphy seconded. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No.

B. 15.520 Ordinance Pertaining To Glass To Ensure That Structures Exempt From Review Minimally Maintain The Existing Amount Of Glass On Street Facing Facades

This Ordinance is not part of zoning. Ordinances that are part of Central Business Architecture are subject to a different approval process. For many years there have been a series of exemptions from review by Central Business Architecture. This had been item 14 under exemptions. The language clarifies that renovations and alterations are exempt, however, the 50% baseline would still apply. Examples of anomaly buildings include the former Police Station building; houses used for commercial purposes; Northampton Cooperative Bank. If someone wanted to change the facade, they would not be allowed to brick up the store front. Buildings will remain exempt as long as they don't reduce the amount of glass.

Amendment made by committee:

"C. The following elements are specifically exempt from review by the Committee. The Building Commissioner shall issue permits for this work only after determining that the project is exempt.

(14) Alteration or renovation, but not expansion or demolition, of any anomaly or transitional residential building, based on its most recent classification if developed in accordance with the Design Guidelines and so long as the change does not reduce the glazed area of any street-facing facade."

Councilor O'Donnell moved to send the Ordinance back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation as amended; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No.

C. 15.522 Ordinance For A Complete Streets Policy

This Ordinance serves the purpose to codify what is currently done to improve the public infrastructure. The formality of codifying will make the city eligible for public street improvement money from state sources. Also, the language provides guidelines for all departments to use as guidelines for proposed improvements on the street network.

Councilor O'Donnell points out that there are two versions of this ordinances that were referred to this committee. One version was submitted by the Transportation and Parking Commission. The second shows sponsorship by the Mayor. He indicated that the TPC should be removed as a sponsor. Although they endorse the idea of a policy for complete streets, they did not add their sponsorship to it.

Changes introduced by committee:

- B (3) Lane width should be 10 feet to 11 feet wide for a two way street.
- A The City's Complete Street policy...
- A (5) Ensure sidewalks on all new and reconstructed streets, except alleys and shared streets.

Councilor Murphy asked that Ms. Misch provide for the full city council the state's requirements for a complete street policy.

Councilor O'Donnell moved to forward to City Council with a neutral recommendation as amended; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No.

D. 15.523 Ordinance Regarding Winter Parking Regulations

This Ordinance came from Transportation and Parking Commission. Councilor O'Donnell explained that this was a divided vote which narrowly passed in that committee.

The Ordinance prohibits parking in municipal lots during a snow emergency, with certain exceptions. The exceptions are not spelled out in the portion of the ordinance before committee. Councilor Murphy asked that this information be provided to Council when the ordinance goes back to the full City Council for a vote.

Councilor O'Donnell moved to return the Ordinance back to City Council with a neutral recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No.

E. 15.524 Ordinance Revising Section 312-117 Schedule XVI-Handicapped Parking Spaces On Keyes Street

This Ordinance corrects the location of the parking space.

Councilor O'Donnell moved to return this ordinance back to City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No.

F. 15.525 Ordinance Revising Section 312-46 "Designation Of Parking Spaces"

Councilor O'Donnell explained that certain wording of the ordinance did not make sense for parallel parking spots designated for handicapped parking. Also, the international symbol of accessibility parking space sign is introduced.

Councilor O'Donnell moved to return the ordinance back to the full city council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No.

7. Appointments For Committee Approval

A. 15.535 Appointments

The Appointments will be reviewed at the December meeting.

Councilor O'Donnell volunteered to contact Jami Albro-Fisher who has been proposed as a member of the Transportation & Parking Commission.

The extension of the term of appointment for Esther White will not be discussed by this

committee as the term extension was approved in City Council on Nov. 5th rather than referring to committee.

8. New Business

None

9. Adjourn

At 5:50 pm Councilor O'Donnell moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No.

Respectfully submitted by
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