



CITY COUNCIL MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 212 MAIN STREET
Northampton, Massachusetts
November 2, 2023

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the City Council was called to order by Council President Jim Nash at 7 p.m. Upon a roll call, the following City Councilors were physically present:

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|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| At-Large Councilor Marissa Elkins | At-Large Councilor Jamila Gore |
| Ward 1 Councilor Stanley Moulton, III | Ward 2 Councilor Karen Foster |
| Ward 3 Councilor James Nash | Ward 4 Councilor Garrick Perry |
| Ward 5 Councilor Alexander Jarrett | Ward 6 Councilor Marianne LaBarge |
| Ward 7 Councilor Rachel Maiore | |

Announcement that Meeting Audio/Video Recorded

Council President Nash announced that the meeting was being audio/video recorded.

Public Comment

Public Comment

Councilor Nash asked the council’s discretion to take the agenda out of order and begin with public comment instead of public hearings since the Tax Classification hearing is expected to take some time. Hearing no objection, he explained the procedure he would use in conducting public comment and opened the floor to comments.

George Kohout, 234 State Street, said he is a 40-year resident of Northampton who has had the privilege of serving on the Planning Board for more than 15 years. He doesn’t speak for other Planning Board members tonight but that experience has given him a pretty good overview of the city’s planning process. Over the past 15 to 20 years, he has been engaged in quite a few discussions and review of plans, especially plans around sustainability and resilience and transportation. He is here to support the council’s resolution in support of the Main Street redesign. The changes that will be incorporated in the redesign of Main Street really speak to those long-term plans of the city. The alignment is remarkable around sustainability - the impact on the city’s carbon footprint - and particularly around safety for people visiting and living in town, whether traveling by car, foot or bicycle. Those two very important factors need to be taken into consideration. He’s spent the past month talking to quite a few business owners on Main Street. Having just been through COVID and suffered the impacts of the pandemic, their concern about the construction period is real. City officials need to work on some creative mitigation to help them through the construction time and the Planning Board would love to be part of that process. He is highly in favor of the resolution to move forward with the Main Street redesign.

Jacqueline McCreanor, Northampton, said she would deeply appreciate the mayor, councilors and heads of departments staying open-minded to a potential alternative design plan developed by Toole Design group and just slightly modified so as to continue to be eligible for state and federal funding. It is her belief that they and the public will be privy to such an alternative plan, one that keeps all the benefits of the existing plan but addresses some key concerns and issues that continue to exist. She asked them to imagine being a spry 90-year old Northampton resident or an individual born with a disability or otherwise physically impaired who still enjoys going downtown but depends on a vehicle and angled parking to do so. She believes there are many benefits to the proposed Main Street redesign, however, the plan unequivocally puts the desires of able-bodied cyclists ahead of the needs of their elderly and those with disabilities. She believes this is unacceptable. They need to be an inclusive community and to stand up for what is right. “We need to prioritize our vulnerable, elderly and disabled residents.” She strongly urged them to stay open to the forthcoming alternative plan designed to garner funding for the Main Street project that would still accommodate cyclists much more so than they are today just not at the expense of their elderly and disabled residents and visitors.

Jess Levine, Wright Avenue, said she moved here in 2021 and has been attending all the meetings about the Main Street redesign. She wanted to come and support the council’s support of the Main Street redesign. Last week she was at the Friends of Northampton Trails

bike party and out riding the streets and so was not able to be here. She lives on Wright Avenue off Pleasant Street and, when walking her dog, etc., sees those sidewalk-level bike lanes for all ages and abilities. Just this morning she saw four people commuting by bike in the one minute she was on Pleasant Street. She sees people using those bike lanes all the time. Those are the types of facilities they need here in Northampton and just the types the Main Street redesign has for all ages and abilities. She works for MassBike and with a lot of older adults. A lot of older adults use e-bikes for transportation right now but they need separated, dedicated lanes to make that possible. The Main Street lanes will make it much safer for older adults choosing to use e-bikes or regular bikes as their transportation option. She knows All Out Adventures helps folks with disabilities get set up with adaptive equipment. When she gave out free bike lights last year there was an awesome lady with an adaptive chair that is actually a bicycle. She supports this redesign for all ages and abilities to get through downtown.

Michael Whitmann played a song with the refrain, “There you go again talking about reparations; there you go again talking about something else free. . . Well, listen to me, you ain’t getting nothing from me.”

“You say all your ancestors were slaves and that’s a reason that you oughta get paid. You want something for nothing; you monkeys are all the same. You put all the blame on whites; we violated. . . “ (The speaker was muted at this point.)

David Ames spoke in support of the Main Street redesign. Whether here in Northampton, in Boulder, Colorado, Burlington, Vermont, New York City or Paris, everyone hates [construction projects] at the beginning - the disruption, the effect on business. In all of those places, after it’s done, people love it and it brings more people to the downtown area. It will be tough; he has his concern for businesses, but he thinks that if everyone in the community gets behind it and supports the businesses, they’ll get through it and, at the very end, people are going to look at the project and say it was a great idea and it’s going to be a boon to everyone in Northampton. He thinks once they get through it, it’s going to be the best.

Leonard Frank, Northampton, identified himself as a member of Jews for Christ and stated his intention to read from scripture. Claiming to be reading directly from the Talmud, a Jewish holy book, he cited various verses as follows:

Gittin 57a: “Jesus is in hell being boiled in hot excrement;”

Bava Kamma 113: “A Jew may lie and use subterfuges to circumvent the non-Jew;”

Sanhedrin 57a: “When a Jew steals from a non-Jew, he may keep it;”

Sanhedrin 58b: “If a non-Jew hits a Jew he must be killed;”

Ketubot 11b: “A man who engages in intercourse with a girl of less than three years of age has done nothing wrong.”

Jalkut Rubeni gadol 12b: “The souls of non-Jews come from impure spirits and are called pigs;”

Yalkut 245c: “The extermination of the Christians is a necessary sacrifice;”

Zohar 1,160a: “Jews must always try to deceive Christians;”

Yebamoth 98a: “All non-Jew children are animals;”

He continued after reiterating that this is the Jewish holy book, the Talmud:

Sanhedrin 57A: “When a Jew murders a non-Jew there will be no penalty;”

Shabbat 116A: “Jews must destroy the books of the Christians (i.e., the New Testament);”

Lieber David 37: “To communicate anything to a non-Jew about our religious relations would be the equal to the killing of all Jews, for if the non-Jew knew what we teach about them, they would kill us openly.”

He quoted Jesus from the Bible as stating at John 8:44 that “They are of their children the devil (sic) and quoted Revelation 29:39, “They are the synagogue of Satan.”

He ended by saying, “Gas Jews.”

Councilor Nash announced that the council was going to take a brief recess.

Recess

Recess

At 7:22 p.m., the City Council recessed briefly. The council reconvened at 7:31 p.m.

Public Comment
(continued)**Public Comment (continued)**

Upon reconvening, Councilor Nash noted that they have been experiencing some hate speech during public comment and took a brief recess to regroup. People are still queued up to speak; some he knows and some he doesn't know, so they may hear more of that. They are required per Mass. General Law to allow people to have the floor during public comment so, whoever it is has two minutes, he advised.

He reread a portion of his preamble stressing that speakers' protected speech is a constitutional right which they ask them to wield with consideration and respect for all.

Benjamin Spencer, Rust Avenue, thanked councilors for the work they do, saying he's sorry to see that it's sometimes very challenging. As a 30-year resident and 20-year homeowner, he said he was present to express support for the Main Street redesign. The project is a once in a lifetime opportunity to improve the quality of life for everyone who visits, works or resides in Northampton. The design is the result of years of planning for a healthier, safer and more equitable downtown. Reducing Main Street to one lane in each direction with a center left turn lane will make downtown safer for everyone. The bike lanes are an additional benefit that will make downtown more equitable and inclusive; not everyone owns a car. The plan reflects the values of their community, will make life better for future generations and is a plan towards the greater good. He thanked the council for its leadership on this issue, saying he was heartened to hear councilors support the project at the last meeting. Please continue to do so, he urged. This will be a downtown they can all be proud of.

Martha Ebner, Northampton, thanked the mayor and city council for their work and said she is here to state her support for the Main Street redesign. The resolution in support of Picture Main Street outlines two decades of work done by the city; work done with extensive public engagement that thoughtfully considers all Northampton constituents. She looks forward to seeing this project attain its goal of a more walkable, cycle-able, accessible downtown that firmly fixes Northampton as the region's premier destination for business, arts, entertainment and general enjoyment.

Lev Tronstein, member of Northampton for 14 years, thanked the council for honoring the constitution. In the wake of the incarceration of political prisoner Jon Minadeo, he did a little digging. Two things he would like the city council to write down and look into are gtvflyers.com and nyc.gov using the search term 'oral suction.' In researching this political prisoner, he came across a website that gives an extensive list of documents that reveal the control structure of America. It shows that dual citizens with despicable religious practices are actually the hidden hand forcing everything; basically all factions of life. He called to mind Jeffrey Epstein and the operation he ran and Alan Dershowitz, who defended this operation. To quote a very biased man, "America is submissive to Semitic pedophiles," he asserted.

He says that is because, in looking up oral suction, it reveals a practice called Metzitzah B'peh whereby a Rabbi places his mouth on an eight-day old baby's genitals and (he said he thinks they can imagine what oral suction is). This came to public knowledge because a lot of babies were dying from herpes. He brought this to the council because he finds it to be terrifying and really frightening and would appreciate their looking into it.

As far as the Main Street redesign, he said he is all for it as long as it gets redesigned into a 'no niggers' zone.

Kaylee Goldstein said she wanted to discuss a safety concern. Massachusetts seems to be the only state with a 'right to shelter' law for immigrants in place. Thanks to programs like the Immigrant Family Services Institute, they now see an influx of over 4,000 Haitian immigrants just in May of 2023 alone plaguing airports, hospitals and other health centers all over the state as well as their town. It seems to be contributing to a large increase in crime. She has to worry about the safety and security of her children who attend local high school and are subjected to anti-white sentiment and Semitic rhetoric. There has been quadruple the amount of immigrants in their area according to on-line statistics. The governor recently declared a state of emergency in Massachusetts due to the rise in immigration. This agenda is orchestrated by Jewish control. As an example, the founder of the New American Century – Bill Crystal - has said that, "if things are so bad with white working class, don't you want to get new Americans

in? You need people who are poor from other areas of the country who want to get wealthy, who want to get rich and want to move ahead in life in order to keep the country moving, because the majority of whites are fat, dumb, happy and lazy.”

This is just one of the many disgusting comments condemning the white working class in our state and in our country while ushering in illegals in droves that put families like hers at risk. While people in this meeting are upset about their discussion about this demographic and probably think they are not representing themselves fairly, she thinks it is important the state understands that they are being inundated by herds of Haitian immigrants who are destroying their city.
(The speaker was muted.)

Recess

Recess

The City Council recessed briefly again at 7:41 p.m.

Councilor Elkins advised anyone who did not wish to remain in the room not to stay. They may have to provide the forum but she doesn't think the constitution requires any of them to sit through it.

At 7:46 p.m., the council reconvened.

Public Comment (continued)

Public Comment (continued)

Upon reconvening, Councilor Nash stated that, due to circumstances where they seem to have a cue of folks here to share hate speech and not to speak to matters related to their work in council, he is going to ask for a motion to suspend council rules and end public comment.

Councilor Foster moved to suspend council rules. Councilor Elkins seconded.

Councilor Jarrett asked the council president if they had an opinion from the city solicitor and he said they did.

The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

Public Hearings Announcement of Public Hearing on Administrative Orders

Public Hearings

Announcement of Public Hearing on Administrative Orders

Councilor Nash made the following announcement:

Per Charter [Section 6-1](#), the Northampton City Council will hold a Public Hearing in hybrid format on Thursday, November 16, 2023 at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA. The City Council will consider proposed amendments to the City of Northampton Administrative Code, Part II Multi-Member Appointive Organization to 1) amend Section 15.0 Human Rights Commission to reduce the number of members from nine to seven and 2) amend Section 11 Energy and Sustainability Commission to add the Climate Action and Project Administration (CAPA) Director to its membership and designate the CAPA Director as its ex-officio chair. Instructions for accessing the hearing remotely may be found on the November 16, 2023 City Council agenda to be posted on www.northamptonma.gov no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. The City Council will hear all persons who wish to be heard thereon.

Public Hearing on 23.377 National Grid/Verizon Pole Petition for Water Street (Petition #30817064)

Public Hearing on 23.377 National Grid/Verizon Pole Petition for Water Street (Petition #30817064)

Councilor Nash read the legal notice.

Councilor LaBarge moved to open the public hearing. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

The public hearing was opened at 7:51 p.m.

The petition involves a jointly-owned pole on Water Street about 100 feet south of the center-line of the Hotel Bridge, National Grid representative Ken Creigle advised. National Grid is relocating Pole #15 approximately 25 feet north of its current location due to a new house being built at 99 Water Street.

Councilor Nash drew attention to an advisory printed in all capital letters on the DPW's memo. The memo states that a 24-inch water main is located within 10 feet of the proposed pole location and that, "Disturbance of the 24-inch main will cause catastrophic damage to the city's water supply."

Mr. Creigle said he had spoken to the water department and is aware of this potential conflict. The utility is fine with complying with the DPW's conditions, he confirmed. Contractors will be using a vac truck in lieu of digging.

Councilor Nash asked if anyone wished to speak for or against the petition.

There being no further comments, **Councilor LaBarge moved to close the public hearing. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.**

The public hearing was closed at 7:54 p.m.

Tax Classification Hearing

Tax Classification Hearing

Councilor Nash read the legal notice.

Councilor LaBarge moved to open the public hearing. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

The tax classification hearing was opened at 7:55 p.m.

Principal Assessor Marc Dautreuil delivered a Powerpoint presentation entitled, "FY2024 Tax Classification Hearing, City of Northampton, November 2, 2023." (See document attached.)

Mr. Dautreuil reviewed the requirement of M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 56 that the city council with the mayor's approval annually determine the percentage of the local tax levy to be borne by each class of real property. Councilors must decide if there is going to be a factor of one, which would result in a single tax rate, or if the residential factor should be shifted, which would result in a split tax rate, he explained. Per the Tax Classification Act of 1978, all Massachusetts cities and towns are required to classify property into one of four classes: residential, commercial, industrial and personal property. The total tax levy remains the same regardless of whether the council elects to shift the rate, he advised.

Mr. Dautreuil showed a slide depicting the percentage of the total levy represented by the various classes of property. In Northampton, 83.59% of taxable property is residential as compared to 16.41% for the other three classes combined. The commercial property class has been steadily declining over the last ten years due to the sharp rise in residential values combined with the lowering of commercial values, the lack of large-scale commercial or industrial construction projects and the lack of recovery post COVID-19. This very stark distribution percentage is one of the main reasons he believes the council should vote to keep a single tax rate.

He presented the total tax levy (the total taxable value of all four property classes combined) as \$75,515,707. The rise in residential property revenue over the last 10 years is a direct result of the rise in sale prices of residential homes. Between last year and this year, the percentage of value in the residential class of property in Northampton rose 10% and revenue from this class rose just under 6%, he presented. By contrast, commercial values went down this year and, for the second year in a row, commercial revenue went down as well.

Mr. Dautreuil presented the figure for FY2024 new growth (based on new construction and renovations between July 1, 2022 and July 1, 2023) and the tax revenue associated with it. The amount of new growth this year was \$58,199,964 with a little over half coming from the residential class alone (\$29,235,700) and the other \$28.964 million coming from the other three classes combined. Tax revenue generated by new growth was \$921,887 (the lowest amount since fiscal year 2017). This figure is added to the FY2023 levy limit plus 2.5% to determine the FY2024 levy limit (\$74,989,347), he reminded. The lower revenue from new growth was not necessarily due to less construction; as they know, they had a good amount of residential growth. Instead, it is the result of the lower tax rate since the tax rate is a factor in determining total growth.

The maximum allowable levy is calculated by adding the debt exclusion (\$575,932) to the FY2024 levy limit (\$74,989,347) for a total of \$75,565,279. That number along with the total taxable value of every property in the city (\$4,971,409,286) is how the tax rate is figured.

The recommendation of the principal assessor and the mayor is a factor of 1, leading to a single tax rate. This would result in a fiscal year 2024 tax rate of \$15.19 per thousand, a decrease of .55 from the current tax rate of \$15.84.

In comparison to other communities, Northampton's tax rate is in the lower half for residential rates and is the second lowest for commercial rates. Throughout western Massachusetts (Berkshire, Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin counties), they are in the bottom one-third of residential tax rates.

If councilors were to split the rate to shift a greater burden onto the commercial/industrial class, it would lower the residential rate to \$13.70 and raise the other three classes to \$22.79 per thousand. To show the general effect this would have on residential tax bills, he used the FY2024 average single-family home assessed value of \$477,690. This value results in an average tax bill of \$7,256 ($\$477,690/\$1,000 \times \$15.19 = \$7,256$). Under a split tax rate, the tax bill would be lowered by \$712 to \$6,544 ($\$477,690/\$1,000 \times 13.70 = \$6,544$), he presented.

By comparison, with the split rate, the average commercial tax bill (based on an average commercial property value of \$652,433) would see an increase of \$4,959 (from \$9,910 to \$14,869) while the average industrial tax bill (based on an average value of \$879,907) would increase by \$6,687 (from \$13,366 to \$20,053).

In the state, 234 municipalities, or almost exactly two-thirds (2/3), have a single tax rate. 106 communities have a split rate that favors the residential class and only a handful (11) have a split rate that favors the commercial/industrial/personal property classes.

Communities in which it would be good to split the tax rate are those cities and towns with very large commercial tax bases (at least 30%) and/or very large commercial businesses like malls or power plants or very large industrial complexes, he suggested.

In his opinion, splitting the tax rate in Northampton would put an unnecessary burden on the commercial, industrial and personal property classes which are already hurting from the lingering effects of COVID-19, inflation, low growth and lack of large construction projects. In addition, Northampton only produced 16.41% of its tax levy from non-residential properties and the suggested minimum from the Department of Revenue (DOR) is 30%.

The city does not have the industrial and large commercial businesses needed to successfully sustain splitting the tax rate, he opined. It is by far the most prudent thing to have a single tax rate as Northampton does not have the economy or the infrastructure to support a split rate.

Councilor Jarrett asked if Mr. Dautreuil had information on the median single family home value. He also asked how this affects multi-families as opposed to single family homes.

Mr. Dautreuil said he has that information in his office and could provide a breakdown.

Councilors asked questions and offered comments. Referring to new growth figures presented on page 9, Councilor Nash noted that nearly 50% of new growth appeared to come from the commercial sector. However, Mr. Dautreuil pointed out that a significant piece of new growth on the commercial side was because Coca-Cola came out of its tax increment financing (TIF) agreement.

Councilor Nash asked if any member of the public wished to speak.

There being no further comments, **Councilor LaBarge moved to close the public hearing. Councilor Perry seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.**

The public hearing was closed at 8:20 p.m.

Announcements

Announcements

The Sojourner Truth School for Social Change Leadership is having an event November 10th at 7 p.m. at Edwards Church on Main Street, Councilor Elkins announced. The event will feature Evelyn Harris, Marsha Gomes, Sasha Klare Ayvazian, Jeff Olmstead and Andrea Ayvazian, among others with a welcome by Senator Jo Comerford. Proceeds will benefit the Truth School.

And, Legislative Matters will meet Monday, November 13th at 5 p.m. to take up a parking ordinance and a proposed change to the zoning ordinance to address lighting in a joint public hearing with the Planning Board, Councilor Jarrett advised. The meeting will be in hybrid format in Council Chambers.

Presentations

Presentations

FY2024 First Quarter Financial Report

Finance Director Charlene Nardi presented the first quarter financial report.

For General Fund revenue, the city is almost exactly where it usually is this time of year for personal property and real estate taxes, she presented. Motor vehicle excise tax is only at 12.9% of the \$2.8 million projected but, as has been discussed before, this is to be expected since motor vehicle excise bills are generally sent out in February.

For hotel/motel excise, the city has taken in \$363,801 of the \$750,000 revenue projected and so is already at 48% of its projected budget. Similarly, with \$201,746 collected, the city is at 31% of the \$650,000 in revenue expected for meals taxes.

Cannabis revenue was budgeted at \$800,000 for FY2024 and has only brought in \$208,000, which, as they will see, is lower than other quarters in previous years.

At the bottom of pg. 1 and pg. 2 under Charges for Services, the city collectively budgeted \$1.2 million and has brought in \$335,000 so, with 27% collected, is on target. Ambulance Services is part of this grouping and has brought in \$714,000, or 25%, of the \$2,800,000 projected.

The next group of Charges for Services appears to have only brought in 1.6%, which may seem cause for alarm, but it includes Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School (SVAHS) tuition, which has not yet been received since it is only billed three times a year, she explained.

Under licenses and permits, liquor license revenue is also low because licenses are renewed as of January 1st so revenue comes in in November and December. Building permit revenue was increased slightly after doing well last year and continues to be on target with \$108,127, or 24%, of \$450,000 collected.

Director Nardi reviewed the spreadsheet comparing revenue for various 'heavy hitters' (meals, hotel/motel, short-term rentals and cannabis) over all four quarters from FY2020 to FY2024.

Enterprise fund revenue, enterprise fund expenses and General Fund expenses are tracking as expected, she indicated.

Councilor Moulton said that, to him, the most encouraging number is hotel revenue, which continues to rebound phenomenally from the pandemic years. At \$363,801, this last quarter was the highest it's been so far by a significant amount. "That's a great sign," he observed.

As far as meals, they had a very wet summer with a lot of rain, Mayor Sciarra reminded. She thinks they would have seen even higher meals tax with outdoor dining had it not been so wet.

Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda

Councilor Nash reviewed the items on the consent agenda. There being no requests for removal, **Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Councilor Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.**

The following items were approved as part of the consent agenda:

	<p>A. <u>Minutes of October 19, 2023</u></p> <p>B. <u>Approve 23.377 National Grid/Verizon Pole Petition for Water Street (Petition #30817064)</u></p>
<p><u>Financial Orders (on 1st reading)</u> <u>23.390 An Order to Suspend Parking Fees on Certain Days - 1st reading</u></p> <p><u>23.392 An Order to Establish a Tax Classification for FY2024 - 1st reading</u></p>	<p><u>Financial Orders (on 1st reading)</u> <u>23.390 An Order to Suspend Parking Fees on Certain Days - 1st reading</u> It is a long-standing practice to suspend parking fees on certain days: the Saturday before Thanksgiving - Saturday, November 18, 2023 (Bag Day); Friday, November 24, 2023 (Black Friday) and Saturday, November 25, 2023 (Small Business Saturday), Mayor Sciarra confirmed.</p> <p>Councilor Maiore moved to refer the order to the consent agenda. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.</p> <p><u>See November 16, 2023 for second reading.</u></p> <p><u>23.392 An Order to Establish a Tax Classification for FY2024 - 1st reading</u> Councilor LaBarge spoke in favor of retaining the factor of 1. She feels it is the right direction to go because of the economy.</p> <p>This is always a painful vote, Councilor Jarrett acknowledged. He agrees with the recommendation but, at the same time, he sees how much people’s residential values are increasing and that’s really hard. However, changing this factor is not a good option. He would love to give that relief but they don’t have the commercial/industrial tax base to do it. They are giving all the options for exemptions that the state allows as far as he’s aware. He knows it will be tough for some people.</p> <p>He thinks it is the right thing to do in terms of supporting the business community and promoting business growth, Councilor Nash shared. If businesses grow it will relieve the tax burden, he pointed out.</p> <p>Councilor Foster moved to refer the order to the consent agenda. Councilor Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.</p> <p><u>See minutes of November 16, 2023 for final reading.</u></p>
<p><u>Administrative Orders</u> <u>23.393 Administrative Order to Amend Administrative Code Section 15.0 Human Rights Commission - 1st reading</u> <u>23.394 Administrative Order to Amend Administrative Code Section 11.0 Energy and Sustainability Commission - 1st reading</u></p>	<p><u>Administrative Orders</u> <u>23.393 An Administrative Order to Amend Administrative Code Section 15.0 Human Rights Commission - 1st reading</u> <u>23.394 An Administrative Order to Amend Administrative Code Section 11.0 Energy and Sustainability Commission - 1st reading</u> He read the announcement of a public hearing on these orders earlier, Councilor Nash reminded. He expressed his understanding that the first change is simply changing the number of members of the Human Rights Commission from nine to seven.</p> <p>Mayor Sciarra read her memo.</p> <p>The second change is adding the Climate Action and Project Administration (CAPA) director to the membership of the Northampton Energy and Sustainability Commission (NESC) and making the CAPA director chair, Mayor Sciarra advised. The director of the Office of Planning and Sustainability is currently the chair.</p> <p>The change to Section 15.0 Human Rights Commission (HRC) reduces the members from nine to seven, she confirmed. It isn’t part of the administrative code but she has also asked Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Commissioner Merridith O’Leary if she can link the Human Rights Commission with the DHHS. It is her intention that linking the HRC to DHHS will foster a more directed and defined approach to addressing human rights issues. The committee currently is not associated with a particular city department and doesn’t have a liaison or city staff person and that is one of the reasons she thinks it has struggled to attract members. Commissioner O’Leary has agreed to serve and be the liaison. The Division of Community Care (DCC) has been doing some remarkable work and also guiding the city</p>

around diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). She is excited to empower the Human Rights Commission to maybe do some of that work and help them develop policies.

Councilor Foster said it is a really interesting, potentially-exciting proposal reflecting some really creative thinking. Councilor Moulton wondered if they should also be looking at some of the recommendations that came out of the barriers to service select committee about access to meetings, transportation and childcare since the HRC seeks members from traditionally under-served communities.

Mayor Sciarra said she thinks that's a great idea.

As someone who served on that committee as her entry into city government, Councilor Maiore said she is very excited for this change. They are all very passionate but it was easy to lose their way and they also didn't feel very connected to the city. She thinks this connection is going to be key to keeping on track. If they are going to have a Human Rights Commission, she would like it to be very vibrant. She thanked Councilor Moulton for suggesting applying some of the select committee's recommendations toward this group since another issue involved in finding and keeping membership were the barriers that have been identified.

Councilor Foster wondered if it made sense to include a liaison from the Disability Commission on the HRC. Mayor Sciarra said that was a very good idea and she would think about adding it to the order.

There will be a public hearing on this in two weeks, it was noted.

Ordinances (Not Yet Referred)
23.391 An Ordinance Relative to Parking on Ward Avenue - 1st reading

Ordinances (Not Yet Referred)
23.391 An Ordinance Relative to Parking on Ward Avenue - 1st reading
 Ward Avenue is in Ward 2, Councilor Foster advised. A right-of-way on Ward Avenue leads to a walking path along the Mill River and also provides access to city utilities including a water main. The concern has been that people are often parked at this access point. The DPW wants to make sure that it is able to back a trailer down the path in the event of an emergency with one of its utilities. The ordinance creates a very small no-parking zone right at the trail head to provide just enough access so the DPW could get down there if need be.

Councilor Jarrett moved to refer the ordinance to Legislative Matters. Councilor Gore seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

See minutes of November 16, 2023 for final reading.

Recess

Recess
 At 9:05 p.m., the City Council recessed briefly. The council reconvened at 9:10 p.m.

Resolutions

Resolutions
23.389 A Resolution in Support of Picture Main Street
 Sponsors have asked for a vote at the next meeting but it is on the agenda tonight in case anyone has an update, Councilor Nash advised.

Councilor Jarrett appreciated Councilor Elkins for the great opinion piece in the Gazette. In terms of safety, one piece that has not been talked about is that it is not the same world as even 20 years ago in terms of how the height of pick-up trucks, SUV's, etc. directly relates to danger to those outside of those vehicles. They've made great strides in terms of safety for people inside the vehicles but have not addressed the safety of those outside the vehicles. In view of the lack of other regulations, it's imperative that they redesign their roads to adapt as things change.

A protected bicycle lane network can't be built all at once, he noted. Once this section is built it will directly connect to the rail trail via Pulaski Park and be very close to the bike trail access on Merrick Lane. As they consider new protected lanes in the future, it could expand that network. It can't be built all at once and he thinks this would be the beginning of a wider network of safe connections.

He attended the Youth Commission meeting last night and made an appeal for them to support the resolution, Councilor Nash reported. He continues to network with the business community and thinks something's in the works there. A number of business folk who have been prominent over the years will be submitting letters to the editor. He thanked all the candidates who have taken a stand on this and said he heard a rumor that NESCC was sending a letter to the Gazette.

One thing she has liked about this process is hearing from new voices, Councilor Maiore shared. She is excited to hear from people they haven't heard from before.

Mayor Sciarra brought to the council's attention some items that have been added to the FAQ; i.e. - a paragraph about 'Vulnerable Road Users' laws that went into effect this year and information on a Federal Highway Administration report on safety around dedicated bike lanes. The report found with a 99% confidence interval that separated bike lanes are expected to reduce crash rates by approximately 50% over conventional bike lanes. Also, a National Association of City Transportation Officials' report found that protected bike lanes significantly increase not only safety but ridership.

Councilor Jarrett thanked Office of Planning and Sustainability Director Carolyn Misch who has been helping him with getting data out to his constituents.

<p><u>Orders</u></p>	<p><u>Orders</u> None</p>
<p><u>New Business</u></p>	<p><u>New Business</u> None</p>
<p><u>Adjourn</u></p>	<p><u>Adjourn</u> Councilor LaBarge moved to adjourn. Councilor Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 p.m.</p> <p>Attest: _____, Administrative Assistant</p>

EXHIBIT A

List of Documents Reviewed at November 2, 2023 Northampton City Council Meeting:

1. November 2, 2023 Agenda
2. October 19, 2023 City Council minutes
3. Email and letter of support from Elena Huisman to citycouncil@northamptonma.gov, Marissa Elkins, Jamila Gore and Alex Jarrett dated November 2, 2023 re: Letter of Support: Picture Main Street
4. 23.377 National Grid/Verizon Pole Petition for Water Street (Petition #30817064) together with DPW Recommendation – Memo from Greg Newman, PE, DPW Senior Engineer to Donna LaScaleia, DPW Director dated October 11, 2023 re: National Grid-Verizon #30817064 to relocate utility pole #15 on Water Street, Leeds
5. FY2024 1st Quarter Financial Report: 5 spreadsheets entitled:
Cannabis, Meals, Hotel- Motel- Shortterm Rentals FY24
Enterprise Fund Expenses.093023
Enterprise Fund Revenue.093023
GF Expenses.093023
GF Revenue.093023
6. 23.390 An Order to Suspend Parking Fees on Certain Days
7. 23.392 An Order to Establish a Tax Classification for FY2024
8. 23.393 An Administrative Order to Amend Administrative Code Section 15.0 Human Rights Commission
9. 23.394 An Administrative Order to Amend Administrative Code Section 11.0 Energy and Sustainability Commission
10. 23.391 An Ordinance Relative to Parking on Ward Avenue
11. 23.389 A Resolution in Support of Picture Main Street

Record of City Council Votes for November 2, 2023		Elkins	Foster	Gore	Jarrett	LaBarge	Maiore	Moulton	Nash	Perry	Total
Roll Call by Council Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler @ 7p.m.		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	9 Present; 0 Absent
Motion to open Tax Classification Hearing						Motion to open		Second			Motion carried 9:0; voice vote
Motion to close Tax Classification Hearing					Second	Motion to close					Motion carried 9:0; voice vote
Motion to open Public Hearing on 23.377 National Grid/Verizon Pole Petition for Water Street (Petition #30817064)						Motion to open		Second			Motion carried 9:0; voice vote
Motion to close Public Hearing on 23.377 National Grid/Verizon Pole Petition for Water Street (Petition #30817064)						Motion to close				Second	Motion carried 9:0; voice vote
Approval of Consent Agenda:		Second				Motion to approve					Motion carried 9:0; voice vote
Minutes of October 19, 2023 City Council Meeting	Consent										
Approve 23.377 National Grid/Verizon Pole Petition for Water Street (Petition #30817064)	Consent										
23.390 An Order to Suspend Parking Fees on Certain Days - 1st reading	Refer to consent						Motion to refer	Second			Motion carried 9:0; voice vote
23.392 An Order to Establish a Tax Classification for FY2024 - 1st reading	Refer to consent	Second	Motion to refer								Motion carried 9:0; voice vote
23.393 An Administrative Order to Amend Administrative Code Section 15.0 Human Rights Commission - 1st reading		Introduced and discussed/No vote taken									
23.394 An Administrative Order to Amend Administrative Code Section 11.0 Energy and Sustainability Commission - 1st reading		Introduced and discussed/No vote taken									
23.391 An Ordinance Relative to Parking on Ward Avenue - 1st	Refer to LM			Second	Motion to						Motion carried 9:0;
23.389 A Resolution in Support of Picture Main Street		Discussion/No vote taken									
Adjourn	Adjourn		Second			Motion to adjourn					Motion carried 9:0; voice vote