



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS & BRIEFINGS
DATE: JULY 21, 2026
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS NAOMI CARNEY, CHAIR; IAN ABREU; DEREK BAPTISTE; LEO CHOQUETTE; JOSEPH LOPES; SHAWN OLIVER; SCOTT PEMBERTON; RYAN PEREIRA; JAMES ROY

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS SHANE BURGO; BRIAN GOMES

Councillor Carney called the Appointments & Briefings Committee meeting to order, took attendance, and explained that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed. The Clerk read a letter into the record from Councillor Burgo explaining his tardiness. The Communication was received and placed on file by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Pereira.

CITIZEN'S INPUT TIME – Not to exceed the first thirty (30) minutes of the meeting.

Chris Lamontagne, 236 Hemlock Street, speaking on a "Public Petition and Call for the Resignation of Mayor Jonathan F. Mitchell". (Referred – July 01, 2026.)

The Chair informed the Committee that she had received a phone call from Mr. Lamontagne stating that he would not be attending the meeting.

On motion by Councillor Baptiste and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To take "**NO FURTHER ACTION**" on the matter at this time.

PUBLIC HEARING on a COMMUNICATION/DEMOLITION, New Bedford Historical Commission, to City Council, re: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW: 535 BROCK AVENUE, (MAP 011, LOT 0056) a circa 1840 - 1854, carriage barn, later converted to a two-story residence, "the Coffin-Howland is a contributing resource to the Hazelwood Park National Register Site; the building is significant in its association with the Joseph Howland Estate which later became Hazelwood Park; the building experienced a significant fire decades ago and was boarded up and fenced off to deter ongoing vandalism and long-term deferred maintenance, in addition to the fire damage and collapsed roof, does not make the building a good candidate for restoration; the demolition of the Coffin-Howland House removes a dangerous safety hazard from a public park; and the planning for the reconstruction of a similarly scaled and architecturally sensitive building on the footprint of the House has been ongoing, **"in light of these findings, the NBHC has determined that the building at 535 Brock Avenue, known as the Coffin Howland House, is Historically Significant but not a Preferably Preserved Building."** (Matter ID #1064) (Referred – June 11, 2026.) (Advertised in The Standard-Times on Tuesday, July 07, 2026.)

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Roy, the Committee VOTED: To open the public hearing.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Pereira, the Committee VOTED: To receive and place on file the Communication and Staff Report submitted by the New Bedford Historical Commission relating to the Building Demolition Review of 535 Brock Avenue.

The Chair recognized Anne Louro, Preservation Planner, who gave an overview of the property, which included a history of the home and the number of years it has laid in disarray. It has come to the point that it is not fiscally prudent to attempt to restore the building and although it is very unfortunate, there really is no option other than demolition.

Councillor Abreu expressed his dismay that attempts were not previously made to restore the property but he understood that with limited reserves and grants, the reconstruction of the property would not be worth it. The Councillor asked if there were plans to put anything on the property's footprint. He was told that at this time, there were not; however, should funds be secured, they would come up with something on a schematic scale, although it would not result in rebuilding what is currently there. Ms. Louro explained that the property belonged to the Parks Department and that any future plans would be handled by them and the Department of Public Infrastructure. The Councillor asked if there were any current plans for the property; he was told there were not.

Councillor Oliver asked if Ms. Louro knew what the demolition costs would be and if they would be done by the City or an independent contractor. He was told that she did not have the costs for demolition and that she believed both demolition scenarios are being considered. The Councillor asked how soon the demolition would begin. He was told as soon as permission is granted by the Council. The Councillor suggested that perhaps some type of plaque could be placed on the site, explaining what had been there and the historical significance.

Councillor Pemberton asked why the City waited so long to take it down. Ms. Louro explained that over the last twenty years or so, the hope was that the property would be restored. Unfortunately, this was not the case, and it continued to deteriorate.

Councillor Pereira stated that this property is very sentimental to many residents living in the area and he has heard their frustration that nothing was done to restore the property over all these years. While the Councillor understood the property needed to be demolished, he asked that the residents be included when and if there is a move to build something in its place.

Councillor Lopes also expressed frustration, stating that for over thirty years, every Mayor has neglected to properly address the restoration of the property. The Councillor asked if Ms. Louro would be able to forward the Committee the cost breakdown as it relates to the demolition. Ms. Louro agreed.

The Chair recognized Danny Romanowicz, Commissioner of the Department of Inspectional Services, who stated that Ms. Louro's assessment of the building's condition was accurate and that unfortunately, demolition is a necessity. Councillor Abreu asked if there had been any evidence of homeless individuals living in the building; he was told there was not.

The Chair recognized John McCoy of Lucas Street. Mr. McCoy expressed his frustration for the lack of effort to restore the property over the years but understands that it needs to be demolished. He stated that if another building is proposed, it should not be built on the current blueprint because in his estimation, the removal of the dilapidated structure will result in an amazing view of Clark's Cove from the gazebo.

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To receive and place on file a communication submitted by Gary Moraes of New Bedford, expressing his dismay at the need to demolish the building. The Clerk read the letter into the record.

The Chair asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak and/or be recorded in favor of the petition. There were none. The Chair asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak and/or be recorded in opposition to the petition. There were none.

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Roy, the Committee VOTED: To close the public hearing.

On motion by Councillor Roy and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council GRANT the DEMOLITION of the building located at 535 Brock Avenue, known as the Coffin Howland House, (MAP 011, LOT 0056).

COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of JUSTIN OHLSON, New Bedford, MA to the WATER BOARD, Mr. Ohlson will be replacing the late Patrick E. Rogers, who resigned in January 2025; this term will expire in April 2027. (Matter ID #0895) (Referred – May 28, 2026.) (June 23, 2026 – tabled)

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Roy, the Committee VOTED: To remove from the table.

The Chair recognized Mr. Ohlson, who gave the Committee an overview of his previous employment with the City, as he worked for the Department of Public Infrastructure for almost ten years. He explained that he is very familiar with the water department, specifically as it relates to the Quittacas Water Treatment Plant.

Councillor Lopes spoke in favor of the appointment, as did Councillor Abreu.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of JUSTIN OHLSON, New Bedford, MA to the WATER BOARD.

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Lopes, Gomes, Abreu, Carney, Choquette, Pemberton and Pereira, requesting, that representatives from Republic Waste Services, E. L. Harvey, and Waste Management attend a meeting of the New Bedford City Council's Committee on Appointments & Briefings to discuss their ongoing violations of the City of New Bedford Ordinance governing waste collection and disposal operations within the City. (Matter ID #0910) (Referred – May 28, 2026.)

Councillor Lopes asked if the Clerk had received any communications from the invitees (Republic Waste Services, E. L. Harvey, Waste Management). The Clerk replied that the office had not.

Councillor Lopes explained that the motion was submitted because these waste management companies were conducting container pickups before 7:00 am, which is prohibited by Ordinance. He went on to state that he had had a conversation with Republic Waste, and they stated they were unaware of the Ordinance.

After the conversation, he said, nothing changed. The Building Commissioner began to fine the companies who were not following the Ordinance. After a number of fines, as far as Republic Waste was concerned, their corporate office got involved and since that time they have changed their pickup schedule.

Councillor Carney expressed the same concerns as Councillor Lopes. Councillor Lopes suggested that the motion be tabled so that the City can monitor the situation.

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Pemberton, the Committee VOTED: To table the matter at this time.

Councillor Roy made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councillor Pemberton.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence Jr.
Clerk of Committees