

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS & BRIEFINGS
DATE: SEPTEMBER 29, 2020
TIME: 7:10 P.M.
PLACE: HELD REMOTELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS' MARCH 12, 2020 ORDER SUSPENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE OPEN MEETING LAW G. L. C. 30A, SECTION 20 AND THE CITY COUNCIL'S VOTE TO WAIVE RULE 21A

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS DEBORA COELHO, CHAIRPERSON; NAOMI CARNEY, VICE CHAIRPERSON; IAN ABREU; DEREK BAPTISTE; HUGH DUNN; MARIA GIESTA; BRIAN GOMES; SCOTT LIMA; JOSEPH LOPES; WILLIAM BRAD MARKEY; LINDA MORAD

ABSENT: NO ONE

* * *

Councillor Coelho called the Appointments & Briefings Committee Meeting to order and took attendance; there was no one absent.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of CITIZEN'S INPUT TIME – Not to exceed the first thirty (30) minutes of the meeting. 1a. John Silvia, 1256 Sassaquin Avenue, New Bedford, speaking on water bills (Ref'd 09/29/2020); and 1b. Mary Feitelberg, 749 Purchase Street, New Bedford, speaking on the role of firefighters and the value they contribute. (Ref'd 09/29/2020) (1, 1a, 1b)

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Giesta, the Committee VOTED: To table item 1a. as John Silvia was not present at the meeting. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Markey, the Committee VOTED: To table item 1b., as Mary Feitelberg was not present at the meeting. This motion passed on a voice vote.

* * *

Councillor Morad asked if the Chair could take item number four (4) out of order and take it up first without objection. There was no objection so item number four (4) was before the Committee.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a PUBLIC HEARING, CONTINUED, on a COMMUNICATION/DEMOLITION REVIEW - 23 ROBESON STREET (Map 71/Lot 45) Circa 1903 two-story wood framed residence-partial demolition of east façade bay, the building is a contributing property (NBE.419) within the Acushnet Heights National Register District, this area is characterized by its late 19th and early 20th century residences developed on the rise of County Street overlooking the inner harbor; the

building is associated with the political and social history of the City, as it was constructed in 1903 by Thomas Desmond, a local leading Attorney and a City Solicitor for several years, the Desmond Family also constructed the abutting properties at 17 and 27 Robeson Street, this house is locally known as the longtime residence of former Senator, Councillor and Mayor George Rogers; the building is architecturally significant as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Queen Anne style, the subject building is part of a group of buildings which share identical architectural features including cut shingles, arched openings, swag motifs and full bays with stained glass windows and the property owner has indicated that he will follow the Historical Commission's recommendations to mitigate the partial demolition of the façade wall; therefore, in light of these findings, the New Bedford Historical Commission has determined that the building at 23 Robeson Street is Historically Significant but the east façade bay is not a Preferably Preserved Historic Structure (Ref'd 04/23/2020) (Advertised in the Standard-Times on Wednesday, July 1, 2020) (07/14/2020 - Hearing Continued to September 29, 2020) was removed from the table and the hearing was opened by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Abreu. (4)

Anne Louro, Preservation Planner was present and gave an overview on why the hearing was continued until this meeting. The neighbors wanted to be more informed on the demolition originally proposed. However, the owner went ahead and did the demolition anyway. The city is looking to impose a fine on the original petitioner. The owner of the home that did the demolition has since sold the home. The new owner will restore the bay window, but it will be flat and not extended as the original design. Karen Khalife is the new owner of the home and she has agreed to restore the window to the historical integrity as best she can.

Building Commissioner Romanowicz, stated that Ms. Khalife has done many renovations in the city and he believes her to be a person of her word.

Ms. Khalife stated that she has met with Ms. Louro and Mr. Correia of the Building Department and have already reviewed plans to do the restoration.

Councillor Morad asked Commissioner Romanowicz if the city was aware the demolition had taken place. He said he was not. It was done without a permit but that his department has taken steps to fine the previous owner.

The Chair recognized Donna King, 15 Robeson Street, a neighbor, she was disappointed that the new owner would not be restoring the bay window to its original design, as the other homes that were constructed in the area, were the same.

The Chair asked if there was anyone present who wanted to speak and/or be recorded in favor of the demolition, there were none.

The Chair asked if there was anyone present who wanted to speak and/or be recorded in opposition of the demolition, there were none. The hearing was closed.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Baptiste, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL to Grant the Demolition at 23 Robeson Street. This motion passed on a voice vote.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of JOAQUIM "JACK" LIVRAMENTO, New Bedford, MA, to the GREATER NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE; Mr. Livramento will be replacing Joshua Amaral who has resigned; this term will expire in May 2023 (Ref'd 08/20/2020) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Lima. (2)

Mr. Livramento was present to answer questions from the Committee.

Councillor Abreu stated that the former member stepped down due to a conflict in dates, in being able to serve as a New Bedford Public School, School Committee member and a Voc-Tech School Committee Member. He asked if this applicant could see the same conflict as he is also a New Bedford School Committee Member; and Mr. Livramento said he did not.

Councillor Lima asked if the applicant felt there would be any conflict in serving on both School Committees and he said he did not.

Councillor Carney asked Attorney Gerwatowski if a New Bedford School Committee member serving on the Voc-Tech School Committee would be considered a conflict of interest. Attorney Gerwatowski, said no and he provided the Committee with an overview on how the School Committee is formed.

Councillor Markey asked the applicant why he wanted to serve. He said he was asked by the Mayor to fill the position. He thought about it and agreed to have his name placed in nomination. He stated if approved he would look to, review enrollment procedures, he would bring a minority opinion to the committee.

Councillor Gomes expressed his concern that he had received hundreds of emails citing a conflict of interest in approving the applicant. He asked the applicant, if approved would he be able to serve when there were so many people against the appointment. He said he would.

Councillor Gomes asked Attorney Gerwatowski as to why the Voc-Tech School Committee is not an elected body. Attorney Gerwatowski explained that the structure of the School Committee would have been set up under State Law.

Councillor Baptiste expressed his concern that he felt the applicant was being set up. He asked how familiar he was of the Voc-Tech staff and daily operations. Mr. Livramento stated he knows more about the student body, then he does the staff. He did express a concern that the staff was predominately white and were not bi-lingual.

Councillor Morad asked if the applicant was averse to building an additional technical high school in the city. He said he was not.

Councillor Lopes thanked the applicant for his 8 years of service on the New Bedford School Committee. He stated that the NBPS should investigate creating trade related classes at NBHS. The applicant agreed. He asked where both schools may be competing for the same students and funding would he consider serving in both positions a conflict? He said he would not.

On motion by Councillor Lima and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion FAILED on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 4, Nays 7, with Councillors Carney, Lima, Lopes and Markey in favor.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Lima, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of JOAQUIM "JACK" LIVRAMENTO, New Bedford, MS to the GREATER NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE; Mr. Livramento will be replacing Joshua Amaral who has resigned; this term will expire in May 2023. This motion FAILED on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 4, Nays 7, with Councillors Coelho, Lima, Markey and Morad in favor.

On motion by Councillor Lima and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To refer out to the City Council recommending No Further Action on this matter. This motion FAILED on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 5, Nays 5, with Councillors Coelho, Lima, Lopes, Markey and Morad in favor and Councillor Gomes not present for the vote.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell to City Council, submitting AN ORDER, that the City is authorized to file an application with the U. S. Foreign-Trade Zones Board and applicable Federal agencies to reorganize Foreign Trade Zone #28 (FTZ 28) to an Alternative Site Framework (ASF) and that the Mayor is authorized to execute all necessary paperwork for the application and any subsequent administrative actions for FTZ 28 (Ref'd 04/07/2020) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Carney. (3, 3a)

Ed Anthes-Washburn, Director of the New Bedford Port Authority was present and gave an overview of the history of the Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) in the City and how it originated using the Airport property; but the move is now to have the New Bedford Port Authority take it over and expand it. The goal is to encourage international trade and defers duty and custom charges, until the property with the FTZ is sold. If approved there will be an FTZ fee put in place. It consists of a \$5,000 application fee and a yearly flat blanket fee of \$5,000.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Dunn, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER, that the City of New Bedford is authorized to file an application with the U. S. Foreign-Trade Zones Board and applicable Federal agencies to reorganize Foreign Trade Zone #28 (FTZ 28) to an Alternative Site Framework (ASF) and that the Mayor is authorized to execute all necessary paperwork for the application and any subsequent administrative actions for FTZ 28. This motion passed on a voice vote.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the REAPPOINTMENT of BETHANY FAUTEUX, New Bedford, MA to the HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION; this term will expire April 2022. (Ref'd 04/07/2020) (06/09/2020 - tabled) (7/14/2020 – NFA Failed R/C Y-5, N-4; Remain in Committee)

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Lima, the Committee VOTED: To waive the reading and to recommend to the City Council to take "No Further Action" on the COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the REAPPOINTMENT of BETHANY FAUTEUX, New Bedford, MA to the HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION; this term will expire April 2022. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Councillor Lopes made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Lima.

This meeting adjourned @ 8:50 p.m.

ATTEST



Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees