

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON CITY PROPERTY
DATE: JANUARY 26, 2021
TIME: 7:01 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 WILLIAM BRAD MARKEY, CHAIRMAN; NAOMI CARNEY, VICE CHAIRPERSON; IAN ABREU; DEREK BAPTISTE; DEBORA COELHO; HUGH DUNN; MARIA GIESTA; BRIAN GOMES; SCOTT LIMA; JOSEPH LOPES; LINDA MORAD

ABSENT: NO ONE

* * *

Councillor Markey called the City Property Committee Meeting to order and took attendance, everyone was present.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ACT, Authorizing the City of New Bedford To Convey Certain Land Acquired For Open Space and Playground Purposes (Ref'd 11/12/2020, tabled 1/21/2021) was removed from the table and received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Abreu. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 11, Nays 0. (1, 1a)

Mikaela McDermott, City Solicitor was present and gave an overview to the Committee, of Article 97 and how it mandates that for every one acre of recreational/park land that is given permission by the State to be developed for commercial business, that 1.5 acres must e put aside elsewhere towards recreational/park property. To move forward with the Home Rule Petition to grant the development of land at what is known as the golf course on Hathaway Road, must be approved by the Mass House of Representatives and the Senate. Attorney McDermott stated that State Representative Chris Markey and State Senator Mark Montigny had agreed to sponsor the Home Rule Petition if it is approved by the City Council and signed by the Mayor.

Dexter Mead, Executive Director of Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust was present and gave a history and the duties that DNRT provides. It was explained that the city had approached the Town of Dartmouth to act as the Custodian for the acreage owned by the city known as the Rifle Range in their conservation possession. While Dartmouth was happy about the proposal, they did not have the staffing nor the ability to handle the request. The town suggested the DNRT and they happily agreed to oversee/act as custodian, a third party, which is required by the EOEA. Mr. Mead stated that this block of land is a perfect fit because it abuts two blocks of land that are maintained by the DNRT.

Neil Mello of the Mayor's Office was present and provided a power-point presentation of the site usage, which showed where the Business Park would be located and the reconfiguration of the golf course's club house and parking area, which would be improved.

It was asked if the proposed property had any cleanup or EPA concerns, the Committee was told no.

Derek Santos of the New Bedford Economic Development Council gave an overview of the possible usage for the property and those businesses a park like this would attract. He was asked if the NBEDC would look to offer TIF's to these new businesses and he said yes if they were asked.

Councillor Morad raised her concern about the Administration misleading the citizens by stating it would mean \$2.7 million in revenue which is not correct if TIF's were issued that it would most likely take up to ten (10) years to reach the full revenue. She also addressed Mr. Mello's suggestion that the rehab to the golf course would not cost the taxpayers money because the cost of each building would go into the city's accounts, which belong to the citizens.

Councillor Gomes expressed concern about the traffic in the area. Both he and Councillor Morad described the backup of traffic coming off of Route 140 onto Hathaway Road and Rockdale Avenue and Hathaway Road, that if there was, in fact, the estimated one thousand jobs, which could mean one thousand vehicles that traffic would be a concern.

Derek Santos said that when the property was sold, the building owners would be responsible for a traffic study. He reminded the Committee that the same number of vehicles, if not more, were projected for the casino that was once proposed for the location.

Councillor Lopes asked what the timeline was if the Council approved the Home Rule Petition. He was told they hoped it would be approved by the State by the Spring, and that Representative Markey and Senator Montigny had already begun the ground-work to move it forward. Also, that the Secretary of the EOEA has pre-approved the process. The State Delegation would not move forward with the proposal without this pre-approval. This will help to move the proposal along in a timely fashion.

Councillor Abreu asked CFO Sky about the projected revenues and he echoed Councillor Morad's comments that it is hard to tell because they do not know if TIF's would come into play or not. However, at a full tax base this could mean an \$80 to \$110 savings to residential taxes, because the commercial tax rate would be added also.

Councillor Dunn spoke in favor of this project and the approval of the Home Rule Petition. He stated a project like this would bring in revenue, jobs, and Hathaway Road improvements. He reinforced his belief that if the Council stalls the city would lose this opportunity to other communities. He noted that economic development is a competitive sport.

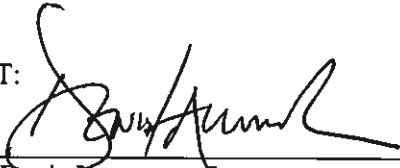
Attorney Gerwatowski gave his overview of the project and explained that this would be the first in many steps moving forward.

On motion by Councillor Dunn and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION, of AN ACT, Authorizing the City of New Bedford To Convey Certain Land Acquired for Open Space and Playground Purposes. This motion PASSED on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 10, Nays 1, with Councillor Morad opposed.

Councillor Lopes made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Giesta. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 11, Nays 0.

This meeting adjourned @ 8:59 p.m.

ATTEST:



Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees