

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS & BRIEFINGS

DATE: JULY 18, 2022

TIME: 7:05 P.M.

PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS NAOMI CARNEY, CHAIRPERSON; SHANE BURGO (7:08); MARIA GIESTA; BRIAN GOMES; SCOTT LIMA; WILLIAM BRAD MARKEY; RYAN PEREIRA

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS DEREK BAPTISTE, VICE CHAIRMAN; IAN ABREU; HUGH DUNN; LINDA MORAD

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Councillor Carney called the Appointments & Briefings Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read Communications from Councillors Abreu, Baptiste, and Morad explaining their absences from this meeting. These Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Giesta.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a PUBLIC HEARING on a COMMUNICATION/DEMOLITION, New Bedford Historical Commission to City Council RE: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW - 1 REAR COFFIN AVENUE (Map 100/Lot 117) a Circa 1902 masonry mill building, the building is architecturally and historically significant and is a contributing resource within the Whitman Mills National Register District, it has associations with the City's cotton textile industry as well with internationally known mill architect/engineer Charles R. Makepeace, notable contractor Benjamin F. Smith and leading textile manufacturer and commission agent William Whitman; a 2019 Board of Survey report drafted by a licensed structural engineer, documented substantial roof structural system collapse and declared the building unsafe and dangerous per the provisions of the State Building Code, the building is structurally compromised and beyond feasible rehabilitation to the extent that it presents as a public hazard; the City and the Massachusetts Historical Commission, with the NBHC as a concurring party, will be entering into a Memorandum of Agreement with stipulations to photo document the building in order to mitigate the adverse effect to historic resources, "in light of these findings, the New Bedford Historical Commission has determined that the building at 1 Rear Coffin Avenue is a Historically Significant but not Preferably Preserved historic building" (Ref'd 06/23/2022) (Advertised in The Standard-Times on Friday, July 01, 2022.) was received and placed on file and the hearing opened by Councillor Giesta and seconded by Councillor Burgo. (1)

Danny Romanowicz, Commissioner of Inspectional Services, explained this property is a danger to the neighborhood and the buildings adjacent to it. Currently the building has been condemned by the State under State Code, by the City and the Fire Department as well. The structure is not sound, and the upper levels have collapsed into the lower levels. The black mold in the building is an issue, the Commissioner stated he has never seen black mold of this magnitude in his entire career. There are also asbestos and contaminant concerns as well.

The objective is to demolish the building using CDBG funding. There is a fund set aside for such demolitions in the city. The city will place a lien against the owner of the building, Great Neck, Inc. The city will then attempt to collect the funds spent on the demolition from the property owner. He explained that the city was attempting to place a lien on the original property owner when that owner gifted the property to Great Neck, LLC. This caused the lien process to begin again. The new owners have gone silent as it relates to the property.

Commissioner Romanowicz explained that the building must come down. It is a detriment to the neighborhood and the two apartment facilities that abut the property.

Anne Louro, Preservation Planner was present and confirmed that CDBG funds would be used towards the demolition of the building.

Some members of the Committee expressed their concerns that the city may not be successful in securing a reimbursement for Great Neck, because it is a non-profit. The Committee did acknowledge that the building did need to come down.

Councillor Carney asked if there was anyone present who would like to speak and/or be recorded in favor of the demolition, there were none. She then asked if there was anyone present who would like to speak and/or be recorded in opposition of the demolition, there were none.

On motion by Councillor Giesta and seconded by Councillor Pereira, the Committee VOTED: To close the public hearing. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Giesta and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council Grant the Demolition of 1 REAR COFFIN AVENUE (Map 100/lot 117). This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 7, Nays 0.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION/DEMOLITION, Anne Louro, Preservation Planner, to City Council, re: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW – 40 EDISON STREET (Map 107/Lot 109) a circa 1910 two story masonry boiler room and pump house; the structure is not located in a National Register Historic District; the structure is the Boiler Room and Pump House of the Nield Manufacturing Company; the structure has experienced deferred maintenance, resulting in the structure being structurally compromised and beyond feasible rehabilitation; this demolition request DOES NOT include the adjacent smoke stack, “in light of these findings, the Preservation Planner has determined that the Boiler Room and Pump House at 40 Edison Street is neither a Historically Significant nor a Preferably Preserved Building” (Ref’d 06/09/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Burgo. (2)

Councillor Pereira explained that he incorrectly referred this item to Committee and apologized for the delay in granting the demolition process.

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Giesta, the Committee VOTED: To Grant the Demolition of 40 EDISON STREET (Map 107/Lot 109.) This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, requesting that the City of New Bedford, as Grantee of Foreign Trade Zone #28 (FTZ 28), be authorized to apply to the United States Foreign Trade Zones Board and applicable federal agencies to reorganize FTZ 28 to an Alternative Site Framework (ASF); and that the Mayor be authorized to execute all necessary paperwork for the application and any subsequent administrative actions for FTZ 28 (Ref'd 02/24/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Giesta and seconded by Councillor Burgo. (3)

George Krikorian, Acting Director of the Harbor Development Commission was present and gave an overview of the request for the Council's authority to expand the Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) from the current FTZ 28 designation to an Alternative Site Framework (ASF). This would basically allow the FTZ to extend from its current size to a larger size. He explained the FTZ has been in existence in the city since the 1970's, but it has been under-utilized basically due to poor marketing. Currently, only Acushnet Rubber (Titleist) utilizes the process.

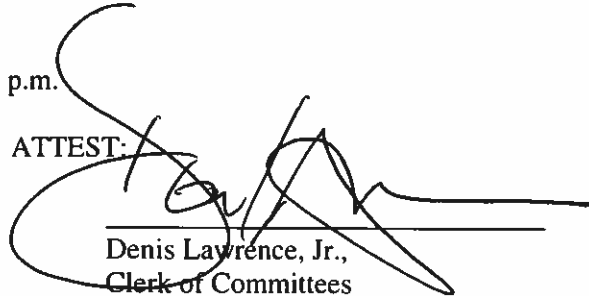
In 2019 the State granted authority to FTZ's to include Southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod and the Islands, which within the sixty (60) mile radius, the city would be able to issue FTZ designations to companies. He explained the closest FTZ is in Boston; so that being able to apply for the ASF would become an economic tool for the city. The city would receive funds, by executing the application process, which currently has a \$3,000 fee and would receive an annual maintenance fee of \$5,000 per year. He explained that in 2020 the City Council transferred the oversight of the FTZ to the Harbor Development Commission, and that having done this, the HDC needs to reapply for the FTZ (ASF) designation. He further revealed that the new designation would increase the original 22-1/2 acres available to a total of 2,000 acres which would be a benefit to the city.

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, requesting that the City of New Bedford, as Grantee of Foreign Trade Zone #28 (FTZ 28), be authorized to apply to the United States Foreign Trade Zones Board and applicable federal agencies to reorganize FTZ 28 to an Alternative Site Framework (ASF); and that the Mayor be authorized to execute all necessary paperwork for the application and any subsequent administrative actions for FTZ 28. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Councillor Pereira made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Burgo.

This meeting adjourned @ 7:51 p.m.

ATTEST:



Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees