

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & NEIGHBORHOODS
DATE: OCTOBER 26, 2022
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS BRIAN GOMES, CHAIRMAN; SHANE BURGO, VICE CHAIRMAN; IAN ABREU; DEREK BAPTISTE; NAOMI CARNEY; HUGH DUNN; SCOTT LIMA; WILLIAM BRAD MARKEY; RYAN PEREIRA

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS MARIA GIESTA; LINDA MORAD

* * *

Councillor Gomes called the Public Safety & Neighborhoods Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read Communications from Councillors Giesta and Morad explaining their absences from this meeting. These Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Burgo.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Lima, Gomes, Abreu, Baptiste, Carney, Dunn, Markey, and Pereira, requesting, that Executive Secretary/Parking Clerk Laurie Alfonso brief the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods on the application that was submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, specifically, the MassDOT Safety Equipment Grant application which details "proposed speed transition zones" in the following areas: East Beach, Victory Park/Clegg Field Baseball Complex, West Beach, Downtown Elm Street Parking Garage, Buttonwood Park, Riverside Park; (To be Referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods) (Ref'd 05/12/2022) and a COMMUNICATION, Councillor Lima, submitting maps detailing the "Proposed Speed Transition Zones" (To be Referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods.) (Ref'd 05/12/2022) were received and placed on file by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Carney. This motion passed on a voice vote. (1, 1a)

Councillor Lima explained that he is very much concerned about speeding in certain areas of the city and believed that the proposed speed transition zones are the proper way to address the issue.

A number of Committee members voiced their support for the proposed Speed Transition Zones. Councillors Abreu, Baptiste, Burgo, Carney, Dunn, Markey, and Pereira asked to be added to the motion as sponsors, there were no objections from the original makers, Councillors Lima, and Gomes; so, they were added to the motion.

Lieutenant Scott Carola of the New Bedford Police Department was present and took down the areas of concern each member of the Committee had, as it related to speed transition zones. He explained that the city has applied for grants to secure and erect

those flashing speed limit signs that are solar operated and that if successful in obtaining, they would be put up throughout the city in designated areas.

On motion by Councillor Lima and seconded by Councillor Baptiste, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Dunn, Abreu, Council President Lopes, Councillors Giesta, Lima, Carney, Markey, Gomes and Baptiste, requesting, that Police Chief Cordeiro, Public Information Officer Scott Carola and Police Union President Turgeon be invited to a meeting of the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods to discuss providing the Council and public with a weekly crime report with up to date statistics on violent crime, property crime, and other crime, the crime data should be compiled both in a Citywide and Ward specific format; and further, the report should show trends based on previous weeks (To be Referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods.) (Ref'd 02/25/2021) (03/24/2021 – tabled; MOTION made that the Chief provide the Committee by email a weekly crime report; RELATED MOTION made that the Chief and Public Information Officer ask for an explanation of the discrepancies between City's crime to FBI and City's budget) was removed from the table by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Burgo. (2)

The Committee expressed their concern that they had not received a breakdown of crime throughout the city as requested from the Police Department.

Lt. Carola was present and explained that while the Police Department had plans to fulfill the Committees request, they would not be able to run a report. They are not in the position to run a report with a breakdown by ward. The city is broken up into two zones and they could run a report that way. He explained that the New Bedford Police Department has now moved away from recording crimes, called the Hierarchy Reporting System, as they have in the past as it has skewed the city's crime numbers and the FBI's formal recording process. The new recording process being used by the Police Department is called NIVUS.

The Committee asked if the Police Department could forward a report to them every three months and they were told that they could.

The Committee discussed several items not related to this motion, to include details, requests for maps of how the city is broken down by Police districts and other items.

On motion by Councillor Dunn and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To send a communication to the Chief of Police asking for a report of crimes in the city to be broken down by district (2 police districts) within the next thirty (30) days. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Dunn and seconded by Councillor Lima, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

* * *

Councillor Lima asked if items three (3) and four (4) can be taken up together without objection. There were no objections.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Lima, Gomes, Dunn, Giesta, and Carney, requesting that Fire Chief Scott Kruger, Inspectional Services Commissioner Danny Romanowicz, Planning Director Jennifer Carloni, Environmental Stewardship Director Michele Paul, and Health Director Damon Chaplin, come before the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods to discuss the conditions that caused the fire at Bob's Tire Co., 55 Brook Street, on July 7, 2022, to apprise the Committee on the three inspection summary reports that were prepared on February 5, 2021 relative to Bob's Tire Company, F & B Tire, and Pearl Street Tire, and to update the Committee on the Administration's intentions relative to ensuring that the aforementioned tire companies are in compliance with City Codes and Ordinances, as well as State and Federal Regulations (To be Referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods.) (Ref'd 07/21/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Pereira. (3)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Gomes, Dunn and Giesta, requesting, that the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods meet with officials from the Department of Inspectional Services, the Department of Public Infrastructure, the Fire Department, the Health Department and the owner of Bob's Tire Company located at 85 Brook Street, due to the local residents' complaints of the foul odor and runoff water from the site where the shredding of tires is occurring, this has become a quality-of-life issue for the residents of that area; and further, that an explanation be given to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods as to when permission was given to shred tires at this location; and further, that if Bob's Tire Company has any Code violations, that the shredding of tires be halted immediately at this site (To be Referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods.) (Ref'd 02/13/2020) was received and placed on file by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Pereira. (4)

A discussion took place as it relates to the tire shredding companies in the city and what steps are being taken to make sure they follow proper safety guidelines to prevent such incidents as the recent fire in the north end.

Damon Chaplin, Health Director was present and answered questions from the Committee. He confirmed that tires need to be kept in containers and that his department has been visiting said tire companies frequently to make sure they are cooperating with the expectations put forth by the city. He told the Committee that he has seen a considerable improvement since the city has stepped up its monitoring of the properties in question.

Scott Kruger, Fire Chief, gave an overview of the cause of the fire at the tire facility, stating it was a combination of machinery, rubber, and steel (from the inner radials) of tires. They believe it was caused by overheating. He went on to say that because of the fire the shredding operation which was held indoors is now taking place outside. He told the Committee that the tire companies have been working with the Fire Department and are following city and state regulations.

Dan Romanowicz, DIS Commissioner was asked if the building that caught fire was going to be rebuilt would it have to be brought up to code. The Commissioner

explained that this would not be possible for these types of businesses as they exist were grandfather into the locations they are at, they are not allowed to reconstruct or add any new buildings, etc. City zoning no longer allows this type of industry around the city. Any proposal would end up going to the City Solicitor for review.

Michele Paul, Environmental Stewardship was also present and explained that her role is to record all information received from the city departments as it relates to issues with these types of business and forward reports to the DEP as needed.

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To table items three (3) and four (4) at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

* * *

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To waive the reading on items five (5); six (6); seven (7); eight (8); receive and place on file and recommend "No Further Action" to the City Council. This motion passed on a voice vote. They are as follows:

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Council President Lopes, Councillors Abreu, Lima, Giesta, Baptiste, Morad, Carney, Dunn, and Markey, requesting that the Fire Chief attend a Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods meeting to discuss the fire coverage area of each of the City's Fire Stations and provide each Councillor with a copy of the coverage map. (To be Referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods.) (Ref'd 02/13/2020) (05/20/2021 – tabled) (5)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, Council President Lopes, Councillors Markey and Carney, requesting, that the City Council go on record in opposition and condemnation of the Boston Globe's article along with the report done by Citizens For Juvenile Justice, titled, "We Are The Prey"; and further, that the New Bedford City Council also go on record in support of the men and women of the New Bedford Police Department as this report was not fairly done, and does not fit the image, the profile and the mission of our law-enforcement in the City, this report condemned our Police Department for racial profiling of minority groups of juveniles; and further, that the department continues to enforce law and order and justice for all Citizens of the City of New Bedford; and further, that Acting Police Chief Paul Oliveira reassure the people of the City that his leadership and New Bedford Police Department will mirror an image and commitment that all Citizens of the City of New Bedford will be treated fairly with no bias, only law and order and protection of all City residents. (Ref'd 02/10/2022) (6)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a RELATED MOTION, Councillor Morad, requesting that the Public Safety Chair hold another Public Safety meeting within the next 30 days and invite the Director of Parks, Recreation and Beaches, Mary Rapoza, in order to continue the discussion on how our parks will be monitored over the course of the Summer of 2022. (Ref'd from Committee 04/21/2022) (7)

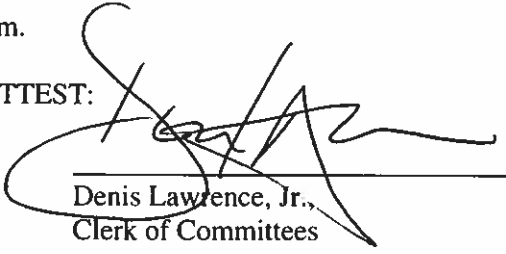
Notice, City Clerk of reference of a REPORT, Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods, recommending that the City Council follow the recommendations put forth in the "Comprehensive Beach Plan" submitted by Councillor Gomes and the "Summer Action Plan" submitted by Councillor Pereira, and to refer said plans to the

Full City Council for distribution to all of the Invitees of the April 21, 2022, Public Safety Committee meeting as well as the Administration. (Ref'd 04/28/2022) (8)

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

This meeting adjourned @ 8:04 p.m.

ATTEST:



Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees