



**CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MEETING:** COMMITTEE ON ORDINANCES  
**DATE:** JANUARY 11, 2023  
**TIME:** 7:05 P.M.  
**PLACE:** CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

**PRESENT:** COUNCILLORS SCOTT LIMA, CHAIRMAN; IAN ABREU; DEREK BAPTISTE; SHANE BURGO; NAOMI CARNEY; MARIA GIESTA; BRIAN GOMES; WILLIAM BRAD MARKEY; LINDA MORAD; RYAN PEREIRA

**ABSENT:** NO ONE

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Councillor Lima called the Ordinance Committee Meeting to order and took attendance; everyone was present.

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COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell to City Council, submitting an ORDINANCE, Amending Chapter 2, Article IX, by changing the Human Relations Commission's name to the Human Rights Commission, and an ORDINANCE, Amending Chapter 10, Article I, Section 10-43 – In General, by striking the phrase “Human Relations Commission” to “Human Rights Commission” (Ref'd 09/08/2022); and AN ORDINANCE, Amending Chapter 2, Article IX, by changing the Human Relations Commission's name to the Human Rights Commission (Ref'd 09/08/2022); and AN ORDINANCE, Amending Chapter 10, Article I, Section 10-43 – In General, by striking the phrase “Human Relations Commission” to “Human Rights Commission” (Ref'd 09/08/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Baptiste. (1, 1a, 1b)

The Chair recognized Marci Pina-Christian, Executive Director of the Human Relations Commission, who provided an overview regarding the request to rename the “Human Relations Commission” to the “Human Rights Commission”.

She explained that the City has the oldest Human Relations Commission in the State, established in the 1960's. However, over time, similar commissions have been renamed “Human Rights Commissions”. The role of the Commission will not change, just the name, and it will continue to address any and all issues, including violations of personal rights. She also stated that with their current title, there is confusion with the Personnel Office, which is also known as Human Relations. They frequently receive job inquiry calls.

Ms. Pina-Christian was asked if there would be cost involved in changing the name. She explained it would be minimal. For example, they would not change the name on the stationary until they needed to reorder such items.

The Chair recognized Martin Bentz of the Commission. He said the name change would allow the residents of New Bedford to know that there is a place in city government that cares about human rights.

Mr. Bentz was asked by Councillor Gomes if he thought posting a mission statement would be a good idea; something that stated the City of New Bedford supports all human rights. Mr. Bentz answered that it was a wonderful idea, and if the Commission decided to move forward with such an initiative, he would be glad to assist with the language.

Atty. Owen Murphy of the City Solicitor's Office was recognized and was asked if there were any issues in renaming the Commission. He stated that there were none and that the City had no objections.

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the Ordinances relative to changing the Human Relations Commission's name to the Human Rights Commission. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting a proposed Zoning ORDINANCE amendment and a proposed ORDER approving the New Bedford MacArthur Drive Redevelopment Plan (Ref'd 10/13/2022) (11/14/2022 – Public Hearing held and closed; matter tabled); and AN ORDER, (Ref'd 10/13/2022) (11/14/2022 – tabled); and AN ORDINANCE, (Ref'd 10/13/2022) (11/14/2022 – tabled); and a COMMUNICATION, Jennifer Carloni, Director, City Planning, to Councillor Hugh Dunn, Chairman, Committee on Ordinances, advising that the Planning Board held a public hearing on Wednesday, November 09, 2022, to discuss the proposed Zoning ORDINANCE amendment and the proposed ORDER approving the New Bedford MacArthur Drive Redevelopment Plan; the Planning Board voted to send a **FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION**, recommending that the City Council approve the MacArthur Drive Redevelopment Plan and finds the plan in conformance with the Citywide Master Plan; and further, the Planning Board voted to send a **FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION**, recommending that the City Council approve the amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to insert the MacArthur Drive District text and map. (Ref'd 11/10/2022) (11/14/2022 – tabled) was removed from the table by Councillor Carney and seconded by Councillor Burgo. (2, 2a, 2b, 2c)

The Chair recognized Atty. Gerwatowski, Legal Counsel. He reminded the Committee that when this item was addressed in November, there was some concern that the tax credit language appeared in the New Bedford MacArthur Drive Redevelopment Plan. At that time, the Committee was informed that this was an oversight and that the language could be removed if the Committee desired to do so.

The Chair then recognized Anne Louro, who was in attendance on behalf of the Planning Department. Ms. Louro pointed out the four places in the plan where the tax credit language could be found, should the Committee wish to strike the language. She and Attorney Jaikes, the City Solicitor, stated that the City had no objections in removing the language.

Councillor Pereira asked Ms. Louro to confirm that by adopting the New Bedford MacArthur Drive Redevelopment Plan, the Designated Port Area in the City could not be infringed upon by non-water related industries. Ms. Louro confirmed that this was the case.

Councillor Giesta asked how the zoning proposal would affect the area as it is now. She was told that any property in the area to the west of the Designated Port Area would change from Industrial to Mixed Use Business. This would allow for businesses to be established that could potentially provide services to the Designated Port Area, for example a convenience store or hotel.

Councillor Giesta expressed her concern that while the City is adamant that the Designated Port Area would not be affected, the State does have the ability to come in and make adjustments to the area. She is concerned that this could ultimately affect the working waterfront and the fishing industry.

Councillor Morad echoed the same concerns. She referenced a waterfront event where streets were closed; the waterfront entities were not notified and expressed concern about how this would affect their ingress/egress in the area.

Councillor Abreu asked if representatives of the fishing industry were invited to the table for their input and if they agreed with the proposed changes. He was told they were, and they did not object.

Councillor Baptiste also expressed his concern in adopting this ordinance. In his opinion, he believes the move will cause an “inching closer and closer” to happen, until the fishing port is just a waterhole. He commented that this is a working waterfront, it is not Venice Beach or Newport.

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: To amend the New Bedford MacArthur Drive Area Redevelopment Plan by striking the tax credit language found in four places in the plan, as follows:

- Strike on page 11, second paragraph, the sentence that relates to the tax credits
- Strike on page 25, at the bottom, the words that reference the same
- Strike on page 64, in the 4th paragraph, the words that reference the same
- Strike in appendix III, at the top/left side, the words that reference the same

This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Pereira, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDINANCE and the ORDER, approving the New Bedford MacArthur Drive Redevelopment Plan, as amended. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 8, Nays 2, with Councillors Giesta and Morad opposed.

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Councillor Burgo made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Abreu. This motion passed on a voice vote.

This meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Denis Lawrence Jr.  
Clerk of the Committees