



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS & BRIEFINGS
DATE: NOVEMBER 18, 2024
TIME: 7:01 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS IAN ABREU, CHAIR; SHANE BURGO;
NAOMI CARNEY; LEO CHOQUETTE; MARIA GIESTA;
BRIAN GOMES; JOSEPH LOPES; LINDA MORAD;
SHAWN OLIVER; RYAN PEREIRA

ABSENT: COUNCILLOR DEREK BAPTISTE

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Councillor Abreu called the Appointments & Briefings Committee meeting to order, took attendance, and explained that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed.

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Councillor Abreu announced the start of Citizen's Input Time, not to exceed the first thirty (30) minutes of the meeting.

CITIZEN'S INPUT TIME – Not to exceed the first thirty (30) minutes of the meeting;

Craig Ptaszenski, 8A Carriage Drive, New Bedford, 02740, speaking on "The Homeless" (Referred – October 21, 2024.)

It was determined that Mr. Ptaszenski was not present.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Oliver, the Committee VOTED: To take "**NO FURTHER ACTION**" on the matter at this time.

Citizen's Input Time was concluded.

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PUBLIC HEARING on an APPLICATION, Chris Correia and Jordan Rebello, d/b/a Neighborhood Auto Sales, for a SPECIAL PERMIT for Motor Vehicle Sales and/or Rentals, at 297 Belleville Avenue, New Bedford, MA 02746. (Application Received – September 12, 2024.) (Duly advertised in The Standard-Times on Tuesday, October 01, 2024 and Tuesday, October 08, 2024.) (October 15, 2024 – Public Hearing continued to November 18, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers.)

The Chair reopened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Chris Correia, one of the two applicants, was recognized. Mr. Correia stated he has retired from a job with the State and plans to establish a motor vehicle sales and rental business at 297 Belleville Avenue in New Bedford. He said if he is granted the Special Permit, he would then apply for a license.

Councillor Giesta asked Mr. Correia if Mr. Rebello, the second name listed on the application, was his business partner. She was told that he was, and that Mr. Rebello would handle the car detailing side of the business while Mr. Correia would be in charge of selling the vehicles. Councillor Giesta asked how many vehicles would be on site. She was told twelve. Councillor Giesta asked if there would be any additional employees; she was told no other employees, as of this date. Councillor Giesta asked what the hours of operation would be. She was told that for now it would be Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with no weekend hours.

Councillor Morad asked the applicant if he had ever had this type of business before. Mr. Correia stated that he has sold as many as five vehicles before but that this was going to be his first venture into a business of this size. Councillor Morad asked if any of the vehicle detailing would take place at this location. She was told no, that it would take place at a County Street location. Councillor Morad asked if he was really going to be closed on the weekends. Mr. Correia replied that the business would be closed on the weekends for now but if he saw a need for opening on weekends in the future, he would apply for a permit. Councillor Morad stated she was concerned about the operating hours and how it would affect the residents that abut the property. She asked if she conditioned the approval to only Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., would he be amenable to that. He stated as of right now he would be.

The Chair recognized Danny Romanowicz, Commissioner, Department of Inspectional Services, who provided the Committee with an overview of the request. Mr. Romanowicz stated the lot in question allows space for twelve vehicles. There would be an additional parking space for an employee. Mr. Romanowicz stated there have been no issues with the property, which has been neatly maintained and operated.

Councillor Morad asked if there was an MDC trap on site; she was told there was not. Councillor Morad expressed concern about repairs being performed on the site and asked Mr. Romanowicz if his Department conducted inspections to ensure such activities were not taking place at similar premises, including the location being discussed. Mr. Romanowicz replied that he and his staff often do. He went on to say that this business is located on a main road often travelled by his staff, and that they would be able to identify a potential issue. He added that the person who originally ran the auto lot lives in a three-family home that abuts the property.

The Chair asked if there was anyone present who would like to speak and/or be recorded in favor of the special permit; there were none. The Chair asked if there was anyone present who would like to speak and/or be recorded in opposition of the special permit; there were none.

The Chair closed the Public Hearing.

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Oliver, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPLICATION, Chris Correia and Jordan Rebello, d/b/a Neighborhood Auto Sales, for a SPECIAL PERMIT for Motor Vehicle Sales and/or Rentals, at 297 Belleville Avenue, New Bedford, MA 02746. This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 6, Nays 4. (Councillors Giesta, Lopes, Morad and Pereira OPPOSED.)

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PETITION, **Deborah A. Carmel, Sandwich, MA d/b/a First Unitarian Church Thrift Shop, 71 Eighth Street, New Bedford, MA**, requesting that she be granted a Waiver of Residency in accordance with Section 15-38 of the City Code, to obtain a **LICENSE TO DEAL IN JUNK, OLD METALS OR ANY OTHER SECONDHAND ARTICLES**. (Referred – October 10, 2024.) (Matter ID #1663)

The Chair recognized Ms. Carmel, who shared that she attends the First Unitarian Church, located at 71 Eighth Street in New Bedford. The Church operates a thrift shop, which is open to the public. Ms. Carmel explained that the reason she is before the Committee is because she runs the thrift shop and in order to do this, she needs a Waiver of Residency, as she resides on Cape Cod.

There were no questions asked of Ms. Carmel.

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Choquette, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the PETITION, on behalf of **Deborah A. Carmel, Sandwich, MA, d/b/a/ First Unitarian Church Thrift Shop, 71 Eighth Street, New Bedford, MA 02740**, requesting that she be granted a Waiver of Residency in accordance with Section 15-38 of the City Code, to obtain a **LICENSE TO DEAL IN JUNK, OLD METALS OR ANY OTHER SECONDHAND ARTICLES**.

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COMMUNICATION, City Clerk/Clerk of the City Council, to City Council, submitting an Application for a **NEW PRIVATE LIVERY LICENSE** on behalf of **ANA L. VALENTIN BURGOS, 627 Allen Street, New Bedford, MA, d/b/a GERANA'S TRANSPORTATION, INC., 211 Weld Street, New Bedford, MA. (License to Expire June 30, 2025.)** (Referred – September 12, 2024.) (Matter ID #1446) (October 15, 2024 – tabled)

On motion by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Giesta, the Committee VOTED: To remove the item from the table.

It was determined that the Applicant was not present.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Oliver, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council take “**NO FURTHER ACTION**” on the COMMUNICATION, City Clerk/Clerk of the City Council, to City Council, submitting an Application for a **NEW PRIVATE LIVERY LICENSE** on behalf of **ANA L. VALENTIN BURGOS, 627 Allen Street, New Bedford, MA, d/b/a GERANA'S TRANSPORTATION, INC., 211 Weld Street, New Bedford, MA. (License to Expire June 30, 2025.)**

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COMMUNICATION, City Clerk/Clerk of the City Council, to City Council, submitting an Application for a **NEW PRIVATE LIVRY LICENSE**, on behalf of **RAFAELA ARITA GUERRA, 122 Frank Street, New Bedford, MA, d/b/a RAFAELA'S TRANSPORTATION, 122 Frank Street, New Bedford, MA. (License to Expire – June 30, 2025.)** (Referred – October 10, 2024.) (Matter ID #1664)

Ms. Guerra and her husband Oscar Santos, who would be translating for his wife as she does not speak English, were recognized. Mr. Santos explained that his wife is looking to start her own transportation business.

Councillor Pereira asked what type of transportation the business would be performing. Mr. Santos replied that his wife would primarily be transporting students to and from school. The vehicle to be used was a 2018 minivan. Councillor Pereira asked if the vehicle would be parked in their driveway; he was told it would and that they also have a garage.

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPLICATION for a **NEW PRIVATE LIVRY LICENSE**, on behalf of **RAFAELA ARITA GUERRA, 122 Frank Street, New Bedford, MA, d/b/a RAFAELA'S TRANSPORTATION, 122 Frank Street, New Bedford, MA. (License to Expire – June 30, 2025.)**

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COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the REAPPOINTMENT of KAMILE KHAZAN, New Bedford, MA to the PLANNING BOARD; this term will expire December 2027. (Referred – October 24, 2024.) (Matter ID #1753)

The Chair recognized Ms. Khazan, who thanked the Committee for reappointing her to the Planning Board where she has served for the past six years.

Councillor Morad commended Ms. Khazan for her attendance over the last six years and explained that the reason she referred this item to Committee was that she wanted to have a conversation about Ms. Khazan's limited participation in those meetings.

Councillor Morad explained that she has attended many Planning Board meetings for a number of projects throughout the City. In doing so over the years, she has noticed that there are a couple of Board Members who ask questions and control the conversation and other Members that do not. Councillor Morad shared that she had recently noticed the Planning Board Chair changed the way he recognizes Members in order to include those who do not often ask many questions. By doing this, Councillor Morad stated that she does not see Ms. Khazan participating. She also said that she wanted her to speak more at meetings and to be visually seen on Zoom meetings.

Ms. Khazan replied that the reason she does not appear on Zoom meetings is that she lives in a very old house with spotty internet service. She has the ability to do one or the other, zoom or phone, and she has better luck participating with audio through the use of her phone.

In addressing her participation, Ms. Khazan shared that she reviews the agenda items as soon as she receives them and reaches out to the Planning Department with questions or for clarification if necessary. She stated that most of the questions she would ask are already asked and answered, and that she will not repeat a question that has already been answered. She added that if she does have a question, she asks.

Ms. Khazan equated her due diligence with agenda items to a puzzle. She receives information regarding an agenda item from various sources, including Councillors, petitioners, abutters and City Staff, and she makes her decision based on that information. She added that the reason she may not ask many questions is because she has done enough prior research, and because of the other questions asked and answered during a meeting. She thanked the Councillor for her input and stated that she would look to ask more questions in future meetings.

Councillor Giesta shared that she feels the Planning Board doesn't really listen to what a neighborhood is saying when they voice their concerns, for example, with the renovation of the old Sunbeam Bread site. Ms. Khazan explained that in relation to that particular project, she had not had the opportunity to visit the location; however, she did ask the applicant why there was not going to be a parking garage at that location. She lives in a similar neighborhood and was well aware of a potential parking issue in that area. Ms. Khazan said that though she cannot speak for other Planning Board Members, she did appreciate the fact that they were able to request a community meeting, which took place this past October. She went on to say that she believes it is very important to hear what the residents abutting a proposed project have to say.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Giesta, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the REAPPOINTMENT of KAMILE KHAZAN, New Bedford, MA to the PLANNING BOARD; this term will expire December 2027.

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

This meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence Jr.
Clerk of the Committees