



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MEMORIALS AND DEDICATIONS

DATE: MAY 13, 2025

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS DEREK BAPTISTE, CHAIR; NAOMI CARNEY (7:15); LEO CHOQUETTE; LINDA MORAD

ABSENT: COUNCILLOR SHAWN OLIVER

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Councillor Baptiste called the Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications meeting to order, took attendance, and explained that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed. The Clerk read Communications into the record from Councillor Gomes and Councillor Oliver explaining their absences. The Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Choquette. The Clerk stated that Councillor Carney had contacted the Committee saying that she would be delayed arriving at the meeting.

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COMMUNICATION, Department of Parks, Recreation and Beaches, submitting a Memorial Park Bench and Tree Dedication Program Application for a Memorial Tree to be located at Hazelwood Park (on a hill looking down, if possible), in memory of DAKOTA SYLVIA. (Matter ID #0239) (Referred – February 27, 2025.)

Councillor Baptiste recognized Sharday Amaral, representing the Department of Parks and Recreation and Beaches. Councillor Baptiste asked if Ms. Amaral had any input on the item. Ms. Amaral stated that the department was pleased to accept the Memorial Tree request as well as the location it is to be placed at.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Choquette, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the Memorial Park Bench and Tree Dedication Program Application in memory of Dakota Sylvia with a referral to the Park Board.

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COMMUNICATION, Department of Parks, Recreation and Beaches, submitting a Memorial Park Bench and Tree Dedication Program Application for a Memorial Park Bench to be located at Buttonwood Park, in memory of DEBORAH G. ROHER. (Matter ID #0491) (Referred – March 27, 2025.)

Ms. Amaral, Department of Parks, Recreation and Beaches, stated that the department was pleased to accept the Memorial Bench request as well as the location it is to be placed at.

The Chair recognized Mr. Richard Roher, 77 Sterling Avenue, White Plains, New York. Mr. Roher spoke in support of the Roher family's request and gave a brief history of his sister, Ms. Deborah G. Roher and her contributions to the City of New Bedford.

Councillor Morad asked Ms. Amaral what the timeline was for placing memorials after they had been approved by the Council and the Park Board. Ms. Amaral was unable to answer the question. Councillor Morad went on to say that she knows of a Memorial Bench that has been in limbo for more than 18 months, understanding it is to be placed at the Buttonwood Warming House.

Councillor Morad requested that Ms. Amaral ask Ms. Mary Rapoza, Director of Parks, Recreation and Beaches, to provide the Committee with a formal list of memorials approved and the timeline to install them.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Choquette, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the Memorial Park Bench and Tree Dedication Program Application in memory of Deborah G. Roher with a referral to the Park Board.

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RELATED MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting, that the Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications meet to discuss the establishment of a monument to memorialize Carl Pimentel on a parcel of land donated by the Pimentel Family, identified as Map 10 Lot 108. (Matter ID #0208) (Referred – February 27, 2025.)

This item was not read into the record.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Choquette, the Committee VOTED: To table the matter at this time.

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The following item was not read into the record.

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting that the Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications meet to discuss a location to honor the late Mr. Peter Britto, the Champion of youth basketball; Mr. Britto was a committed and dedicated beacon in serving the youth in the community; and that the Committee consider the basketball court at Monte Park as a suitable location. (Matter ID #0259) (Referred – February 22, 2024.) (October 28, 2024 – Remain on the table)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Choquette, the Committee VOTED: To Waive the Reading and recommend that the City Council take “**NO FURTHER ACTION**” on the matter at this time.

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The following item was not read into the record.

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Coelho, Lopes, Lima, Abreu, Carney, Giesta and Gomes, requesting that the Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications look into finding an appropriate location in the downtown area honoring Joe Jesus for the love and dedication he had for the City of New Bedford. (Matter ID #0571) (Referred – March 28, 2019.) (June 29, 2022 – tabled) (May 08, 2024 – tabled)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Choquette, the Committee VOTED: That the item remain on table at this time.

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The following item was not read into the record.

RELATED MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting, that the same course of action, the installation of American flags and poles be placed at the following monuments: Monte's Park playground, located at Acushnet Avenue and Russell Street, in honor of Joseph J. Monte, the first Cape Verdean to receive the Purple Heart medal and at the Veterans monument in honor of Private First Class Irving Kaplan, located at the intersection of Bolton, Fair and Hemlock Streets. (To be Referred to the Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications, the Mayor's Office, and Department of Public Infrastructure.) (Matter ID #0824) (Referred – June 10, 2021.) (June 25, 2021 – RETURNED UNSIGNED by the Mayor.)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Choquette, the Committee VOTED: To table the matter at this time.

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The following item was not read into the record.

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Abreu and Oliver, requesting, that the Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications, the Department of Public Infrastructure and the Administration discuss the feasibility of erecting a dedication plaque honoring ~~Philip C. Paleologos~~ *Philip C. and Celeste Paleologos* at the corner of Shawmut Avenue and Hathaway Road (or another suitable location) honoring ~~his~~ *their* over five decades of philanthropy and community service to the City of New Bedford. (To be Referred to the Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications, the Department of Public Infrastructure and the Administration.) (Matter ID #0940) (Referred – May 25, 2023.) (May 08, 2024 – tabled with a request that Celeste Paleologos's name be added)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Choquette, the Committee VOTED: That the matter remain on the table at this time.

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COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting a request to honor Korean War Veteran Andre Lopes by naming the new pedestrian bridge over John F. Kennedy Boulevard in his honor, namely the "Andre Lopes Memorial Bridge." (Matter ID #0110) (Referred – January 23, 2025.)

The Chair recognized Assistant City Solicitor Katherine Schuko representing the City. Attorney Schuko explained that this is a City issue. There is a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) between the City and the State that upon completion of the bridge, the City will take ownership of the bridge and would be in a position to dedicate the bridge.

Councillor Morad contradicted Atty. Schuko's statement, informing her that the Council had not yet accepted the overpass and therefore the City does not have the authority to name it. Councillor Morad further stated it was her understanding that the State Delegation had moved to dedicate the bridge until the City accepted the property.

Councillor Carney reiterated Councillor Morad's comments and asked that the Committee be given a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and State. Atty. Schuko stated she would have a copy of it forwarded to the Councillors.

Councillor Baptiste echoed the same, stating that the City had not yet accepted the property as the Council had not yet approved the request.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To table the matter at this time.

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The following items were not read into the record, and NO FURTHER ACTION was taken

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting, that the City Council go on record in support of sending a letter to Congressman William Keating and the National Park Service, requesting that the Federal Government designate Ft. Taber Park as a National Veterans Memorial Park. (Matter ID #1645) (Referred – September 23, 2014.) (June 27, 2017 – tabled; the next time this matter is on an agenda, invite a Rep from Congressman Keating’s office, John D’Angelo of Senator Warren’s office in Boston, and the New Bedford National Parks Superintendent Meghan Kish) (April 25, 2018 – tabled; have Council send a letter to the federal delegation asking that they work towards securing federal government recognition of Fort Tabor Park as a National Veterans Memorial Park)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To Waive the Reading and recommend that the City Council take **“NO FURTHER ACTION”** on the matter at this time.

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COMMUNICATION, Council President Morad, submitting a letter from Peter Boswell, Chair, Board of Park Commissioners, regarding the April 25, 2018 Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications meeting vote to bring a Motion to the full Council relative to the National Park Service designation of Ft. Taber Park as a National Veteran’s Memorial Park. (Copy all Councillors May 14, 2018.) (Matter ID #0862) (Referred – May 24, 2018.)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To Waive the Reading and recommend that the City Council take **“NO FURTHER ACTION”** on the matter at this time.

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WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Baptiste, Abreu, Carney, Coelho, Dunn, Giesta, Gomes, Lima, Lopes, Markey and Morad, requesting that the Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications meet with a Representative of the Mitchell Administration, the Department of Public Infrastructure Commissioner Jamie Ponte; and Parks Recreation and Beaches Director Mary Rapoza to discuss the feasibility of erecting an appropriate dedication in honor of New Bedford resident, Dr. Jibreel Khazan, a civil rights icon who is best known as a member of the Greensboro Four, a group of African American college students who on February 1, 1960, sat down at a segregated Woolworth’s lunch counter in Downtown Greensboro, North Carolina challenging the store’s policy of denying service to non-white customers; the protest and the subsequent events were major milestones in the Civil Rights Movement; Dr. Khazan has been a resident of New Bedford for the past 50 years and raised his family here in New Bedford where he has worked with numerous organizations and been one of the most influential people in our Community. (Matter ID #0407) (Referred – March 25, 2021.) (May 19, 2021 – Recommend that the City Council go on record in support of naming a park after Dr. Khazan and that this support and request be forwarded to the Park Board for consideration; and further, that Erik Andrade, Ross Grace Jr., Charlie Perry and Amilton Tavares be invited to attend the Park Board meeting as well; main motion tabled)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To Waive the Reading and recommend that the City Council take **“NO FURTHER ACTION”** on the matter at this time.

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WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, Council President Carney, Councillors Giesta, Lopes, Pereira, Oliver and Burgo, requesting, that the City take immediate action with ARPA money to revitalize the Mother Teresa Park, located at North and Chestnut Streets, this park was dedicated to Mother Teresa and has become a beacon within the community not only for the neighborhood kids, but also for the kids of the Mother Teresa House located on County Street. (Matter ID #1158) (Referred – June 27, 2024.) (October 28, 2024 – tabled)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To Waive the Reading and recommend that the City Council take **“NO FURTHER ACTION”** on the matter at this time.

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Councillor Morad made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Choquette.

This meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence, Jr.
Clerk of Committees