

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2009

Present: Ald. Salvucci (Acting Chairman), Lennon, Albright, Gentile, Yates, Mansfield, and Lappin

Absent: Ald. Schnipper

Also present: Ald. Fischman

City staff present: John Daghlian (Associate City Engineer), Nick Parnell (Commissioner of Public Buildings), David Tannozzini (Energy Officer; Public Buildings), Josh Morse (HVAC Technician; Public Buildings), Mike Kruse (Director of Planning), Mayor Cohen, Thomas Daley (Commissioner of Public Works), David Turocy (Deputy Commissioner of Public Works), Elaine Gentile (Director of Environmental Affairs, Public Works Department), Nunzio Piselli (Public Works Department), Angela Sottile (Solid Waste Manager; Public Works Department) and Shawna Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

#51-09 NSTAR ELECTRIC COMPANY petitioning for a grant of location to install one new pole (514/10A) in CHURCH STREET on the southwesterly side 65' ± southeasterly of Billings Park (Ward 1.) [01/26/09 @12:18 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0-1 (Lennon abstaining, Gentile not voting)**

NOTE: Maureen Carroll, NStar Permit Representative, presented the petition to the Committee. The petition is a request for a grant of location to install a pole on Church Street to eliminate wire crossings on a customer's property at One Billings Park. There is also a pole located at the back of the customer's yard that feeds five other properties and contributes to the wire crossings. The Department of Public Works recommended approval of the petition with standard conditions.

The public hearing was opened and the resident at 81 Church Street spoke on the petition. She would like to see additional street lighting and asked if it was possible to provide a new streetlight on the new pole. The Commissioner of Public Works explained that the City installs new streetlights and provided the woman with contact information to request a new light. Stephen Merrill Weiner, One Billings Park, spoke on the petition. They are concerned that the crossed wires create a safety hazard, which could be easily resolved with the addition of the new pole.

Ald. Albright asked if there was any possibility of undergrounding the wires from the pole. Ms. Carroll explained that it was not possible to underground at this location as the pole feeds another pole, which feeds five houses. Ald. Lappin moved approval of the petition, which carried unanimously.

#52-09 NATIONAL GRID petitioning for a grant of location to install and maintain 86' ± of 2" gas main in ELLIS STREET from the existing 2" gas main near Pole No. 135/3 southerly to 38 Ellis Street (Ward 5.) [02/03/09 @11:19 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0 (Lennon and Gentile not voting)**

NOTE: Dennis Reagan, Keyspan Permit Representative, presented the petition for a grant of location. The new gas main will provide gas service to 38 Ellis Street. The Department of Public Works recommended approval of the petition with the appropriate requirements to be issued as part of the street opening permit. The public hearing was opened and no one spoke for or against the petition. The Committee reviewed the petition and plans. Ald. Yates moved approval of the item, which carried unanimously.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#59-09 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting authorization to appropriate and expend eighty two thousand dollars (\$82,000) from bonded indebtedness for the purpose of entering into a contract with NORESKO to perform energy audits of the following locations: Bigelow Middle School, Brown Middle School, Oak Hill Middle School, Education Center, City Hall and Police Headquarters. [02/10/09 @4:41 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0 (Gentile not voting)**

NOTE: Commissioner Parnell, David Tannozzini, and Josh Morse presented the item and explained that this is a request for funds to perform energy audits at six City buildings. The City will enter into another contract with NORESKO, who performed an energy audit of F.A. Day Middle School. During that audit, a number of potential cost-saving projects were identified and the City opted to undertake all of the projects with NORESKO as the contractor. The Day Middle School is the largest user of energy of all City buildings. When the projects at the school are completed, they will generate energy savings, which will be substantial and will continue to save the City money over the next several years. The reports regarding the bonding request for Day Middle School are attached. The energy audits at the next six buildings should also identify projects that will generate long-term savings for the City. After the energy audits are complete and the recommendations are available, and the City has determined the scope of construction, it will be determined whether to proceed with NORESKO as the contractor. If the City opts to work with NORESKO as the contractor, the costs of the audits will become part of the total construction cost. Therefore, the appropriation will only used if the City does not move forward with a construction contract with NORESKO.

Ald. Salvucci inquired whether there were plans to perform energy audits on other City buildings. The Commissioner responded that he believes that the intention is to look at other buildings for energy savings. In moving forward, the City wants to perform the energy audits in increments to ensure that the City is getting what it needs out of the audits. Commissioner Parnell stated that the Committee should expect additional audit proposals in the next few months. Ald. Albright asked how the funding works for the audits. Mr. Morse explained that the City pays \$82,000 if it does not go through with an energy service agreement for the buildings. If the City does pursue all or substantially all of NORESKO's recommendations, the City does not pay the fees for the audits, and they are paid for through the energy savings. Ald. Lennon asked if there were any projected savings for the buildings if the projects identified by the audits are undertaken. Mr. Morse responded that there are no estimates but he believes that there are significant energy savings to be found at each of the buildings. The Commissioner stated that he would come back to the Committee with the results of each of the audits.

Emily Prenter of Stand for Children spoke on the item. She urged the Committee to approve the funding for the energy audits. She also thanked the Committee for the approval of the funding for F.A. Day energy savings improvements. She asked that the Committee also approve any future proposals for energy audits and energy savings improvements. With that, Ald. Albright moved approval of the item, which carried unanimously.

#241-08 ALD. SCHNIPPER requesting an update on the progress of the design for the reconstruction of Needham Street. [6-13-08 @ 11:45 AM]

ACTION: **HELD 6-0 (Gentile not voting)**

NOTE: The Director of Planning, Mike Kruse, Mayor Cohen, and Bill Steffens of McMahon Associates joined the Committee for discussion of this item. Mr. Steffens stated that the 25% plans were received back from the Mass Highway Department approximately a year ago. When the plans were received, the City made a presentation to Mass Highway requesting that the City take ownership of Needham Street before construction commenced. Rather than continue to present plans to Mass Highway, the City would accept the road but still receive the funds to construct the road from the State. The City would then manage the construction of the road. If Mass Highway were willing to agree to this proposal, the City could get through design and construction more quickly.

The Mayor stated that the Mass Highway Department considers the Needham Street Project a very small project. He reminded the Committee that the City's experience with State projects on Needham Street and Washington Street essentially resulted in the City taking over those projects. Needham Street is the City's largest commercial road and the construction has to be done in a way that is sensitive to the businesses that depend on that road for their livelihood. If the State views this as just another construction project that is done, when it is done, it could be disastrous to the City and the businesses. At some point, the City realized that the Mass Highway Department was not going to agree. The City has worked very closely with the State legislative delegation and that language for acceptance was incorporated into the State transportation bond last summer. The money to do the project has been authorized by the legislature. However, when the legislature authorizes it, it is not like a budget where the money is there and is intended to be spent but more of a wish list. The Mayor has had some discussions with the Commissioner of the Highway Department about whether or not the project was going to be one of the projects that would be done. Her response was clear that it was not considered a priority; however, if the Governor called and made it a priority, it would be a priority. The Mayor has been working with Northland, who is interested in developing along Needham Street, and they have hired an effective and knowledgeable lobbyist. The Mayor and the lobbyist have been working on trying to influence the Governor to make that call. Governor Patrick has talked about the importance of doing infrastructure as a tool for economic development and that is what the project would be. The Mayor has a meeting tomorrow with the new Secretary of Transportation, James Aloisi, to talk about the importance of the project and using State funds as an economic development tool to get the Needham Street/Highland Avenue Corridor Project working.

Ald. Salvucci has always understood that when a State road is repaired, it is up to the City or Town to pay for the working drawings and he wondered if that had changed. Mr. Steffens responded that it is true for Newton but his understanding is that Needham is getting State money to do the design. The City of Newton's commitment was to do the design with City

of Newton money. The City has some off right of way improvements that need to be implemented in order for the plan to work and there was not enough money in the original budget to do those improvements. The City went back to the State and informed them that the project was bigger than first expected. The transportation bond bill allows the City to use a portion of the money for those off right of way improvements and the design of those improvements.

Ald. Yates asked if the Town of Needham has agreed to accept their portion of the road. Needham has agreed to move in tandem with the City of Newton. Ald. Mansfield asked if Needham and Newton would coordinate with each other on the project, especially the bridge portion. The Mayor responded that Needham has agreed to work closely with Newton on the reconstruction. Representatives from Needham will also be meeting with the Secretary of the Mass Highway Department. Ald. Yates asked if the Department of Public Works was qualified to run a project of this magnitude. The Mayor is confident that the Department of Public Works is qualified to supervise the project. Commissioner Daley stated that he is not afraid of the project. The department is familiar with running this type of project and is aware that construction management and construction phasing is key to the success of the project. A project of this size requires the department to provide overall supervision with construction managers.

Ald. Albright inquired if the plan for Needham Street includes undergrounding all of the utilities. The Mayor responded that the conduit would be placed in the roadway to allow undergrounding in the future. The City would like to underground the wires but will need the businesses to participate, as the cost of undergrounding is substantial. The City is discussing the possibility with Northland.

Ald. Lappin asked what the dollar amount of the project is and what it includes. The cost of the whole corridor including the bridge is \$17 million. The cost for reconstructing the Newton portion is \$7 million. The bridge construction is estimated at \$4.3 million. Inflation has been factored into the estimates but it will cost more if the project is delayed for a number of years. The funds will be authorized before Needham Street is accepted as a city street. Ald. Lappin requested that the Mayor provide the cost of maintaining the road when an item is docketed for street acceptance. The Mayor agreed to provide that information, when the time comes.

Ald. Fischman is very pleased with the direction the project is going. He asked if there was anything the Aldermen could do to marshal support and further the project. He believes that it is important to get the project out of the hands of the State. It is a maintenance disaster. The Mayor responded that it could not hurt for the Aldermen to go on record with the Governor that they support the project. The Mayor also pointed out that the Newton/Needham Chamber of Commerce is also very interested in the project.

Ald. Lappin requested the timetable for the project. The Mayor replied that if you factor out the political part, the design will take nine months, the bid package will take three months and construction would be a two-year process. The reason for the two-year construction is that the work would be done between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. in order not to disrupt the business.

The Mayor expects to know whether the project is moving forward in the next few months. Ald. Yates was disappointed that the project was not deemed shovel-ready in terms of the stimulus package. Ald. Mansfield asked that the most expensive options be used in the estimates for the project. With that, Ald. Mansfield moved hold, in order to receive future updates of the Needham Street project. The motion carried unanimously.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#58-09 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to enter into a contract for solid waste and recycling collection with Waste Management, Inc. for a term of five years. [02/10/09 @4:42 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 3-0-4 (Lennon, Gentile, Mansfield, Lappin abstaining)**

NOTE: Public Works Commissioner, Tom Daley, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposal to enter into a contract with Waste Management for automated trash and recycling collection. The presentation was distributed to the Board last week and is available on the City's website on the Public Facilities Committee page. The presentation detailed the results of a survey sent to residents who were part of the automated trash collection pilot. The survey responses were very encouraging as overall satisfaction with the program was 91% with a 42% return rate of the survey. The presentation also highlighted the significant reduction in trash and increase in recycling in the pilot area.

If the contract is approved, the plan is to provide a 64-gallon trash barrel and a 64-gallon recycling cart to each household. Residents will have the option of a 35-gallon trash barrel if the 64-gallon barrel is too large. In addition, the will provide a household with an extra 64-gallon recycling cart at no charge, if it is warranted. The Public Works Department will offer an extra cart for a fee of \$200 per year. There will also be the option of obtaining a bag for \$2.25 for extra trash at a neighborhood store. Bulky waste and cleanouts will require a call to the Department of Public Works for pick-up at no charge. The Solid Waste Commission unanimously supports the plan.

The City plans to fund the purchase of the carts through 10-year bonds. The carts are warranted for 10 years and have a life expectancy of 16 years. The fee for the extra bags will be collected by the City. The neighborhood stores will provide the bags at no fee to the City because the bags will generate foot traffic. The cost for the bag covers the cost of the pick-up and the disposal of the trash. There were questions regarding the bonding for the collection carts. The bond will be paid directly out of the Public Works Department budget through the savings generated through the program. This particular bond will not effect the City's bonding capacity

The Solid Waste Commission also recommended that the City negotiate a five-year contract with Waste Management with the right to go out to bid if negotiations fail. The savings generated from the automated trash collection are approximately \$90,000 per month. Waste Management will order automated trucks, which require some lead-time, and try to implement the automated collection by August 1, 2009 but have promised an October 1, 2009 implementation if the contract is approved in April. The City has pre-negotiated the prices and included a slide in the presentation of the cost per household of several cities and towns compared to Newton's cost.

Several Committee members asked if the automated collection system would exclude the possibility of going to a pay-as-you throw program, as recommended by the Citizen Advisory Group. Mayor Cohen responded that the automated collection does not affect the City's ability to implement a pay-as-you throw program. However, the Mayor is not sure an appetite for that type of program exists in the community.

Ald. Lennon was concerned about the existing problems in Ward 1 concerning trash collection. Commissioner Daley stated that the route would be reworked by May or June of this year. The City has a significant and long-term working relationship with Waste Management, which leads the Commissioner to believe that problems will be dealt with as soon as they arise.

Ald. Lappin requested that the Commissioner provide a 10-year payment plan for the bond. Ald. Mansfield requested the draft contract for review in the Finance Committee. Ald. Yates moved approval of the item, which carried by a vote of three in favor, none opposed, and four abstentions. Ald. Lennon, Gentile, Mansfield, Lappin abstained until they had an opportunity to review the requested information.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#61-09 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend forty five thousand dollars (\$45,000) from Utilities Division's Water Surplus account for the purpose of reimbursing the Treasury Department's Treasury Expenses account for the consultant costs related to year-end reconciliation of water receivables. [02/10/09 @4:42 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: The Commissioner of Public Works explained that the City hired a consultant to run the appropriate reports for the year-end reconciliation of the water receivables. It was originally funded through the Treasury Departments budget but it was later determined that as it concerned the Utilities Department the appropriate funding source was the Water Surplus Account. The requests will allow the funds to be transferred to the Treasurer's Department. The Committee had no problem with this and Alderman Lennon moved approval, which carried unanimously.

#385-07 ALD. SCHNIPPER AND GENTILE updating the Public Facilities Committee on the progress of the Newton North High School Project. [11-21-07 @ 10:23 AM]

ACTION: **HELD 7-0**

NOTE: The item was held without discussion.

All other items were held without discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman