



Appointments and Briefings

April 20, 2017 – 7:02 PM – **Minutes**
Chambers of the City Council, Room 214

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS & BRIEFINGS
DATE: APRIL 20, 2017
TIME: 7:02 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS BRIAN GOMES, CHAIRMAN; JOSEPH LOPES, VICE CHAIRMAN; IAN ABREU;
NAOMI CARNEY; DEBORA COELHO; LINDA MORAD; DANA REBEIRO; KERRY WINTERSON

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS STEVEN MARTINS; JAMES OLIVEIRA

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Councillor Gomes called the Appointments & Briefings Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read Communications from Councillors Martins and Oliveira explaining their absences. These Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Carney.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Council President Gomes, requesting, that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DOT), meet with the Committee on Appointments and Briefings, for the purpose of discussing replacing the signage along Route 18 North and South, which has become old and has sustained reflective deterioration especially in the nighttime hours; and further, to also discuss possible signage changes that would announce attractions, placed at main intersections along with the present directions on the signage; and further, that our State Representative for that area be requested to attend said meeting along with a representative from the Mayor's Administration (Ref'd 5/14/15) (10/28/15-tabled) was removed from the table and received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Winteron. (1)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Gomes, requesting, that the Committee on Appointments and Briefings meet with Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) for the purpose of discussing the immediate action to be taken on Exit 15 Downtown New Bedford, on both Exits off of 195, east and west; and further, immediate action has to be taken on both these exits due to the present conditions, this is not the first time the issue of these two exits have been addressed, they have been in deplorable condition for some time; and further, these are the exits that welcome you to the City of New Bedford, also requesting that MassDOT fix all the lights on North Front Street, between Kenyon Street and Cedar Grove Street, on Belleville Avenue, between Kenyon Street and Cedar Grove Street located on the support wall under 195 east and west, on Logan Street, between Acushnet Avenue and Purchase Street, located on the support wall under Rt. 18, north and south of JFK Memorial Highway, these areas are very dark and are the responsibility of the MassDOT (To be Referred to the Committee on Appointments and Briefings, with a request that a letter be sent to Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DOT). (Ref'd 10/13/16) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Winteron. (2)

Councillor Gomes gave an overview of his motions and stressed the need for newer signage and road repairs especially since the two off ramps from Route 195 were the entrance ways to the city.

Amy Getchell of MASS DOT, District 5 was present to address the Committee. She told the Committee that she has reviewed the proposals and that the State would be sending out people to look at signage and would replace what needs to be replaced. This will include Route 18 to Elm Street as well. She also stated they will review the repairs to the ramps, but that this was a higher level than hers. It would be a massive and expensive project. Thirty-three (33) spans

would need to be rehabilitated. She could not commit to a timeline on a response on the project, but once she hears she will revert back to the Committee.

Councillor Abreu asked about sign protocol that if a Councillor wanted the DOT to look at signage was the way they were going about it the correct way and he was told it was.

Councillor Morad asked for a timeline on the signage reply. She was told that after the inspection took place the DOT should be able to respond to the Committee within sixty (60) days.

Councillor Gomes explained the need to replace the lighting near the ducts off Route 195 and 18. Ms. Getchell stated she looked into it and it does not appear that the State owns that lighting; she believes it belongs to the city because the State is not paying for the electricity. She believes that maybe the State gave the city permission to put up the lighting many years ago, but could not find a record of it to confirm her suspicions.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee Voted: To table item 1 at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Coelho and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To table item 2 at this time. 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 the APPOINTMENT of CAROL PIMENTEL, New Bedford, MA to the NEW BEDFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY, replacing Cynthia Edwards, whose term has expired; this term will expire December 2021 (Ref'd 3/23/17) was received and placed on file by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Winterson. (3)

Councillor Gomes explained the Communication before them had an issue because the person who originally is in that position did not resign from the Board as the Communication from the Mayor stated. It was later understood that the appointment letter was incorrectly worded when it was sent to the Council Office and Ms. Edwards, 100 Oak Street, New Bedford, was told the Mayor has said she had resigned when she had not and she reached out to the Council. It was later revealed that Ms. Edwards' appointment had expired in December of 2016.

Ms. Edwards was present and addressed the Committee, she made it clear that she did not want to leave the Board she would like to stay and finish all the work she had started.

Christina Connolly of the Mayor's Office explained the letter was a clerical mistake, but that Carol Pimentel's appointment was properly before the Committee.

Councillor Morad expressed her frustration with the Mayor's Office stating this was not the first time something like this has occurred and that the Mayor should have been decent enough to reach out to Ms. Edwards and tell her he was not reappointing her rather than sending her a letter.

Ms. Edwards told the Committee she had been offered another Commission by the Mayor but turned it down.

Councillor Lopes asked that Ms. Pimentel provide the Committee with an overview of why she would be a good fit on the Commission. She stated she was a lifelong resident of New Bedford with a financial background, ten years of property management experience and has served on a multitude of nonprofit Boards.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of CAROL PIMENTEL, New Bedford, MA to the NEW BEDFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY, replacing Cynthia Edwards, whose term has expired; this term will expire December 2021. This motion FAILED on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 4, Nays 4, with Councillors Carney, Morad, Rebeiro and Winterson opposed.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Gomes, requesting, an increase in Police patrols especially on weekends in Hazelwood Park, on the West Beach side of the park due to the amount of complaints from

residents from the south and north side abutting the park of drug activity, inappropriate activity, including persons openly urinating on residential properties; and further, that the Police Chief consider using motorcycle Police patrols in these Park areas due to the fact that motorcycle patrols can get through the whole entire park; and further, that the Department of Parks, Recreation and Beaches consider putting up signage on both sides of the park reminding visitors of the rules and regulations of our City Parks (To be Referred to the Committee on Appointments and Briefings, Police Chief Cordeiro and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Beaches.) (Ref'd 8/18/16) (9/8/16-returned unsigned by the Mayor) (3/13/17-Follow Recommended Action, letters sent) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Winterson. (4)

Councillor Gomes told the Committee that he would like to see increased police patrols and growth of police motorcycle contingency around the beach area.

Councillor Lopes expressed his frustration that he has asked for larger signage in the parks explaining park rules. He believes the current signage is not big enough at 12" x 16"; it should be 4' x 8' in size to explain the rules of the beach and parks.

Councillor Carney suggested the signage be put where the people congregate. Councillor Abreu suggested a public relations campaign on what is and is not appropriate at parks and beaches.

Mary Rapoza, Director of Parks and Recreations was present and told the Committee that she understands their concerns and would take them back to the Park Board. She did like the idea of the public relations campaign.

Police Chief Cordeiro was also present and told the Committee that the Police Department is going through a cultural shift, but they are working to increase the patrols at parks and beaches, on the time an Officer is idle, if not responding to a call, they should be driving through parks and the like, perhaps even walking through neighborhoods. He did state they were in the process of adding an additional Motorcycle Officer.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council to Follow the Recommendations in the Written Motion, Councillor Gomes, requesting, an increase in Police patrols especially on weekends in Hazelwood Park, on the West Beach side of the park due to the amount of complaints from residents from the south and north side abutting the park of drug activity, inappropriate activity, including persons openly urinating on residential properties; and further, that the Police Chief consider using motorcycle Police patrols in these Park areas due to the fact that motorcycle patrols can get through the whole entire park; and further, that the Department of Parks, Recreation and Beaches consider putting up signage on both sides of the park reminding visitors of the rules and regulations of our City Parks. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Bousquet and Council President Morad, requesting, that Den DeMarinis, Chairperson of the Commission for Citizens with Disabilities and Cynthia Wallquist, Director of the Department of Community Services, appear before the Committee on Appointments and Briefings to provide an overview of the projects and initiatives the Commission is currently undertaking (Ref'd 8/18/16) (3/13/17-tabled) was removed from the table by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Rebeiro. (5)

Councillor Morad asked that Cynthia Wallquist, Director of Community Services and Dennis DeMarinis, Chairman of the Commission for Citizens with Disabilities to provide the Committee with an update.

Ms. Wallquist spoke about the grants received to allow the Commission to do the Clear Paths Snow Removal Project as well as secure the services of an ADA Architect to advise the city on making their buildings ADA compatible.

Mr. DeMarinis gave an overview of projects including the Wheelchair Beach Access Project and addressing Library access issues.

Mr. B. G. Shankin, an Architect from 14 Cove Brook Road, Little Compton, RI was introduced and he gave an overview of how he has been able to help DPI, the Historic Commission, and the Harbor Commission with handicap accessible design solutions. He has also worked with the School Department as well.

Councillor Morad asked that other than money what can the Committee do to help the Commission; Mr. DeMarinis replied that the Committee helps with their continued support of the Commission.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council to take "No Further Action" on the Written Motion, Councillor Bousquet and Council President Morad, requesting, that Den DeMarinis, Chairperson of the Commission for Citizens with Disabilities and Cynthia Wallquist, Director of the Department of Community Services, appear before the Committee on Appointments and Briefings to provide an overview of the projects and initiatives the Commission is currently undertaking. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting that Mr. Dennis Galvam or a Representative of NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, come before the Committee on Appointments and Briefings to explain to the Council and City Residents the high cost of delivery charges appearing on the electrical bills and their request to the State Regulators for a rate increase. (To be Referred to the Committee on Appointments and Briefings.) (Ref'd 3/9/17) (6)

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

Councillor Winterson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Abreu.

This meeting adjourned @ 8:36 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees