

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 2008

PORTSMOUTH, NH
TIME: 7:00PM [or thereafter]

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ferrini called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Ferrini, Assistant Mayor Blalock, Councilors Novelline Clayburgh, Dwyer, Smith, Kennedy, Spear, Raynolds and Pantelakos

III. INVOCATION BY FATHER KERPER, CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH

Father Kerper of Corpus Christi Parish conducted the invocation. Members of the Portsmouth Fire and Police Departments Honor Guard held a procession and posted the colors.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Police and Fire Honor Guards led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

Wendell Purrington of the Portsmouth School Department sang the Star Spangled Banner.

POETRY READING

Marie Harris read several poems to the City Council in honor of the Inauguration Ceremony.

OATH OF OFFICE

City Clerk Barnaby administered the Oath of Office to the following officials who were elected at the November 6, 2007 Municipal Election.

A. FIRE COMMISSION

Commissioner Michael Hughes

B. POLICE COMMISSION

Commissioner John Golumb

C. SCHOOL BOARD

Ann Walker, Rebecca Emerson, Elizabeth Sweet and Dexter Legg

D. CITY COUNCIL

Councilors Nancy Novelline Clayburgh, M. Christine Dwyer, Kenneth Smith, Esther Kennedy, Eric Spear, Edward Reynolds and Laura Pantelakos

1. Assistant Mayor John Blalock
2. Mayor Thomas G. Ferrini

V. ADDRESS BY MAYOR THOMAS G. FERRINI

Good evening everyone and Happy New Year.

I would like to welcome City Councilors, School Board Members, Members of the Fire and Police Commissions, family and friends, people from our municipal departments. It is a good thing that we can come here to celebrate community service and volunteerism on this night of the Inauguration of the new City Council, School Board, Police and Fire Commissions.

My father taught me the value of service to the community, and service to that community in particular. We have a community that is blessed by healthy public participation in its elections and in its public policy considerations. I certainly hope going forward that we can continue to improve upon this process and get more people involved in new and different ways. You judge a community's health by the level of its citizens' involvement in public life, be it government, the arts or the non-profit sector which provides social services and other benefits to the community. Since we are so blessed in Portsmouth and since we have that kind of public participation already, I think it is incumbent upon us to bring new people into the fold, teach them about our community and make our healthy public process even better.

We have a number of challenges before us as we begin the new year that are going to affect our citizens and our government. We have the difficulty and challenge of high energy prices, the mortgage crisis and an uncertain economy. And, we as a Council will have to deliver affordable taxes to our community. We have been able to do this in the recent past, and we have been able to rely upon the creative management and hard work of our department heads our School Board and our City Commissions. It is only by working together that we can achieve government that is effective, well managed and affordable. Ever mindful of the burden on taxpayers, I believe that the public servants we have employed across the City are committed to giving the tax payer strong value in the services we provide. I believe everyone understands the need to work together to bring the cost of these services in at an affordable level during the next budget process.

As part of this, we face the challenge of collective bargaining with our fifteen municipal collective bargaining units. We need to make sure, as we go forward in this process, that it is a civil process and that we ensure that there are fair expectations for all – from taxpayers to municipal employees. The ultimate goal is to provide services to the community at an affordable price, with fair wages and benefits for municipal employees.

Besides these challenges, we also face the arduous task of rewriting our zoning ordinance. A master plan is no plan unless we write its concepts into our zoning ordinance and make sure that our zoning ordinance achieves the goals that we have set as a community for properly managed and reasonable growth. We need to sustain and enhance economic development while at the same time ensuring that the quality of life in neighborhoods is not negatively impacted by this economic development. Our new zoning ordinance must provide incentives to use environmentally sound and sustainable practices as we grow.

This is a challenge, yet I am glad we have this challenge because we can work together to make our community both affordable and livable. Our community can have the tax benefits of economic development if we have intelligent environmental, zoning and land use policies.

Economic and social diversity can also be enhanced in our community by a strong workforce housing program. I believe this Council will look forward and develop ways to create workforce housing in our community that go beyond what we have already done. These solutions will affect us for years to come. A community is more attractive to employers when it is economically diverse. If we lose our economic diversity and we are unable to provide housing for younger working families in Portsmouth, our quality of life will suffer and our economic vitality will be diminished.

We must seek to enhance and sustain the arts in Portsmouth. Part of what makes Portsmouth a vibrant place to live is that we have many opportunities to appreciate art, music and theater. Tourists and Town folk alike enjoy this important community resource.

In closing, I would like to thank you all for the support I personally have received through the course of this last election and I am sure the other elected official sworn in this evening share my gratitude. One of the historic hallmarks of Portsmouth politics in recent years has been the civility in local government that we enjoy. It seems that we are able to discuss issues, for the most part, in ways that address the substantive concerns at hand and not the personalities of the individuals talking about the issues. I also think that you can judge the health of a local government by the civility and productivity of its members. Please do not mistake civility for agreement on all issues or some sort of false consensus. I would be disappointed if that were the case. Rather, I think healthy, strong disagreement with informed and substantive debate creates the best community policy and makes the community a more vibrant and open place in which to live. I have seen other communities in New Hampshire allow their public discussion to regenerate into unproductive and personal debates. There is no place for that in Portsmouth politics. I have confidence and faith that as we move forward through the many issues facing our community, we will remember our history of being a community and engage in civil, informed and intelligent debate. We will do this in a way that will make our community proud of us.

In closing, I would like to thank my wife Jane and my children Eddy and Lucy Bin for supporting me in this process. I would like to thank you all for being here and being so interested in the future of Portsmouth. Every person in this room and everyone watching on television is really working to make Portsmouth the dynamic, progressive and fun place we all love. Thank you for listening and let us all build a bright future for Portsmouth.

VI. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY OFFICIALS

A. CITY MANAGER

City Manager Bohenko announced that the City Council will take action on the City Council Rules and Orders this evening.

Informational Items

1. Meetings for January:
 - January 10, 2008 – Work Session - Committee of the Whole
 - January 14, 2008 – Regular City Council Meeting
 - January 28, 2008 – Work Session – Capital Improvement Plan

City Manager Bohenko reviewed the dates of the upcoming meetings of the City Council for the month of January.

B. MAYOR FERRINI

1. Acceptance of Rules and Orders of the City Council (*See Attached*)

Councilor Pantelakos moved to accept and approve the City Council Rules and Orders as presented. Seconded by Councilor Novelline Clayburgh and voted.

2. Committee Assignments for City Councilors

Mayor Ferrini announced that Committee Assignments for the City Council have been submitted and no action is necessary from the City Council.

Committee Assignments:

Assistant Mayor Blalock – Economic Development Commission

Councilor Novelline Clayburgh – Fee Schedule Study Committee, Fire Station 2 and Pease Development Authority Liaison

Councilor Dwyer – African Burial Ground and Planning Board

Councilor Smith – Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Commission and Parking Committee

Councilor Kennedy – Fire Station 2, Peirce Island Study Committee and Port Advisory Committee

Councilor Spear – Historic District Commission and Taxi Commission

Councilor Raynolds – COAST, Recreation Board and Sustainable Practices Blue Ribbon Committee

Councilor Pantelakos – African Burial Ground and Recreation Board

VII. BENEDICTION BY THE REVEREND FATHER PAPPAS, SAINT NICHOLAS CHURCH

The Reverend Father Pappas performed the benediction.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:45 p.m., Councilor Pantelakos moved to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Smith and voted.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelli L. Barnaby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelli L. Barnaby, CMC/CNHMC
City Clerk