

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024

PORTSMOUTH, NH
TIME: 7:00PM

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to close the Non-Public Session and seal the minutes. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi and voted.

III. CALL TO ORDER

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

IV. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor McEachern, Assistant Mayor Kelley, Councilors Tabor, Cook, Blalock, Bagley, Moreau and Lombardi

ABSENT: Councilor Denton

V. INVOCATION

Mayor McEachern asked everyone to join him in a moment of silent prayer.

VI. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor McEachern led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PROCLAMATION

1. Black History Month

Mayor McEachern read the Proclamation hereby proclaiming the month of February 2024 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire as Black History Month and urged all citizens to champion our commitment to racial equity and inclusion and to sustain the open door of diversity throughout our community.

VII. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 18, 2023

Councilor Blalock moved to approve and accept the minutes of the December 18, 2023 City Council meeting. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley and voted.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION

Roy Helsel asked if taxes are reduced when there is a surplus of funds. He also stated the city needs to have zero based budgets.

Mark Brighton spoke regarding the high expense of using outside counsel. He asked why we can't use our own counsel in cases.

Christina Dubin spoke in support of reducing single-use plastic service-ware. She stated it is filling up the landfills and polluting our waters. She said that people could opt out for the single-use plastic service-ware rather than opting in and this is a benefit to the community and public health.

Rebecca O'Brien said she agrees with Christina that people should opt in rather than opt out. She said there has been a movement to reduce single use items. She spoke regarding the health risks associated with plastics for the environment.

Evy Douglass said that this is a step to being an eco-city. She stated that we need legislation for change to occur with an incentive.

Julie Myers spoke regarding the scrap metal yard on Jones Avenue. She said this is a neighborhood filled with families and it is a danger for children to walk along the roadside due to the large heavy truck traffic.

Pete Evans said it was offensive that the Deputy City Attorney compared the decibel readings at the scrap yard to those of the nearby cemetery.

Paige Trace said that Mayor McEachern earned the position and expected him to lead the city through the good times and bad. She spoke opposed to Mayor McEachern calling for a hearing to potentially remove James Hewitt from the Planning Board. She said that this is ugly and beneath the mayor and urged the Council to let Mr. Hewitt serve out his term on the Planning Board.

Duncan McCallum spoke against the complaint lodged against Mr. Hewitt. He said that the city is headed for trouble with this complaint. He said nothing Mr. Hewitt has done comes close to a reason for dismissal from the board.

Esther Kennedy asked why any of the Council voted to hold such a hearing for the removal of James Hewitt. She said there must be a reason why you are putting him through this. She stated that these are bogus charges.

Myles Boyne asked that the city vote to "skip the stuff" single-use plastic service ware. He said this will help with climate issues we are facing. He said we need to do something to reduce the waste.

Petra Huda spoke regarding malfeasance and stated the memorandum from the Legal Department did not address what malfeasance is. She said that holding a hearing against Mr. Hewitt is a waste of taxpayers' dollars.

Gabe Weinrieb spoke in support of "skip the stuff" for single-use plastic ware. He said this is the right step to help eliminate this type of waste.

Arthur Clough said over the years residents have seen misconduct by employees and asked why the city is going after Mr. Hewitt when he has done nothing wrong. He stated he knows this is a way to have someone else serve on the Planning Board and vote how the city wants.

Emma Jeffrey spoke in support of "skip the stuff" single-use plastic ware. She said that this should be an ordinance to address these kinds of matters.

Jillian Richmond spoke in support of "skip the stuff" single-use plastic ware. She said this will make the city an eco-friendlier place to live.

Mark Stettner (via Zoom) spoke regarding speed cushions on Woodbury Avenue and asked the City Council to vote against the request to install them. He feels the speed cushions will cause traffic to back up and increase greenhouse gas emissions. He also stated that it will slow down emergency response times for our police and fire departments. Mr. Stettner said that there has been no study as to what six speed cushions could do to a road.

Jim Hewitt introduced his Attorney Jeremy Eggleton (via Zoom) Attorney Eggleton said there should be no hearing against Mr. Hewitt. He said that Mr. Hewitt has voted 95% of the time in favor of projects before the Planning Board. He stated that this feels like a personal attack on Mr. Hewitt. Attorney Eggleton said that Mr. Hewitt should be able to serve his remaining term on the Planning Board.

Tom Kelley (via Zoom) spoke in support of “skip the stuff” single-use plastic ware. He also addressed the Jones Avenue scrap metal yard and its impact on the neighborhood. He stated there needs to be a genuine effort made to address the issues.

Kelsey Sullivan, Dover, NH volunteer member of Surf Rider Foundation, spoke in support of the single-use plastic ware ordinance. She said this is part of a natural movement and is making single-use items as an opt in. She said very often they will bring items home or to the office and not use them. Ms. Sullivan said this ordinance would save restaurants money in the long run by not having to provide single-use plastic ware.

Brian Yurasits, Dover, NH said he is devoted to the single-use plastic ware cause and knows the effects of single-use plastic products. He said that this will impact our health and we don't want more plastic than we need.

X. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND VOTE ON ORDINANCES AND/OR RESOLUTIONS

Public Hearing – Capital Improvement Plan (CIP):

- A. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) FY 2025-2030
 - **PRESENTATION** (*Presentation was held at the January 17m 2024 Work Session*)
 - **CITY COUNCIL QUESTIONS**

Councilor Bagley said he would make changes at the March 4th City Council meeting.

- **PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS**

Mayor McEachern read the legal notice, declared the public hearing open and called for speakers.

Gregory Hebert spoke regarding the cut through in his neighborhood being used and how residents do not feel safe crossing the street. He suggested that a sidewalk be installed on the west side of Greenleaf Avenue in the spring of this year. He said the traffic utilizing the cut through has caused safety concerns for the residents and they need to be addressed. He urged the City Council to have this project as part of the CIP for this year.

William Arakelim said he understands the request to update the playground for the gateway to Langdon Park. He spoke opposed to park improvements for the South Playground with the recent flooding impacts to the area. He said he feels the money should be used to protect other infrastructure in the area.

Petra Huda said the number for FY25 CIP is large and will increase the level of bonding. She expressed concerns for the Mechanic Street Pumping Station funding requests. She believes that the \$20 million figure in FY27 is for a new pump station, and said that the Mechanic Street Pump Station is the most important station the city has.

Cliff Hodgdon spoke regarding the South Playground equipment replacement and said that it should be kept in a centralized area of the park.

Paige Trace expressed concern with the Mechanic Street Pumping Station funding being moved out to FY27. She said that the city should go back and look at the budget for non-negotiated items.

With no further speakers, Mayor McEachern said the Public Hearing will be continued until the March 4, 2024 City Council meeting.

- **ADDITIONAL COUNCIL QUESTIONS AND DELIBERATIONS**

Councilor Cook asked staff to explain why the Mechanic Pump Station funding is out in FY27.

Public Works Director Rice said the original program was to do maintenance work to match the funding for the bridge. He spoke to the temporary pumps out at the station and said they have been there a long time. He said the funding is out in FY27 because it takes a couple of years for a design to be done for a pump station.

City Engineer Fiedler spoke regarding improvements being made to the backup pumps. He said the flooding and elevations need to be reviewed as well as the benefits and how it integrates with sights. He stated this is a reason it is predicted for a multi-tier approach.

Councilor Tabor inquired if we operate with full redundancy. City Engineer Fiedler said we have 3 back up redundancies.

Councilor Moreau asked for an update on the South Mill Pond playground. Public Works Director Rice said nothing has been designed at this point, but the intent is to have an accessible playground. Recreation Director Henley said we want to enhance and improve the site and keep natural surfaces. Mayor McEachern said two years ago Councilor Cook wanted a more accessible playground.

Councilor Bagley spoke in support of sidewalks for Woodbury Avenue.

Councilor Tabor said he is pleased with the sidewalks for Greenleaf Avenue which came through a citizen CIP process. Councilor Moreau said that Greenleaf Avenue sidewalks were added at the Planning Board level.

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to continue this evening's public hearing until the March 4, 2024 City Council meeting. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi and voted.

Councilor Cook moved to suspend the rules to bring forward Item XV. C.1. – Reducing Single-Use Plastic Service-ware Waste. Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted.

Councilor Cook moved to send the draft Single-Use Food Service-ware Reduction Ordinance included in your packet to the Sustainability Committee and the Legal Department for simultaneous review and report back at the March 18th City Council meeting so that first reading can be scheduled. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley.

Councilor Cook said the ordinance was addressed through the comments made by Portsmouth High School students this evening.

Councilor Blalock thanked the speakers this evening for coming forward and taking the time to work on this matter.

Mayor McEachern asked about third-party apps and if that is something that exists with other communities. Councilor Cook said we have an app for that technology currently in the city.

Motion passed.

Public Hearing – Outdoor Dining Encumbrance Permit Ordinance

B. Public Hearing on proposed Ordinance amending Chapter 6 – License – Article XVII – Outdoor Dining Encumbrance Permit, Section 6.1701 – 6.1707

- **PRESENTATION**

Senior Assistant City Attorney Ferrini said the ordinance was brought in November and staff amended the ordinance and met with the Economic Development Commission Working Group to review the ordinance and approve it. She spoke about what remains the same and how one applies through the Viewpoint System. She stated the outdoor dining remains the same with certain locations permitted by the ordinance. She also indicated that the fees would be recommended by the Fee Study Committee. Senior Assistant City Attorney Ferrini said that the application will go live March 1st. She said the removal of materials is part of the ordinance and would need to be removed within 24 hours or we would store it for 48 hours at a fee. She indicated that standards would not be part of the ordinance but as a policy adopted by the City Council.

- **CITY COUNCIL QUESTIONS**

Councilor Cook said she would like to bring the design standards up at third reading. Senior Assistant City Attorney Ferrini said the ordinance would be passed with the design standards after that vote.

Planning and Sustainability Director Britz reviewed the design standards which are the best practices that are appropriate for downtown. He said tables and chairs shall be well maintained and no advertising on umbrellas.

Councilor Lombardi spoke to the lengthy process and review of this by the Economic Development Commission Working Group.

The City Council thanked the EDC Working Group for their work on this matter.

- **PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS**

Mayor McEachern read the legal notice, declared the public hearing open and called for speakers. With no speakers, Mayor McEachern closed the public hearing.

- **ADDITIONAL COUNCIL QUESTIONS AND DELIBERATIONS**

Councilor Tabor moved to pass second reading and hold third and final reading at the February 20, 2024 City Council meeting. Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted.

At 9:10 p.m., Mayor McEachern called for a brief recess. At 9:20 p.m., Mayor McEachern called the meeting back to order.

Councilor Blalock moved to suspend the rules to bring forward Item XVII. 4. – MAC Metals Scrapyard Report Back. Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted.

XVII. CITY MANAGER’S INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

4. MAC Metals Scrapyard Report Back

Deputy City Attorney McCourt reported that we met regarding the upcoming construction season and discussed costs for the project, and the traffic from it. He stated that the fill will be trucked and placed at the Public Works Facility. He said there is still a large amount of fill to be removed from the site which will require truck traffic. He also spoke to the decibel readings that were taken on Sagamore Avenue.

Councilor Moreau asked how often the employee visited and took decibel readings. Deputy City Attorney McCourt said there were two readings that were taken after the complaint. He stated that by the time the readings were taken the trucks had left and there was no activity on the site. He also indicated that Zoning Enforcement Officer Page selected random times throughout the day to take the readings and we started at a baseline.

Mayor McEachern asked if we considered a sound monitoring device that could read for a two-week period. Deputy City Attorney McCourt said we do not have a device available to us. He suggested that we meet and come to a resolution on this matter.

XI. CITY MANAGER’S ITEMS WHICH REQUIRE ACTION

A. CITY MANAGER CONARD

1. Request for Public Hearing on the Elderly & Disabled Exemptions

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to schedule a public hearing at the February 20, 2024 City Council meeting regarding the consideration of the elderly and disabled exemptions. Seconded by Councilor Bagley and voted.

2. Two-Month Lease Extension of Existing Franchise Agreement with Comcast

City Manager Conard reported that the contract is due to expire, and this is a two-month extension request.

Councilor Cook moved to authorize the City Manager to finalize and execute the Extension Agreement as presented. Seconded by Councilor Blalock and voted.

3. Temporary Construction License for Peirce Block

City Manager Conard said there have been delays with the project and work has not been completed.

Councilor Lombardi moved to authorize the City Manager to execute and accept a temporary construction license extension to encumber the sidewalk and roadway along High and Ladd Streets and 6 parking spaces on High Street that abut the Peirce Block as requested. Seconded by Councilor Tabor and voted.

4. Request for Public Hearing on ARPA Funding for Personal Protective Equipment Inventory

Health Director McNamara said she is looking for more funding to replenish PPE. She reported that the State is no longer providing this equipment at no charge, so it is our responsibility to have it on hand and purchase it.

Councilor Blalock moved to schedule a public hearing at the February 20, 2024 City Council meeting regarding the use of ARPA funding for PPE inventory. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley and voted.

5. Adoption of Change to Hometown Program Loan Administration

City Manager Conard said in order to have a more robust participation by eligible applicants in the City's first-time homebuyer program the Community Development Staff is recommending a forgivable balloon loan to incentivize home sales to Home Town-eligible buyers.

Councilor Bagley moved that the City Council affirm this recommended change in the City's Home Town Program administration as described in the memorandum and to allow disbursements from the Portsmouth Housing Endowment Fund Trust consistent with the program rules and requirements adopted by the Portsmouth Housing Endowment Fund Advisory Board. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley.

Councilor Moreau commended staff for coming up with this idea.

Motion passed.

6. Request for Public Necessity Hearing for Property Located on Maplewood Avenue

City Manager Conard said the area is part of ongoing work for a new drainage line on Maplewood Avenue.

Councilor Moreau moved to schedule a public necessity hearing to begin at 5:00 p.m. on March 25, 2024 in Eileen Dondero Foley City Council Chambers. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi.

Deputy City Attorney McCourt explained that this is similar to the domain hearing for the water line in Durham and we hope not to require the hearing.

Motion passed.

7. Report Back on Request to Remove Salter Street from Waterfront Business District

City Manager Conard stated that this would change Waterfront Business District to General Resident B District.

Councilor Tabor moved to refer Marcia MacCormack's January 7, 2024 letter requesting Salter Street be rezoned from Waterfront Business to General Residence B to the Planning Board for its recommendation in a report back to City Council. Seconded by Councilor Cook and voted.

8. Request to Establish Polling Hours for the Ward 1 State Representative Special Election on March 12, 2024

City Manager Conard said City Clerk Barnaby is requesting the polling hours for the Ward 1 State Representative Special Election on March 12, 2024 be established from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to establish polling hours for the Ward 1 State Representative Special Election on March 12, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Blalock and voted.

XII. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Request from Raphael Roman, Roman Law Group/Fleet Street Title & Closing, to install a Projecting Sign at 51 Islington Street, Unit 1A (***Anticipated action – move to approve the aforementioned Projecting Sign License as recommended by the Planning & Sustainability Director, and further, authorize the City Manager to execute the License Agreement for this request***)

Planning Director's Stipulations:

- ***The license shall be approved by the Legal Department as to content and form;***
- ***Any removal or relocation of projecting sign, for any reason, shall be done at to the City; and***
- ***Any disturbance of a sidewalk, street or other public infrastructure resulting from the installation, relocation or removal of the projecting sign, for any reason shall be restored at no cost to the City and shall be subject to review and acceptance by the Department of Public Works***

- B. Letter from Jodie Tsekrekas, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, requesting permission to hold the CF Cycle for Life for 2024 on Saturday, July 13, 2024 (***Anticipated action – move to refer to the City Manager with Authority to Act***)
- C. Letter from Rich Clyborne, Gundalow Company, requesting permission to conduct the Round Island Regatta on Saturday, July 20, 2024 at the Peirce Island Boat Ramp from 10:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. (***Anticipated action – move to refer to the City Manager with Authority to Act***)
- D. Letter from Ashley Healy, David Krempels Brain Injury Center, requesting permission to hold the 27th Annual Cisco Brewers Portsmouth Memorial Day 5K on Sunday, May 26, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. (***Anticipated action – move to refer to the City Manager with Authority to Act***)

Councilor Cook moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley and voted.

XIII. PRESENTATIONS AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Presentation Regarding Revaluation Process – Rosann Lentz, Certified Assessor

Finance Director Belanger stated that the State of New Hampshire's largest source of revenue is property taxes. She stated that the City Council adopted a total budget prior to supplemental appropriations of \$137,283,375.00 and reported total revenues of \$32,309,118.00 with a tax levy of \$104,974,257.00.

Assessor Lentz spoke to the 2024 Statistical Revaluation which reviews all taxable and nontaxable properties in a municipality, using existing property data, to arrive at full and true value as of April 1. She stated the overall median ratio of the municipality should fall between 0.90 and 1.10. She stated that the State of NH Assessing Standards Board adopted the IAAO Standard of Acceptable Appraisal Practices and utilizes these standards to determine acceptable ranges of a municipality's level of assessment and uniformity of assessment. Assessor Lentz said the city will monitor the 2024 Statistical Revaluation with help from Whitney Consulting to assure the above standards are adhered to. She addressed market value by stating that is the price a buyer of property, is willing but not obligated to buy, and a seller of property, willing but not obligated to sell, would agree on after taking into consideration all uses to which the property is adapted and might in reason be applied. She reviewed the tentative timeline.

- Sales Review, Commercial and Residential Analysis – March 2024 thru May 2024
- Feld Review – Starts April 2024
- Assessor Review of Values – Start May 2024
- Work Session with the City Council on Preliminary Assessments – July 2024
- Taxpayer Notice of Preliminary Assessments – August 2024
- Taxpayer Hearings – August 2024
- Final Notices if changes to Preliminary Values – September 2024
- MS-1 – City Valuation – October 2024
- Tax Rate Set – October 2024
- Tax Bills – November 2024 (Reflecting New Assessments)

In closing, Assessor Lentz explained the role of an assessor.

Mayor McEachern thanked Assessor Lentz and the office for their work and said it is incredibly hard work and said he appreciates her work and the work that will go on throughout the process.

- B. Letter from Warren Widener, Seacoast Lacrosse Club, requesting permission to exhibit temporary signage on the fences at the Portsmouth Recreation Athletic Field for the spring 2024 lacrosse season

Councilor Tabor moved to refer to the City Manager with Authority to Act. Seconded by Councilor Blalock.

Councilor Moreau said that sign must be clear what they are supporting.

Motion passed.

- C. Letter from Joe Caldarola regarding Community Based Power: Does Opting Up reduce CO2 emissions

Councilor Moreau moved to accept and place on file. Seconded by Councilor Bagley and voted.

- D. Memorandum from Public Art Review Committee (PARC) regarding Proposed Donation of Art Work from artist Carl Austin Hyatt

Councilor Cook moved to accept and refer to the City Manager for placement. Seconded by Councilor Tabor.

Councilor Cook passed around a picture of the artwork we would be receiving.

Councilor Moreau moved to suspend the rules to hear from Chris Dwyer, Chair of the PARC to speak on the donation of Art Work from Carl Austin Hyatt. Seconded by Councilor Blalock and voted.

Chair Dwyer said the donation is a wonderful piece and is of museum quality/value. She would like the City Council to invite Mr. Hyatt for a presentation and suggest a location for the work.

Motion passed.

- E. Email Correspondence

Councilor Bagley moved to accept and place on file. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley and voted.

Councilor Cook moved to suspend the rules and continue the meeting beyond 10:30 p.m., Seconded by Councilor Bagley and voted.

XIV. MAYOR McEACHERN

1. Resignations
 - Elaine Apatang-Butts from the Citywide Neighborhood Committee
 - Kathleen Boduch from the Citywide Neighborhood Committee
 - Lori Soloway from the Citywide Neighborhood Committee
 - Paul Burke from the Public Art Review Committee
 - Robert White from the Public Art Review Committee

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to accept the resignations with regret and a letter of thanks be sent for their service to the city. Seconded by Councilor Tabor and voted.

2. Appointments to be Voted:
 - Donald Brabant as a regular member of the Audit Committee
 - Jeff Abrams as a regular member of the Cable and Broadband Internet Commission
 - Gary Lowe as a regular member of the Cable and Broadband Internet Commission
 - Talia Sperduto as an alternate member of the Conservation Commission
 - Jody Record reappointment as an alternate member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment

Councilor Blalock moved to appoint Donald Brabant as a regular member of the Audit Committee until November 15, 2026, appointments of Jeff Abrams and Gary Lowe as regular members to the Cable and Broadband Internet Commission until April 1, 2026, appointment of Talia Sperduto as an alternate member of the Conservation Commission until April 1, 2026, and reappointment of Jody Record as an alternate member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment until December 1, 2028. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi and voted.

3. Appointments to be Considered:
 - Appointment of Jessica Dickey as an Alternate to the Arts & Cultural Commission
 - Appointment of Andrew Samonas as a regular member of the Planning Board
 - Appointment of Ernie (Ernestine) Greenslade to the Public Art Review Committee
 - Appointment of Robin Lurie-Meyerkopf to the Public Art Review Committee
 - Appointment of Megan Corsetti to the Housing Blue Ribbon Committee
 - Appointment of Tracy Kozak to the Housing Blue Ribbon Committee
 - Appointment of Mary Loane to the Housing Blue Ribbon Committee
 - Appointment of Byron Matto as the School Board Representative to the Housing Blue Ribbon Committee
 - Appointment of Dagan Migirditch to the Housing Blue Ribbon Committee
 - Appointment of Jen Stebbins Thomas to the Housing Blue Ribbon Committee

The City Council considered the appointments which will be voted upon at the February 20, 2024 City Council meeting.

4. Council Goals

Mayor McEachern outlined the City Council Goals of 2024-2025.

- Enhance the supply of housing choices, especially the supply of below-market rate housing options.
- Integrate sustainability, resilience, and climate change mitigation actions throughout City government and community.
- Invite and engage the entire community, especially those traditionally unreached, to increase participation and transparency in government.
- Support the needs of residents, businesses, nonprofits, arts and cultural institutions by leveraging City and local resources.
- Explore opportunities to support all modes of transportation options.

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to accept the Council Goals as presented. Seconded by Councilor Blalock and voted.

5. Board and Commission Assignments for City Council

Mayor McEachern read the City Council Assignments to various Board and Commissions.

African Burying Ground Stewardship Blue Ribbon Committee

Assistant Mayor JoAnna Kelley

Blue Ribbon Committee on Arts & Non-Profit

Councilor Kate Cook

Audit Committee

Councilor John Tabor
Councilor Josh Denton
Beth Moreau

Chamber of Commerce

Councilor Andrew Bagley

Citywide Neighborhood Steering Blue Ribbon Committee

Councilor Rich Blalock

Economic Development Commission

Assistant Mayor JoAnna Kelley
Councilor Vincent Lombardi

Blue Ribbon Energy Advisory Committee

Councilor John Tabor
Councilor Kate Cook

Ethics Board

Councilor Josh Denton

Fee Schedule Study Committee

Councilor John Tabor
Councilor Josh Denton
Councilor Moreau

Governance Committee

Assistant Mayor JoAnna Kelley
Councilor John Tabor
Councilor Kate Cook
Councilor Vincent Lombardi

Historic District Commission

Councilor Rich Blalock

Housing Blue Ribbon Committee

Assistant Mayor JoAnna Kelley
Councilor John Tabor

Legislative Sub-Committee

Mayor Deaglan McEachern
Assistant Mayor JoAnna Kelley
Councilor John Tabor
Councilor Kate Cook

Parking and Traffic Safety Committee

Councilor Andrew Bagley

Pease Development Authority

Councilor Vincent Lombardi

Planning Board

Councilor Beth Moreau

Prescott Park Master Plan Implementation Committee

Assistant Mayor JoAnna Kelley

Public Access Financial Advisory Committee

Councilor Vincent Lombardi

Recreation Board

Councilor Rich Blalock

Rockingham Planning Commission

Councilor Beth Moreau

Safe Water Advisory Group Blue Ribbon Committee

Councilor Rich Blalock

Councilor Vincent Lombardi
Sister City Blue Ribbon Committee
Assistant Mayor JoAnna Kelley

Skateboard Park Blue Ribbon Committee
Councilor Rich Blalock

Sustainable Practices Blue Ribbon Committee
Councilor Kate Cook
Councilor Josh Denton

Task Force on Portsmouth Historical Archives
Councilor Vincent Lombardi

Trees & Public Greenery Committee
Assistant Mayor JoAnna Kelley

Veterans Organization
Councilor Josh Denton

XV. CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

A. COUNCILOR TABOR, COUNCILOR COOK AND COUNCILOR DENTON

1. Green Building and Infrastructure Policy

Councilor Cook moved to request updates on the exploration of the feasibility of incorporating electrical infrastructure & conduit pathways for EV charging stations and on the basic design and cost for solar array covered parking at the Portsmouth High School in accordance with the 2023 Green Building and Infrastructure Policy. Seconded by Councilor Tabor.

Councilor Cook said she and Councilor Tabor are co-sponsoring with Councilor Denton on this motion. She spoke to the policy and said it is a great deal of work.

Councilor Blalock asked if we thought of looking at placing solar panels on existing buildings. Councilor Cook responded that they're looking at that.

Motion passed.

B. COUNCILOR TABOR AND COUNCILOR LOMBARDI

1. Council Budget Guidance for FY25 Budget

As the elected body, it is the City Council's role to balance the staff needs with the taxpayer's ability to pay for them. If this target requires reductions in the current high level of services, the city manager and staff should advise the council during the all-day budget presentation, review and listening session.

Councilor Tabor moved that the Council adopt a range of 3.5% - 4.5% increase in total expenditures as guidance for the FY25 budget, with no additional headcount unless the positions are self-funded. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi.

Councilor Tabor said he spoke with a number of City Councilors and thought he would put this forward for the City Council to consider. He stated our average increase was 3.5% - 4.5% for the last seven years. He said we do not know where values will fall if but if we add a 5.7% tax increase it could be an increase on top of revaluation for some. Councilor Tabor said when taxes go up fast it is a major hit to quality of life.

Councilor Lombardi said a meeting was held with Finance Director Belanger and Human Resources Director Harper. He stated going into the meeting he was thinking 3.5% but over the last several years we have increased the payroll significantly across the board and we need to keep it at 4.5% or less.

Councilor Blalock thanked Councilor Tabor and Councilor Lombardi for bringing the matter forward. He said we need to keep the budget below 4.5%.

Councilor Moreau said she would like it to stay no more than 4%. She said we need to keep the budget as tight as possible.

Councilor Cook said we need to keep the budget below 4.5%. She said we are asking to find efficiencies in areas.

Councilor Bagley said we are going to have to make cuts in the CIP and take a look at various projects.

Mayor McEachern said inflation has dropped and prices have increased, and we will have some sticker shock. He stated we cannot add more positions.

Motion passed.

C. COUNCILOR COOK

2. Charter Amendments

Councilor Cook moved to request the Governance Committee review potential charter amendments to address legal interpretation in the case of perceived or actual conflicts between charter and state law. Seconded by Councilor Blalock.

Councilor Cook said governance works best when residents and government can understand our charter.

Mayor McEachern said we faced this discrepancy with the recount, and this is for us to identify issues.

Motion passed.

D. COUNCILOR BAGLEY

1. **Action Item Needing Approval by City Council:**

- Woodbury Avenue Speed Cushion Plan

Councilor Bagley moved to refer the Woodbury Avenue Speed Cushion Plan back to the Parking & Traffic Safety Committee. Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Councilor Moreau said putting six speed cushions on Woodbury Avenue all at once sounds like a lot. She said you need to look at what you can do and keep the speed down on the road.

Councilor Cook would like to hear from Fire Chief McQuillen on this matter.

Fire Chief McQuillen said he was against this matter from the beginning. He said there are some conflicts with street classes on different streets with Parking & Traffic Safety. He stated the arterial roadway is a primary response road and the cushions would limit the department's ability to get to a location. He said Parking & Traffic Safety needs to flesh this out further.

Motion passed.

2. Parking & Traffic Safety Committee Action Sheet and Minutes of the November 29, 2023 meeting

Councilor Bagley moved to approve and accept the action sheet and minutes of the November 29, 2023 Parking & Traffic Safety Committee meeting with the exception, of VII B. under Old Business – Woodbury Avenue Speed Cushion Plan. Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted.

3. **Action Item Needing Approval by City Council:**

- 2 Russell Street

Councilor Bagley moved to approve requested changes to on-street parking on Deer Street and Russell Street as presented on approved site plans for project with modifications as proposed by DPW, with the inclusion of bicycle signage at locations as approved by the DPW Traffic Engineer, and the continuation of sharrows on Russell Street to Market Street. Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Councilor Moreau said that this is part of the development of the area.

Councilor Cook said when she saw the proposal it was without the bike lane, but the alternative route has a bike lane and will become the preferred route.

Motion passed.

- Parking Principles

Councilor Bagley moved to approve proposed changes to City Parking Principles as recommended by DPW and Planning Department. Original 2012 Parking Principles and recommended revised Parking Principles attached for Council review and approval. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley.

Councilor Bagley reported that there are no real changes to the principles, however, there is a bigger emphasis on bike routes.

Motion passed.

4. Parking & Traffic Safety Committee Action Sheet and Minutes of the January 4, 2024 meeting

Councilor Bagley moved to approve and accept the action sheet and minutes of the January 4, 2024 Parking & Traffic Safety Committee meeting. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi and voted.

5. Schedule first reading to consolidate all city owned surface parking into Zone A

Councilor Bagley moved to refer to the Legal Department to draft an ordinance for first reading at the City Council meeting in March. Seconded by Councilor Blalock and voted.

XVI. APPROVAL OF GRANTS/DONATIONS

- A. Donation for the Police Department for EV Vehicle and Charging Station

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to approve and accept the donation as presented. Seconded by Councilor Cook and voted.

XVII. CITY MANAGER'S INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Water Service Line Inventory

City Manager Conard said that a press release will go out tomorrow that all water suppliers create a water line inventory. She reported that 1,600 would need to be inventoried in the city that will require us to make a visit to the property.

2. Report Back on Request for Signage in Prescott Park Fence and Dock for Water Taxi

City Manager Conard said there are deed restrictions at Prescott Park, and we would need the Attorney General to read and review our deed restrictions.

Councilor Bagley moved to have the Legal Department reach out to the Attorney General office for report back. Seconded by Councilor Tabor.

Councilor Bagley said that this could be an exciting way for those unable to see the city from the water to be able to enjoy that view. He stated he looks forward to hearing from the Attorney General's office on this matter.

Motion passed.

3. Solar Panel Work Session

City Manager Conard reported that the Planning Board & Historic District Commission will be having a Joint Work Session on the installation of solar panels and the meeting is slated to take place on February 21st at 6:00 p.m. in the Levenson Room of the Library.

XVIII. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS INCLUDING BUSINESS REMAINING UNFINISHED AT PREVIOUS MEETING

Councilor Cook announced that PARC will be meeting to discuss possibilities and ideas related to the Peirce Island Project, on February 12th at Noon via Zoom and February 15th at 6:30 p.m. in the Levenson Room of the Library.

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:25 p.m., Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Councilor Blalock 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, MMC/CNHMC
CITY CLERK