



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

Present: Councilors Rice (Chair), Brousal-Glaser (Vice Chair), Albright, Krintzman, Greenberg and Kalis

Absent: Councilors Baker and Schwartz

Also Present: Councilors Danberg and Leary

City Staff Present: Deb Youngblood (Commissioner, Health and Human Services), Marie Lawlor (Assistant City Solicitor), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

#129-19 Appointment of Yasodhara Paruchuru to Urban Tree Commission

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing YASODHARA PARUCHURU to the URBAN TREE COMMISSION for a term to expire April 30, 2022. (60 days: 5/29/19)

Action: Programs & Services Approved 4-0 (Councilors Kalis and Krintzman not voting)

Note: Ms. Paruchuru and Ms. Fortez-Cruz joined the Committee. They both expressed that they were looking for ways to be more involved in the community and they were very interested in seeing more trees planted in the City. Larger policies could be created to improve the health of trees in the City but outreach to residents to make them aware of the small ways in which they can keep the street trees healthy is essential as well.

A Committee member asked the appointees how they felt about having to remove trees in order to make some solar installations effective. They agreed that there needs to be balance between the two. Determining best places for solar installation to reduce tree removal as well as replanting trees that have to be removed to accommodate them in some areas is important.

Councilor Greenberg moved approval for both appointments and the Committee voted in favor 4-0.

#130-19 Appointment of Michele Fortez-Cruz to Urban Tree Commission

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing MICHELE FORTEZ-CRUZ to the URBAN TREE COMMISSION for a term to expire April 30, 2022. (60 days: 5/29/19)

Action: Programs & Services Approved 4-0 (Councilors Kalis and Krintzman not voting)

Note: See note above.

#78-19

Resolution to the federal government to adopt a new nuclear policy

COUNCILOR LEARY requesting a Resolution to the federal government to freeze plans to spend over a trillion dollars rebuilding the US nuclear arsenal and instead to adopt a new nuclear policy based on the active pursuit of a verifiable, enforceable agreement among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 5-0-1 (Councilor Kalis abstaining)

Note: Councilor Leary docketed this resolution asking for the federal government to take action on nuclear policy to prevent nuclear war and reduce the chance of accidental launches of nuclear weapons. She stated that Newton is part of the larger world and actions here resonate with other cities and towns. When enough communities come together on an issue, they influence state legislators and in turn, those legislators can influence federal policy. This resolution also brings attention to the impact and threat of nuclear war, which has faded from the public domain.

Councilor Leary asked that several experts have an opportunity to address the Committee to share their experience and why they have become committed to this issue.

Susan Mirsky, Newton Highlands said she is a member of Newton Dialogues in Peace and War as well as Green Newton. Newton Dialogues became interested in this resolution awhile ago and it was developed by the Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Union of Concerned Scientists. It is endorsed by some state legislatures so far and other cities and towns including Somerville and Brookline. It is currently being considered by Needham, Belmont, Waltham and Watertown. Environmental groups are also endorsing the resolution and as well as communities of faith. The resolution deals with the dangers and costs of nuclear weapons and the different ways of addressing the problem. She asked for the Committee's support.

Peter Barrer, 60 Endicott Street said he is a member of 350 (a citizen-led climate activist group) and that group endorses the resolution. He majored in engineering physics in college and will never forget the day they learned the equation to build a nuclear bomb to get critical mass. It was a horrible yet elegant equation. When his son was born, he remembers holding him and telling him he did not want him growing up in a world with this threat. He has been an activist ever since and he is thrilled to support this resolution. While Newton does not have power over military of federal policy, it can show support for the resolution.

Dr. Dan Shaw, 116 Church Street has been a member of Newton Dialogues in Peace and War since its inception 20 years ago. Newton Dialogues has brought many resolutions to the City Council, all of which have been passed, but the question that is always asked is why should Newton do this? There are many reasons. Newton Dialogues has sponsored other resolutions on this topic, but this resolution is about the growing concern for accidental and poorly planned launches of nuclear weapons. There have been 100 such events since Eisenhower and there is great concern that the planet is at a higher risk for that to happen now. One of the aspects of the resolution is to limit the power of the president to launch a first strike. It is important that this be approved by Congress. Of the taxes that Newton pays to the federal government, \$16 million a year are allocated to the

support and maintenance of nuclear weapons. That money would be better used for services in Newton. Newton does not exist in a vacuum – there are cities and town in the state that have endorsed the resolution and the more communities that are added to that, the more visible this resolution becomes to the state legislature. The more states that support this, the more visible it will become to the federal government who are authorized to take action.

Jane Brown, 104 Atwood Avenue said she is concerned and fearful. A nuclear explosion can end life on this planet as we know it. The explosion itself will kill instantly and then the pollution will continue to kill people and the climate will be completely wrecked. There will be no agriculture. Any president having this much power is a very dangerous thing and this resolution should be passed.

Joan, Sterling Street said she is a retired sociology professor and a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom which is 102 years old. That organization has devoted itself to getting rid of all nuclear weapons from the time they were introduced. She is keenly aware that the younger generation is not aware of the nuclear threat and the older generation has not passed the information to them so they understand the danger and are able to act on that. This City Council should demonstrate that things need to happen in order to make them less dangerous. Newton is a Mayors for Peace City and as June 2017, 7,335 cities and 162 countries representing 1 billion people, have unanimously adopted the Mayors for Peace Resolution calling on the president to lower nuclear tensions, prioritize diplomacy and redirect nuclear weapons spending to meet human needs and address environmental challenges. Levees are breaking in states out west and \$20 trillion is being spent on updating nuclear weapons when this kind of need, and other needs are so apparent.

Marcia Cooper, Green Newton thanked Newton Dialogues for bringing this resolution forward. They are doing great work. The City Council should support this movement that is gaining strength across the country. Climate change does not recognize municipal borders, nor does this, and this is not something that just involves Newton and it would be wise to show support because it affects everyone.

Lockland Farrow said this topic is so terrifying that it is difficult to talk about without sounding hyperbolic. Newton should be the leader on this in the United States because no one in this room might be alive today if it were not for earlier action by people in Newton. In 1961, Dr. Bernard Lown who still lives on Hobart Road and is 98, organized other doctors to study the effects of nuclear weapons and published in the NE Journal of Medicine what nuclear explosions would actually do to people. None of the civil defense plans would protect us. Five months later when the Cuban Missile Crisis came so close to a disaster, people in Newton had headlines in papers warning of the dangers. In 1980, we were back to civil defense plans and the US and Russia talking about nuclear war. Dr. Lown realized the US cannot do this alone and worked to establish an international organization, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). In 1985, Mr. Farrow and others in Newton joined the call when Dr. Lown was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as part of that organization and its work. In 2007 there are still the same amount of

nuclear weapons and all the measures that were introduced did not work. The IPPNW launched an event to introduce a treaty to abolish international nuclear weapons and the UN overwhelmingly passed in 2017 and he was back in Oslo for another Nobel Peace Prize for this treaty. We are in danger today and the doomsday clock is at 2 minutes to midnight. While the world is uniting slowly on a global treaty, the 5 points in this resolution really matter. One computer accident could lead to global destruction. The US must work on the long-term solutions of this treaty and every city and town in MA and then the state legislatures must support this. Election day in 2020 is coming and people have to be on the ballot who support these measures and the efforts should start in Newton.

Committee members thanked Councilor Leary and the group for bringing this resolution forward. It is common sense and hard to argue against its purpose.

Councilor Kalis stated that he studied Soviet and Eastern European Studies and Political Science. He then lived in Russia for four years and wrote a book about the fear he had about a nuclear war. There was much discussion in college about ways to eliminate the weapons and to ensure they are never used. The point that calls for cancelling the plan to replace the entire US arsenal with enhanced weapons bothers him. If the US unilaterally cancels plans to do this, it makes it more dangerous for the entire world. Someone like Putin would have the enhanced weapons and he is not afraid to use them. The bargaining power goes away and it makes it more dangerous. While he agrees with the intent, he is not sure it is the way to get there. Mr. Farrow thanked him for the question and said the only way this will be an effective campaign in 2020 is if for months ahead of that for people to have asked difficult questions like this. The overkill that the US has is so redundant. If Putin were to understand what Gorbachev came to understand, what just one warhead reliably delivered on Moscow would do to his country, there would be perfect deterrence. The US has thousands of warheads with plan for more that can be unverifiable because they are on cruise missiles. The current US arsenal is 500 times larger than what perfect deterrence requires. This is an insanely irresponsible waste of \$1.7 trillion. We have adequate deterrence.

If the thinking is always that we need more because the other side has more, it never stops. People have spent years and years of time researching how to stop this and this resolution points out the best ways. Mutually assured destruction has been at the core of nuclear weapons, but the larger stockpiles, the larger the chance of accidental launch from a variety of locations. It would only take a hundred of these to provoke a nuclear winter and shut down all growth of plant life on earth.

A Councilor noted that Newton should be a leader in this. Many grew up with the "duck and cover" drills which would be useless but children now are not really aware of the risk and need to be educated about it so they can continue the fight that is demonstrated in this resolution. Global telecommunications can connect people throughout the world to work on this and progress can be made.

Physicians for Social Responsibility are working on this issue right now. The only other issue they are working on is climate change. The kind of strength that young people need to work on these

catastrophic, existential threats while trying to live life is overwhelming. It is everyone's responsibility to do everything they can to fight for the survival of the planet and humankind when there are people in positions of power who can destroy it. We all have to band together and stand up.

A Councilor noted that the City is very fortunate to have the talent and knowledge represented in the room this evening. She remembered seeing a demonstration of someone pouring out BBs to represent the number of nuclear weapons in the US and they poured out for minutes and minutes. It was stunning. If we care about climate change, we should certainly be concerned about this. Newton needs to be part of educating other communities and provide leadership.

Councilor Albright moved approval and the Committee voted in favor 5-0-1 with Councilor Kalis abstaining for the reasons he stated earlier.

The draft Resolution is attached.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#127-18

Prohibition on polystyrene-based disposable food or beverage containers

COUNCILORS DANBERG, ALBRIGHT, NORTON, CROSSLEY, LEARY AND KALIS requesting a prohibition on polystyrene-based disposable food or beverage containers in the City of Newton if that packaging takes place on the premises of food establishments with in the City.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 5-0 (Councilor Krintzman not voting)

Note: Councilor Danberg joined the Committee. She explained that the docketers have been working on this ordinance to ban food and beverage containers made of polystyrene and related materials for several years. It was close to being passed last year but a few Councilors had suggested adding some other items to the ordinance including Styrofoam coolers, packing peanuts and plastic coffee stirrers. In the future, if other items should be added after further research and outreach, they could be added through an amendment, including compostable products when the City has the ability to compost.

Marie Lawlor noted that rather than allow hardship exemptions for businesses as was included in the previous draft, the current draft now allows for a longer phase-in period in order to provide businesses time to use their current stock of products before the ordinance takes effect on January 1, 2020.

It was noted that schools are included in this ordinance. Any institution or business that must come through the City for a permit to operate under the state food code is included, which includes the schools. Ms. Lawlor explained that using the term "government entities" to cover the schools would be confusing because ordinances cannot regulate state or federal government entities that might be in the City.

Deb Youngblood, Commissioner of Health and Human Services said she was grateful to be involved in the process of forming the ordinance and to have had the opportunity to express what her department is able to do under current staffing. She is incredibly supportive of doing all that can be done to be as environmentally friendly as possible. Her staff feels this ordinance is enforceable. The plan will be to look for compliance while staff is doing regular food inspections. Enforcement for other establishments that they do not normally inspect, such as liquor stores where coolers might be sold, will be complaint driven. If they hear from a resident or Councilor that there is a violation, they will go inspect that establishment.

Councilor Leary said she plans to do some canvassing of the village centers and produce an informative flyer. She will be working on this with Kathryn Ellis, Director of Economic Development, as well as Councilor Danberg and some volunteers. They will be speaking with businesses about this ordinance, as well as the bag ordinance and the private haulers ordinance. It will be a good opportunity to get the word out face-to-face as they did when the plastic ban ordinance went into effect 4 years ago.

Committee members said that some other communities have been banning these products for years and it is time for Newton to do the same. Pushing the responsibility of solid waste onto cities and towns is unfair and businesses must be involved in order to take on their fair share.

Councilor Danberg thanked Sun Woo Kan for all her work on this ordinance. Because of her, this ordinance was transformed to a sustainable products ordinance from a simple polystyrene ban. Her research and hard work made that possible.

Councilor Brousal-Glaser moved approval and the Committee voted in favor 5-0 with Councilor Krintzman not voting.

This item will be heard in Finance Committee before it goes to the full City Council for a final vote.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

John B. Rice, Chair

CITY OF NEWTON

IN CITY COUNCIL

April 2019

RESOLUTION

CALLING UPON THE UNITED STATES TO LEAD A GLOBAL EFFORT TO PREVENT NUCLEAR WAR

BE IT RESOLVED:

WHEREAS nine nations collectively have approximately 15,000 nuclear weapons in their arsenals, most of which are far more destructive than those that killed hundreds of thousands of people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945; and

WHEREAS the detonation of even a small number of these weapons would have catastrophic human and environmental consequences that could affect everyone on the planet; and

WHEREAS the United States maintains several hundred nuclear missiles in underground silos on hair-trigger alert, capable of being launched within minutes after a presidential order, which greatly increases the risk of an accidental, mistaken or unauthorized launch; and

WHEREAS the United States continues to reserve the right to use nuclear weapons first, which reduced the threshold for nuclear use and makes a nuclear war more likely; and

WHEREAS over the next 30 years, the United States plans to spend an estimated \$1.7 trillion to replace its entire nuclear arsenal and the bombers, missiles, and submarines that deliver them with more capable, more usable versions; and

WHEREAS taxpayers spend more than \$2 million every hour of every day to maintain the US nuclear arsenal; and

WHEREAS the United States, as well as Britain, China, France, and Russia are obligated under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to take concrete steps toward eliminating their nuclear arsenals; and

WHEREAS in July 2017, 122 nations approved the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which makes it illegal under international law to develop, test, produce, manufacture, or otherwise acquire, possess, or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Newton City Council call on the United States to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by:

- Renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;
- Ending the sole, unchecked authority of any president to launch a nuclear attack;
- Taking US nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert;
- Cancelling the plan to replace its entire arsenal with enhanced weapons; and
- Actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council shall send a copy of this Resolution to Representative Joseph P. Kennedy, III, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Edward J. Markey and President Donald J. Trump.

Under Suspension of Rules
Readings Waived and Approved
yeas nays

(SGD) DAVID A. OLSON
City Clerk