



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, May 9, 2018

Present: Councilors Rice (Chair), Brousal-Glaser, Albright and Scibelli Greenberg

Absent: Councilors Baker, Kalis, Krintzman and Schwartz

City Staff Present: Jonathan Yeo (Chief Operating Officer), Jayne Colino (Director, Senior Services), Josh Morse (Commissioner, Public Buildings), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

#271-18 Appointment of Naomi Krasner to the Council on Aging

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing NAOMI KRASNER, 72 Nonantum Street, Newton, as a member of the COUNCIL ON AGING for a term to expire May 15, 2021. (60 days: July 6, 2018)

Action: Programs & Services Approved 4-0

Note: Naomi Krasner joined the Committee. The Chair asked Ms. Krasner why she would like to join the Council on Aging. She explained that the Council on Aging is a wonderful, well-run organization serving the older residents of Newton as well as anyone else who is interested in elder issues. She would very much like to join them. A Councilor noted that Ms. Krasner has experience as a social worker and felt she would be a great asset to the Council on Aging. It was also pointed out that during the last campaign; candidates found that there were many older residents living on their own. Since then, they have been having conversations with the Director of Senior Services to create some programming to reach out to that 85+ year old demographics to help with isolation and other practical needs. Ms. Krasner noted that was an article in the Boston Globe about people, in general, facing isolation so this is an issue that is on everyone's mind. She would like to find out what resources are already available and how the City can connect to those resources and make them known to those who need them. Ms. Krasner also stated that some people living in isolation, do not respond to offers of help, which is problematic.

The Committee thanked Ms. Krasner for her willingness to serve and approved her appointment unanimously, 4-0.

#270-18 Appointment of Allison Sharma to the Council on Aging

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing ALLISON SHARMA, 46 Kingswood Road, Auburndale, as a member of the COUNCIL ON AGING for a term to expire May 15, 2021. (60 days: July 6, 2018)

Action: Programs & Services Approved 4-0

Note: Allison Sharma joined the Committee. The Chair asked her why she would like to join the Commission on Aging. She explained that during her campaign for City Councilor last year, she met Marian Knapp, the Chair of the Council on Aging. She was impressed with the work the Council was doing and wanted to be involved. She noted that as a younger member, she could bring a different perspective that could be helpful.

A Councilor noted that Ms. Sharma has a particular interest in housing. Ms. Sharma said she is just beginning her involvement in this, but when she initially met with Ms. Knapp she realized how desperate the City is for senior housing. She is pleased to be on the housing subcommittee of the Council and is looking forward to being an advocate for better choices of housing for seniors. This could include working with the City and developers and working on education for affordable housing for seniors. Every family is dealing with issues of aging either as they themselves age, or have aging parents. The Councilor felt she would be very helpful on the Council.

The Chair asked how she felt about the new facility for seniors. She wholeheartedly supported more senior space and more facility space in general for the community. The feasibility study will help tremendously in figuring out what will work best. Some seniors love the idea of a multigenerational model and others do not want that at all. Like anything else, there will be many opinions and preferences.

The Committee thanked Ms. Sharma for being willing to serve and voted in favor of her appointment unanimously, 4-0.

#269-18 Appointment of Anil Adyanthaya to the Licensing Board

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing ANIL ADYANTHAYA, 11 Tamarac Road, Newton Upper Falls, as a member of the LICENSING BOARD for a term to expire June 3, 2024. (60 days: July 6, 2018)

Action: Programs & Services Approved 4-0

Note: Anil Adyanthaya joined the Committee. The Chair asked why he would like to serve on the Licensing Board. Mr. Adyanthaya explained that he is a member of the Upper Falls Neighborhood Area Council and the work there is limited to that area and community building. The Licensing Board deals with issues of public health and safety, economic vitality and other important issues. The ability to serve the City in on a wider range of subjects interests him very much.

A Councilor asked if there were any particular issues that interested him. Mr. Adyanthaya said that the Licensing Board should listen to the police about any increase in alcohol related arrests or incidents, and address it through the licensing process. He wants the institutions that want to serve alcohol to be able to do that in a successful way and would not want to create a hindrance. It was noted that the lodging house ordinance was just approved and Licensing will have some role in that. XXXX, current Board member said that basically, they will be collecting the inspections from the various departments involved and sign off that all of them have occurred.

The Committee wondered if recreational marijuana facilities would have to go through the Licensing Board. They would have to get a special permit, but the Committee believed that the Health Department would be involved and not Licensing.

Gloria Gavis, current Licensing Commissioner, explained that there is an archaic law that requires the Licensing Board to have a Democrat, a Republican and an Unenrolled member. She has wanted to leave the Republican party for several years, but has not done so because of this requirement. In order for her to stay on the Board and change her affiliation, a home rule petition would have been required. She believes that Mr. Adyanthaya would be a wonderful asset to the Board and he can fulfill the Republican requirement.

It was asked what she felt might be a problem on the Licensing Board. She noted that there is an inequity in fees. Smaller non-profits like PTOs, trying to raise \$1000, have to pay \$250 for liquor permits for their events. She noted that the staff has turned over in the past year and new staff, under the Health Department, have done a wonderful job of working with the Licensing Board. The Board recently rewrote all of their regulations so they are much more simple and easier to read and understand.

The Chair explained that Mr. Adythaya was the person who originally pushed for the Upper Falls Area Council and has done great work.

The Committee voted in favor, unanimously, of Mr. Adyanthaya's appointment to the Licensing Board.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#282-18 HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) from Free Cash to fund the facility programming phase for an Active Living Center to address community and senior needs.

Action: **Programs & Services Approved 4-0**

Note: Josh Morse, Commissioner of Public Buildings joined the Committee. He explained that this request is the first step in addressing the growing needs of the senior population in the City. The senior population spans from 55-100 years old and the current facilities could be better serving that population. This money will start a programmatic evaluation to determine what this project can accomplish. When there is a school project, the program is established ahead of time, however, because the City is trying to meet the needs of the senior population and the community at large, as well as roll in some Parks & Recreation Department programs, the overall goal is a bit more amorphous. This money would fund the programmatic phase of the feasibility study to establish the program. They would then come back to the City Council with the programming and ask for design money to get through the site plan approval process. At that point, they would also have a better sense of where the site options might be for this facility. He noted that most of the questions the Committee might have, are the questions that will be answered through this study.

Committee Comments/Questions

It was asked if this project would be considered more of a multi-generational complex, rather than specifically a “senior center”. Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer, stated that they will explore a range of options. There are site and financial constraints, but the Mayor is very interested in looking at something that has a focus on the senior population. The facility should be able to comfortably address all the Senior Services programs and the programs for seniors at the Parks & Recreation Department. This programmatic evaluation will assist in deciding what could be included and it could end up quite large, or more modest. They are considering a multigenerational model but he was not sure if there would be a children’s component to it.

Commissioner Morse explained that Public Buildings, Executive Office, Senior Services, Parks & Recreation and Planning Departments are all involved in this project. This asset will serve the a broad community so it will be crucial to examine and analyze what the needs are. He is involved because as Commissioner of Public Buildings, this future site will be under his purview, however, the programmatic decisions will not be in his hands. He will facilitate the process and try to shepherd things along. Councilor Rice noted that he is on the Working Group for this project. They meet every two weeks and decided it was important to have this feasibility study for programming done first. The size and scope could be within a wide range of opportunities so this will provide a framework. The Building Committee will be formed next and another City Councilor will join that Committee from the Public Facilities Committee.

After the programming is established, it will be applied to a site selection matrix, which is a weighted system that helps to analyze sites to determine appropriateness for the programming. Everything possible site is considered in this matrix at first and then it is narrowed down.

A Councilor asked about the breakdown of the budget. Commissioner Morse explained that there is an Owners Project Manager (OPM), which is a team of people, and a Designer or Architect, which is also a team of people. It will go through the Designer Selection Committee in June, which will help to evaluate the project and make recommendations for the Designer and the OPM. The OPM is a facilitator that allows the City to engage with the community by organizing meetings, setting up a webpage, doing mailings, setting a schedule, and writing executive reports for the City Council on a weekly basis. The Designer, in the programmatic phase, is mainly an architect but there may be a subcontractor. Their time is spent analyzing existing conditions, studying current programs, looking for inadequacies, determining the current square footages, and determining the ideal square footages. This analysis includes broom closets to yoga studios and everything in between.

Councilor Rice moved approval and the Committee voted in favor, unanimously. This item will go to Finance Committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

John B. Rice, Chair