

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2006

Present: Ald. Johnson (Chair) Ald. Hess-Mahan (Vice Chair) Sangiolo, Baker, Lipof, and Parker

Other Alderman Present: Ald. Albright

Absent: Ald. Coletti and Merrill

Also Present Bob DeRubeis (Recreation) Carol Stapleton (Recreation) David Naparstek (Health Commissioner)

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#30-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of **\$236,180** from Budget Reserve for the purpose of funding current and future snow and ice and tree emergency expenses in the Parks and Recreation Department.

ACTION: APPROVED 5-0

NOTE: A memorandum had been distributed showing an amendment in this docket item in the amount from \$145,400 to **\$236,180**. Mr. DeRubeis explained that this money is needed for four storms. (December 4th, December 9th, January 1st and January 3rd)

Ald. Sangiolo questioned if this increase would cover two additional storms and Mr. DeRubeis responded that this would be sufficient. Ald. Sangiolo further questioned if there had been a consolidation of Parks and Recreation and Public Works in terms of snow plowing. Unfortunately Mr. DeRubeis responded that at this point, there has not been much progress.

The Committee voted 5-0 for approval of this request.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#17-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$29,000 be appropriated from the Newton 2000 Committee gift fund in order to establish an account for the purpose of providing maintenance to Balsamo Millennium Park. Said maintenance would fall under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation.

ACTION: APPROVED 5-0 (subject to 2nd call)

NOTE: The Committee approved this item subject to second call for accounting clarification. Mr. DeRubeis explained that this money is what was left in the Newton 2000 Committee Fund and is now being requested to be placed into a maintenance appropriation account. It is hoped that it would become part of the Board Order . (Interest made from this account stay within the account.)

The Committee agreed that they would approve the item but **subject to 2nd call** for further clarification.

#47-05 ALD. SANGIOLO requesting amendment to the Tree Preservation Ordinance to provide a provision for notification to the Board of Aldermen of any price adjustment for payment for trees removed in accordance with the ordinance.

ACTION: HELD 5-0

NOTE: Ald. Sangiolo noted that one of the concerns that came up a number of years ago when “The Terraces” was built that the adjustment on replacement of trees was substantially reduced. The purpose of this docket item is to be sure that there is notification any time there is an appeal by a developer to the Mayor. Ald. Lipof suggested making this as strong as possible so that price cannot be bargained. Chairman Johnson felt that the first step in a revised appeal process should be to communicate with the Tree Warden in writing and then have the Tree Warden communicate with the Board. In her view, Ald. Sangiolo said that what needs to be spelled out more clearly is when an appeal can or cannot be granted. President Baker said that if the Mayor grants an appeal, he should specify the rationale. Chairman Johnson suggested an appeal process where the letter and application for appeal goes to Parks and Recreation as well as the Ward Aldermen from the location be informed.

The Committee concluded that the Law Department should work on this and Ald. Sangiolo said she would continue her efforts and come back to Committee on February 22nd. The Committee agreed to hold the item.

#225-05 ALD. JOHNSON, DANBERG, FISCHMAN, HESS-MAHAN, PARKER AND SANGIOLO requesting a 3 month, 6 month, and 12 month update regarding the reorganization of the Health and Human Services organization in light of the Board’s concern that there was an insufficient focus on youth services.

ACTION: HELD 6-0

NOTE: **Background:** Chairman Johnson introduced the item by saying that there had been concern with the reorganization of Health and Human Services and whether the focus on youth was being diminished. Commissioner Naparstek noted that this reorganization, as outlined at the last time he was before the committee, is presently on target (ahead in some cases), His main purpose for being here this evening was to discuss the assessment of Youth Services that was conducted. Health and Human Services staff networking and supportive structure to enhance services and continue assessment of reorganization is also ongoing. He reported that Bev Droz meets regularly with the Youth Commission and is very effective in staffing that Committee.

Needs Assessment: He provided a preliminary review of the results of the Needs Assessment. (attached). Twenty-five agencies responded to a survey and are actively participating. Gaps and duplication of services have been identified. In process is a Youth forum to share all information gathered. Ald. Sangiolo asked if there would be a needs assessment survey to the youth to get feedback on whether they think what we are providing is good, bad, different, or could be changed. Commissioner Naparstek said that could be the agenda for the next Youth Services Task Force. One of the outcomes of the survey is that his department is working with organizations, across the city. The information is being used to create a book, "Guide to Youth Resources" which will soon be available in hardcopy and on the web. Developing "Youth" pages on the City's website is ongoing.

Ald. Parker would like to see a social worker function incorporated into the budget and feels it would be a great addition. It was agreed that the Commissioner will come before the committee as soon as he has spoken with the Youth Task Force about a survey of youth. At this time, a complete analysis will be completed and the Commissioner will report on the results of the survey that was conducted among service providers in the city.

The Committee agreed to hold the item.

#242-03 ALD. JOHNSON, SAMUELSON AND SANGIOLO requesting a discussion to determine times and places where dogs may be off leash on public grounds excluding schoolyards.

ACTION: HELD 6-0

NOTE: Ald. Albright told the Committee that the Committee has met four times and has three upcoming meetings scheduled in January, February and March. (Note Progress Report attached dated January 18, 2006) Ald. Albright said that she had heard from those for and against this item. Presently there is agreement that what we are doing now does not work. There is a premise that if there were set hours where dogs were allowed, this would stop the problem of dogs running free at the wrong time. She noted that fences are not cheap and there would be a cost problem with fencing, maintenance, and enforcement. There is a Boston model that requires a citizen group to come forward and sponsor a park and provide the funds. President Baker noted that enforcement is an issue as presently there is only one dog officer and wondered if any mechanisms for that issue have been discussed. In response Ald. Albright said that part of the citizen model is citizen enforcement. Citizens have to monitor what is going on in the park and Ald. Albright was not sure what type of model would work in Newton. Ald. Parker asked about raising the fee for licensing dogs and it was noted that many citizens do not even obtain dog licenses. President Baker feels that many people do not know what the current rules are and information should be made more available. At this point, Ald. Albright feels there is some agreement that a trial should be instituted in four or five parks.

The Committee voted to old this item

#79-04 ALD. PARKER & GERST requesting discussion of the development of a Citywide wireless internet access network in Newton.

ACTION: HELD 5-0

NOTE: Ald Parker provided an overview of this docket item. This citywide wireless internet access network would be available to anyone who lives or works in the city and wants to pay for it. This kind of program could be helpful in reading water meters in the city. A transponder on the water meter could be used to notify people of an unusual pattern of water use as well as helpful in accurate water bills. Emergency communication (fire and police) would be helped with this kind of program. The working group on this project currently consists of Bob Rooney, Mike Rourke, Joe Mulvey, Ann Cornaro, Eileen McGettigan, Theresa Park, and Karen Griffey. The next step would be to make this inter-operable with the remote meter reading and then do a site survey of the city. Ald. Johnson expressed her concern regarding money for this type of program. It would take approximately \$12,000 to do a site survey of the City and then close to one million dollars to roll this out city wide. However, Ald. Parker said this would generate millions of dollars in revenue. In conclusion, he noted that Commissioner Rooney does have some discretionary funds that **may be** used for this project. The Committee voted to hold this item.

The Committee adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ald. Marcia Johnson, Chair