

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2006

Present: Ald. Johnson (Chair) Ald. Sangiolo, Ald. Merrill, Ald. Parker, Baker, Lipof

Absent: Ald. Hess-Mahan, Coletti

Others: Mike Kruse (Planning Director) Michael Horgan (Geographer from the Census Bureau)
Adam Mandell (Barney Frank's Office)

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

ACTION: **HELD 4-0**

NOTE:

Background Ald. Parker noted that there has been an informal Committee of City officials including the head of the City IT Department, Representatives of various other departments, Commissioner of Public Works, and Representatives of the Law Department. Numerous meetings have been held to discuss the technology. Research has been done and there have been demonstrations.

The Mayor did issue a \$10,000 appropriation request which was approved by the Board for doing an assessment of City needs for WiFi. At the same time that the assessment docket item was coming up, Mr. Carp who is a Newton resident and President of a Newton Company (Galaxy Internet Services) came to this City and offered a different model than the one that had previously been looked at. The previous one looked at would have had an upfront cost to the City to acquire assets that would run the wireless internet access. The model that Mr. Carp proposed is that his company would pay the upfront cost to put together the network and would maintain the network. They would be asking for a license to use our City buildings and our street lights to hook on to their equipment. In exchange for that, free access would be provided for city employees; an hour a day of free access for Newton residents plus some free hot spots within the City; free access for the indigent and then a reasonable cost for a commercial product that would be very competitive with the internet options for the public.

There has been a good deal of interest in having wireless access including usage for reading water meters as well as Public Works Commissioner Rooney having interest in this for reading parking meters, police and fire communication could also use this in communicating information regarding incidents as they take place. There appears to be a good deal of public safety and public works interest. The appeal of the Carp approach was that it entailed no upfront cost. Ald. Parker noted that this is being done in the town of Brookline. After extensive study, Brookline

settled on Galaxy Internet to provide this service. There was a 4 pm demonstration that was attended by Ann Cornaro (IT Director) Joe Mulvey (Deputy Director) Robert Rooney (Public Works Commissioner) Steve Smith (IT Director, Newton Police).

Chairman Johnson said she would like to have a meeting and hear from Ann Cornaro, Police Chief O'Brien, Fire Chief LaCroix, Commissioners Lojek and Rooney and the Director of Planning Department as to how they would plan on utilizing this new technology and what potential costs and savings it would mean for the City. She would also like to hear from the Mayor regarding how this combines with the City's IT strategy. After a report from the consultant is completed and reviewed, the Department Heads will then be invited in to hear about cost benefits. Ald. Parker stated that the next meeting should occur in 3-4 weeks, after receiving the consultants report and talking to department heads. Ald. Merrill would like to hear input from neighborhood groups.

The Committee voted to hold the item 4-0. (Ald. Baker and Lipof not voting)

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#267-06(2) ALD. PARKER, BURG, LINSKY, FISHMAN, HESS-MAHAN, VANCE, HARNEY, JOHNSON & DANBURG proposing an ordinance paralleling the state legislation that would require the divestiture of City of Newton funds from those companies that aid and abet the Sudanese government in its genocide.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0 (Parker not voting)**

NOTE: Ald. Parker noted that the Law Department has made some minor changes on the Resolution (attached). Ald. Parker indicated that what we are proposing is the same as what is in the state bill Providence, Rhode Island recently passed. Ald. Parker added that we do not want to give our taxpayer money to aid and abet genocide. There was a motion to approve subject to second call. The vote was 5-0 (Parker not voting)

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV., PUB. FAC. AND FIN. COMMITTEES

#309-01 ALD. PARKER requesting increase in the income eligibility level of the 30% water/sewer discount for low-income senior citizens.

NOTE: No discussion due to other committee business that took the docketer away from the meeting.

ACTION: **HELD 4-0 (Baker Parker not voting)**

#320-06 ALD. YATES requesting a report from the Director of Planning and Development and other relevant officials as to how the Bureau of the Census can be persuaded to allow the city to use the Sudbury and Cochituate Aqueduct as the boundaries just as they were before 2000.

ACTION: **NAN 6-0**

NOTE: Present for discussion of this item was Adam Mandell from Barney Frank's Office and Mike Horgan from the Census Bureau. Ald. Yates reported that when the Census Bureau was looking at its guidelines for the census tract maps pre the 2000 Census, a change was made that seemed innocuous--aqueducts would not be allowed to be used as block boundaries. The assumption was that aqueducts were buried and therefore if there was dirt on top of them, they were invisible and not a good boundary. Somehow the Bureau was not aware that in many places, aqueducts are among the most visible features of the landscape. As a result of that, the situation we found in the Ward Lines process was generated. It is also the reason that former Election Commissioner Alan Licarie was confused about where the boundaries were. Previously, part of the Ward 5 and 6 boundaries had been the aqueduct that crossed Walnut Street. The ward boundary was changed to reflect the revised census block boundary. Ald. Yates said that in his mind that the situation that was in place in 1990 appears more satisfactory than the situation in 2000.

Mr. Horgan gave a thorough description of the process from the Census Bureau perspective. Assistant City Solicitor Gayle Smalley was legal counsel to that Ward Lines Committee and described the process from the City perspective. In the next few months, the Bureau of the Census will issue draft regulations on what the appropriate boundaries are of census tracts and census blocks. (The eventual new Ward and Precinct lines must not split up Census Blocks.) At that point, these regulations will be open to comment for an extended period. The City of Newton or anyone else can comment that aqueducts that are in fact above grade level and are visible physical presences should be allowed to be used as block boundaries. After those guidelines are adopted sometime in 2007, proposed block boundaries will be issued.

Mr. Horgan, Geographer with the U.S. Census Bureau, told the Committee that later this year more information will be available. At a future date, maps will be distributed to all local communities which will show ward and precinct boundaries. Mr. Horgan does not think voting districts will change.

Ald. Yates felt this present docket item could be NAN'd but would want to know how the City could participate in the Block Boundary Suggestion Project 2007 through 2009. It was suggested that the Board be notified when further discussion will take place.

The Committee voted 6-0 for no action necessary.

Re-Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#290-06 DENA SALZBERG, 65 Kenilworth Street, Newton, reappointed as a member of the ADVISORY COUNCIL OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES for a 3-year term to expire February 2, 2009 (60 days 10-13-06).

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0**

NOTE: Ms. Salzberg has served since 1999 on the Council on Aging. She was present at a Programs and Services Committee on October 19, 2005. Ald. Sangiolo has worked with Ms.

Salzberg in the past and noted that she is extremely well-qualified and, in her opinion, feels she will be a tremendous addition to the Advisory Council of Health and Human Services. The Committee voted 6-0 to approve her appointment.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Johnson, Chair