

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2005

Present: Ald. Johnson (Chair) Ald. Hess-Mahan (Vice Chair) Ald. Merrill, Ald. Coletti, Ald. Parker

Absent: Ald. Sangiolo, Baker, Fischman

Also Present: Ald Danberg, David Olson (Jackson Homestead)

Reappointment by His Honor the Mayor

#73-05 AUDREY COOPER, 114 Berkeley Street, Newton 02465 reappointed as a member of the NEWTON COUNCIL ON AGING for a term of office to expire January 31, 2008 (60-day Board action date May 6, 2005.)

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 4-0 (Coletti not voting)**

**NOTE:** Ms. Cooper reported that the Newton Council on Aging meets once a month and the Executive Committee also meets once a month with the main focus being the Senior Center. There has been expansion with a new Outreach Worker and a Geriatric Clinical Social Worker which has been of great value. A scholarship fund has been set up for emergency assistance. Under Jayne Colino's able leadership, things have been going along very well. Issues discussed include tax relief for seniors, Medicare, Social Security, etc. All of these discussions have been very positive. It is important for seniors in need to know that there is a place to come where assistance is available. Ms. Cooper noted that the Senior Expo is scheduled for June 7<sup>th</sup> at Post 440 with the possibility of a White House Conference.

The Committee voted 4-0 to approve this appointment.

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#48-05 FAY COHEN, 15 Cottonwood Road, Newton Centre, re-appointed as a member of the Election Commission for a term of office which will expire on April 1, 2009 (60-day Board action date: 4/23/05)

**ACTION:** **HELD 4-0 (Hess-Mahan not voting)**

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#49-05 STEVEN SMITH, 442 Chestnut Street, Waban, re-appointed as a member of the Election Commission for a term of office which will expire on April 1, 2009 (60-day Board action date: 4/23/05)

**ACTION:** **HELD 4-0 (Hess-Mahan not voting)**

**NOTE:** Ald. Parker explained that there is a state statute that requires that the Democratic City Committee nominate three names to be the democratic seats on the Election Commission and the Republican City Committee do the same for the republican seats. Ald. Parker went on to say that this has not been complied with and that Newton has been notified by the Secretary of State's Office that it should be handling things this way. A certified letter should come from the Mayor to the Chairs of the Democratic and Republican City Committees and there should be an election at their meetings to nominate three people. The Mayor chooses from among the three names nominated. It is a formality, not observed in the past, but now that it has been pointed out to us, we need to follow the procedure under M.G.L. Chapter 51, Sec. 16A, adopted by the City of Newton by local acceptance in 1962.

Chairman Johnson has given this information to both Fay Cohen and Steven Smith. Ald. Coletti questioned if Mr. Smith, an employee of the City, could serve in that capacity and Chairman Johnson responded that she would check into that. The Committee agreed to hold these two reappointments.

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#50-05 JANE O'HERN, 472 Walnut Street, Newton, re-appointed as a Trustee of the Newton History Museum at the Jackson Homestead for a term of office which will expire on February 1, 2008. (60-day Board action date: 4/23/05)

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0**

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#51-05 LILLIE B. JEFFERSON, 94 Adena Road, West Newton re-appointed as a Trustee of the Newton History Museum at the Jackson Homestead for a term of office which will expire on February 1, 2008. (60-day Board action date: 4/23/05)

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** Docket Items #50-05 and #51-05 were discussed together. David Olson of the Jackson Homestead told the committee that both Jane O'Hern and Lillie Jefferson were wonderful trustees who have been both active and committed to the Jackson Homestead and the Newton History Museum for many years. Both have been extremely supportive as well as active. Ms. Jefferson has recently helped with a Newton Salutes Exhibit on the Myrtle Baptist Church that is presently at the Museum.

Ms. O'Hern noted that both expansion and space for the Museum are very important and possible opportunities were being investigated. Ald. Danberg asked about the building next door. Mr. Olson responded that there are several buildings that are in play at the moment. Mr. Olson said that there is a new strategic plan that will carry out to the year 2010 and space is one of the goals of that plan. The Newton Historical Society has funded the hiring of Larry Bower to do a planning study to help determine how much space is needed.

Ald. Parker asked about which buildings currently being looked at are historic and the response was the Potter Estate and the Caretaker's Cottage are landmarked by the City as historic. Mr.

Olson said there was a great 20<sup>th</sup> century collection that is not able to be displayed because of a lack of space.

Ald. Hess-Mahan moved to approve both appointments.

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#52-05        RUSSEL FELDMAN, 85 Langley Road, Newton re-appointed as a Trustee of the Newton History Museum at the Jackson Homestead for a term of office which will expire on February 1, 2008. (60-day Board action date: 4/23/05)

**ACTION:**        **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:**        Mr. Olson reported that Mr. Feldman is a long-term trustee. He was instrumental in getting the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund to do work on the Jackson Homestead. He has contributed much time and energy to that project.

The Committee voted to approve 5-0.

Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#53-05        JOANNE KAZARIAN, 131 Cypress Street, Newton appointed as a full member of the Newton Youth Commission for a term of office which will expire on October 31, 2007. (60-day Board action date: 4/23/05)

**ACTION:**        **HELD 5-0**

**NOTE:**        Ms. Kazarian was not present and since she is a new appointment, the Committee voted to hold.

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#55-05        GWEN FINEBERG, 27 Tudor Road, Newton 02467 re-appointed as a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission for a term of office which will expire on January 1, 2008. (60-day Board action date: 4/23/05)

**ACTION:**        **HELD 5-0**

**NOTE:**        Ms. Fineberg will not be able to serve due to health concerns. The committee voted to hold the item pending receipt of a letter from her to that effect.

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#54-05        PETER KASTNER, 49 Woodbine Street, Auburndale 02466 re-appointed as an alternate member of the Parks and Recreation Commission for a term of office which will expire on January 1, 2008. (60-day Board action date: 4/23/05)

**ACTION:**        **APPROVED 5-0**

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#57-05 JENNIE DEVITO, 26 Rustic Street, Newton, 02458 re-appointed as a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission for a term of office which will expire on January 1, 2008. (60-day Board action date: 4/23/05)

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0**

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#58-05 ARTHUR MAGNI, 107 Mount Vernon Street, Newton 02465, re-appointed as a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission for a term of office, which will expire on January 1, 2008. (60-day Board action date: 4/23/05)

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** The Committee discussed #54-05, #57-05, #58-05 together. Peter Kastner said he has been active in open space issues. Jennie DeVito said she was a graduate of Sargent College and enjoys being on the Recreation Commission and had been a counselor years ago. She enjoys being on this Commission as they deal with policy, including toddlers to seniors and provide great service. Arthur Magni has been using the parks and wants to protect that resource. Ald. Parker suggested a meeting of the Board of Aldermen's Committee on Community Preservation where the members of the Parks and Recreation Commission are invited in.

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#56-05 JORGE QUIIROGA, 204 Ward Street, Newton 02459 re-appointed as a member of the Newton Commonwealth Golf Course Foundation for a term of office which will expire on March 31, 2008. (60-day Board action date: 4/23/05)

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** Backup information on Mr. Quiroga was read to the Committee and the Committee voted to approve 5-0.

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#59-05 MICHAEL CLARKE, 38 Halcyon Road, Newton, 02459, re-appointed as an alternate member of the Parks and Recreation Commission for a term of office which will expire on January 1, 2008. (60-day Board action date: 4/23/05)

**ACTION:** **HELD 5-0**

**NOTE:** There was no backup information on Mr. Clarke. The committee voted to hold 5-0.

#96-05 PRESIDENT BAKER appointing JOHN B. RICE, 9, Selden Street, Waban 02468, appointed by President Baker to the NEWTON CHILDCARE COMMISSION for a term of office which will expire in January, 2007.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** Mr. Rice has lived in Newton all his life and has been active with the Brigham Community House since 1997 and is on the Board of Directors of Newton Highlands Centre and on the Newton Highlands Area Council. He has been appointed to be Oak Hill PTO Co-President next year as well as being active in the Zervas PTO.

The Committee approved this item.

#97-05 **PRESIDENT BAKER** appointing KATEY GROSSMAN, 47 Brookline Street, Chestnut Hill, 02467, appointed by President Baker as the aldermanic appointee to the NEWTON CHILCARE COMMISSION for a term of office which will expire in January, 2007.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** Items #96-05 and #97-05 were taken up together. Ms. Grossman said she had lived in Newton for 25 years, left and came back. She has been a family child-care provider for 17 years. She also does educational consultant workshops.

#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 said there is a working group consisting of representatives of the IT Department, Law Department, Executive Department, Public Works Department as well as some knowledgeable citizens who have been meeting on a regular basis. The idea would be to have a city-wide wireless internet access network in Newton that would be useful to the City for things like obtaining information automatically from water meters without sending an employee out as well as being helpful for public safety communications. It would also be a way to generate revenue for the City. The hope is that it would pay for its installation and operation costs within a year. Chairman Johnson questioned what the required cash outlay for the City would be to start this type of program. Ald. Parker said the equipment could be bought with Water/Sewer funds because it would be useful to the Public Works Department for water meter readings. The equipment would cost about a half a million dollars. It could be purchased as part of the water and sewer budget. As money comes in, that account could be reimbursed. The top priority goal would be to make it citywide and the backup plan would be to roll it out in one area so that it would be less expensive. A demonstration by Tropos was given in March and there will be another demonstration in April. There was also a question on the Newton census regarding how much residents would be willing to pay to have this wireless internet available. Ald. Parker would expect to have a proposal ready for the committee in May.

Ald. Merrill moved to hold the item.

#432-02 ALD. PARKER, JOHNSON, LINSKY, LIPSITT, LAPPIN, BAKER requesting ordinance change and home rule legislation to implement a policy of indexing automobile excise tax to emissions and/or fuel economy, so low-pollution vehicles have lower taxes than those that pollute more.

**ACTION:** **HELD 5-0**

**NOTE** Ald Parker discussed the merits of having a system that rewards people who buy hybrid vehicles that are fuel efficient by lowering their excise taxes. It has been shown that heavier vehicles do more road damage. Ald. Parker plans to look into this item further. Ald. Parker would expect to have a proposal ready for the committee in May. Ald. Hess-Mahan asked whether the law department had looked into whether it is possible to adjust rates in the manner proposed. The Committee voted to hold 5-0.

#44-03 ALD. STEWART proposing that the Rules and Orders of the Board of Aldermen be amended to allow a public comment period before one Board of Aldermen meeting a month.

**Rules Subcommittee voted No Action Necessary on 1/28/04**

**ACTION :** **HELD 5-0**

**NOTE:** The Committee held the item as Ald. Stewart was not in attendance.

#482-04 ALD. GERST & YATES offering a RESOLUTION requesting that NewTV take any and all actions necessary to comply with the December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004 prohibition against Al Manar Broadcasting.

**ACTION:** **NAN 4-0 (Coletti not voting)**

**NOTE:** Ald. Gerst said that he did not have a written resolution to present to the committee. He explained that he still hoped that the Newton Television Station would abide by federal law. Their charter states they will broadcast anything they are legally able to show. Ald. Gerst said that it is still possible that a citizen could ask NewTV to broadcast Al Manar TV in Arabic. He says that he continues to hope that the Board would ask NewTV to refuse such a request. Ald. Parker has spoken to NewTV's management and is convinced that Al Manar will not be shown on New TV. At this point there is nothing illegal being done and he does not feel a resolution is necessary. Ald. Gerst would like to see a pro active instead of a minimal stand. Chairman Johnson had an article from the internet in December 2004 which talked about the since the federal government put Al-Manar on its list of terrorists its ability to broadcast in the U.S. has been halted (12-18-2004). In her view it was important for the record that it isn't just about NewTV; the federal government has disconnected their satellite connection. Ald. Merrill does not want to give the impression that NewTV is doing something illegal when they are actually complying with the law and their rules and regulations and therefore he moved NAN.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marcia Johnson, Chairman

