

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2003

Present: Ald. Johnson (Chair) Ald. Gentile, Lipsitt, Parker, Fischman, Coletti

Absent: Ald. Merrill, Sangiolo

Also Present: Michael Rourke (Chief Administrative Officer) David Naparstek (Health Commissioner)

APPOINTMENT BY HIS HONOR THE MAYOR

#79-03 HELEN LEE, 185 Grant Avenue, Newton appointed on January 22, 2003 as a regular member of the NEWTON YOUTH COMMISSION for a term of office to expire on January 9, 2006 (60-day Board action date 04-19-03).

ACTION: APPROVED 5-0

NOTE: Ms. Lee addressed the Committee and said she was an attorney doing mainly patent work. She has lived in Newton since 1991 and has always had an interest in youth programs and activities. Chairman Johnson asked if Ms. Lee would find out how the Youth Commission feels about a skate board park. Ald. Lipsitt suggested that the Commission would focus on some planned programs that possibly would have an inter-generational component to connect the youth into the fabric of the community. Ms. Lee said there is an on-going project involving the youth shoveling for some of the elders in the City. Chairman Johnson thanked Ms. Lee and the Committee voted 5-0 in favor.

REAPPOINTMENT BY HIS HONOR THE MAYOR

#80-03 FRANCIS RICE, 20 Vista Avenue, Auburndale re-appointed on January 28, 2003 as a member of the PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION for a term of office to expire on 01-01-06. (60-day Board action date 04-19-03)

ACTION: APPROVED 5-0

NOTE: Mr. Rice was present and reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission been working on the development of a skate board park, but a decision has not yet been made. A skate board park committee has been looking into whether there is a need and a suitable location. Ald. Lipsitt felt if kids were going to use skateboards, it would be better to have a place designed for that purpose. Ald. Gentile felt it was a well-intentioned

bad idea. Mr. Rice said a skate board park would be a very expensive project and he questioned how much use it would really get.

Ald. Lipsitt thanked Mr. Rice for his long service and moved his appointment. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor.

REAPPOINTMENT BY HIS HONOR THE MAYOR

#81-03 DOUGLAS DICKSON, 17 Oxford Road, Newton re-appointed on January 24, 2003 as a member of the COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE for a term of office to expire on 02-16-06. (60-day Board action date 04-19-03)

ACTION: HELD 4-1-0. (Johnson opposed)

NOTE: Docket items #81-03 and #82-03 were discussed together. (See note below)

REAPPOINTMENT BY HIS HONOR THE MAYOR

#82-03 HALLIE PINTA, 145 Pond Brook Road, Newton re-appointed on January 24, 2003 as a member of the COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE for a term of office to expire on 02-16-06. (60-day Board action date 04-19-03)

ACTION: HELD 4-1-0. (Johnson opposed)

NOTE: Chairman Johnson explained that both Mr. Dickson and Ms. Pinta had appeared before the Committee one year ago. They have been actively working and Chairman Johnson said she would prefer moving these two appointments since they had both been in so recently. Ald. Parker said ordinarily he would agree that appointments shouldn't have to come in twice during the same term, but in this instance, he would like to hear what the Community Preservation Committee is currently working on. President Lipsitt agrees that these two Community Preservation members come back to Committee. Sometimes how the individual appointees see their roles on their Committee are sometimes different from the recommendations that are brought forward to the board. Ald. Gentile felt since some members wanted these two appointments to come to a meeting, their appointments should be held. There was a motion to hold with Gentile, Fischman, Parker and Lipsitt in favor and Ald. Johnson opposed.

REFERRED TO PROG.& SERV., PUB.FACIL.& FINANCE COMMITTEES

#503-02 MAYOR COHEN AND PRESIDENT LIPSITT requesting RESOLUTION of support for expenditure of up to \$50,000 to complete work of the Newton North Citizens Task Force. Source to be funds previously authorized for the high school renovation project.

ACTION: NAN 4-0-1 (Ald. Parker abstaining)

NOTE: Chairman Johnson said this item was discussed about one month ago. At that time, there was a discussion regarding this item and members of the Committee did not feel they had enough information to approve or disapprove. In the interim, the Public Facilities Committee approved a vote of No Action Necessary. President Lipsitt said there had been a plan to authorize up to \$7500 for each of four architectural firms for reimbursement for expenses in developing their proposals. On Friday, President Lipsitt received information that the subcommittee of architects, engineer, and construction person who had been dealing with this project met and determined they are not going to get what they want from this process and called the seven architects who have applied and told them to go no farther. Only one of the seven architects who had applied ever worked on schools before. Ald. Gentile had a question as it related to the role DRA in the development of architectural plans. No definitive information would be available until the task force meeting on Monday.

Ald. Parker questioned that other than the \$7500 for the approved four architects, has any other money been spent. Copying and printing seems to be the only expense to date. He also again stated his preference that the Task Force act as “fact finders” Vs making recommendations, which is the responsibility of elected officials [Mayor, Board, School Committee] Ald. Gentile disagreed with this approach. He felt that the City needed a combination of the Task Force’s input and that of elected officials in order to construct a recommendation.

Ald. Gentile moved NAN on this item and the Committee voted 4-0-1 (Ald. Parker abstaining)

#466-02(2) PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE requesting
Monthly progress reports from the NNHS Renovation Task Force.

ACTION: HELD 5-0

NOTE: President Lipsitt reported that since the last discussion, there were three meetings of the Task Force. The Superintendent of Schools spoke at the first meeting on the educational mission. There was also discussion regarding what it will take to get the building to support the educational mission. A serious issue appears to be a shortage in the availability of technological equipment. Ald. Gentile said the major message he received is that there is a big disparity between North High and South High especially in the area of technology. The second meeting covered the infrastructure of the building. There was a tour of the building which showed it to be in poor condition with many problems. The third meeting

of the Task Force was with Dick Amster and Architect Carl Franceschi. Mr. Amster said that architects are optimists and think they can solve every problem. In answer to a question from Dr. Jellinek, he essentially said he could not imagine working on this building with anyone occupying any part of it. Ald. Gentile said there was a list of reasons given by Mr. Amster as to why the building could not be worked on with any guarantee of safety to the students. Ald. Gentile still had questions as to why it had taken so long to come to the conclusion that they did. President Lipsitt said the next meeting will follow up with Mr. Amster and Mr. Franceschi.

REFERRED TO PUB. FACIL. & PROGRAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEES

#83-03 ALD. GENTILE, BRYSON, COLETTI AND LIPSITT requesting that the Health Commissioner conduct/oversee a testing program to evaluate the air quality at Newton North High School and, if necessary, make recommendations to ensure the safety of all students and staff in the building.

ACTION: HELD 6-0.

NOTE: See Public Facilities Committee Report of February 19, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Johnson, Chair