

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2007

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chairman), Albright, Salvucci, Gentile, Yates and Mansfield

Absent: Ald. Weisbuch and Lappin

Also present: Ald. Parker

City staff: Dave Turocy (Acting Commissioner of Public Works), Lou Taverna (City Engineer), John Daghlia (Associate City Engineer) and Nick Parnell (Commissioner of Public Works)

#254-07      ALD. PARKER requesting discussion with the Acting Commissioner of Public Works and appropriate state officials regarding the safety of the eight bridges in Newton determined to be structurally unsound and what steps can be taken to repair or replace those bridges. [08-07-07 @ 11:50 AM]

**ACTION:**      **NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0 (Albright not voting)**

**NOTE:**      Ald. Parker, Acting Commissioner Turocy, Lou Taverna, John Daghlia, Bob Rooney from the Executive Office of Transportation and Alex Bardow, Director of Bridges and Structures, Mass Highway Department joined the committee for discussion of this item. Ald. Parker read a Boston Globe report that indicated there were eight bridges in Newton that were structurally deficient. Ald. Parker contacted the Federal Highway Administration, who said that if the city's Public Works Department requested information, they would provide the locations and information on the structurally deficient bridges. This is in reaction to the tragic bridge collapse outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Ald. Parker would like to find out what the status of Newton's bridges are and if funds need to be allocated to address bridge problems.

Acting Commissioner Turocy stated that the City owns six bridges either jointly with other communities or individually. The other bridges located within the City are owned by various state agencies. The City's bridges have all been inspected and none have been found to be structurally deficient. There are minor issues with some of the bridges, such as the bridge at Bridge Street, which is jointly owned with Watertown. The Town of Watertown has requested aid to repair the bridge.

Mr. Bardow and Mr. Rooney gave a PowerPoint presentation of the National Bridge Inspection Standard Highway Bridges in Newton, which is attached. There are a total of 54 bridges owned by state agencies within the City of Newton. Of the 54 bridges, six of them have been determined to be structurally deficient. However, the Hyde Street MBTA Bridge has been repaired, the Mass Turnpike Authority is currently repairing the Church Street Bridge and the Langley Road MBTA Bridge is scheduled for repair in 2008. The Mass Turnpike Authority is currently evaluating how to repair two bridges, which span railway tracks located on the Turnpike at Newton Corner and Auburndale. The sixth bridge is owned by Mass Highway and is located on a service road in Auburndale. Mass Highway has yet to determine how they will be repairing the bridge. The Committee and Ald. Parker were very pleased with the information provided by the State.

Ald. Salvucci asked that the Public Works Department evaluate the culverts in the City to determine what type of repair they may need. Several Aldermen were supportive of Ald. Salvucci's suggestion. Acting Commissioner Turocy hesitated to undertake this project, as he is concerned about funds. Ald. Salvucci stated that this type of evaluation should be done; therefore, the City needs to come up with the funds. Ald. Yates moved no action necessary, which carried unanimously.

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#76-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$300,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of conducting a study of the municipal buildings throughout the city. [02-27-07 @ 4:16 PM]  
**Public Facilities Approved 6-0-1 on 3/7/07; Finance Motion to Approve Fails to Carry 2-4-1 on 03/12/07; Item Recommitted to both Committees on 3/19/07, Public Facilities held on 3/21/07**

**ACTION: APPROVE AS AMENDED 5-0 @ \$250,000 (Albright not voting)**

**NOTE:** Commissioner Parnell was present for the discussion of this item. The Board recommitted this item on March 19, 2007. The Public Facilities Committee previously voted approval of the item on March 7, 2007. On March 16, 2007, the Mayor amended his original request for \$300,000 to \$250,000 for a study of 26 of the largest municipal buildings. The Committee then discussed the item on March 21, 2007 and held the item awaiting the release of the fire station study. The fire station study has been released and the Mayor has submitted a letter to the Committee clearly identifying the funding source as FY'08 Free Cash. The previous reports on this item and the letter identifying the source of the funds are attached. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the item as amended.

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#257-07(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$41,700 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of clearing structures and debris from the property at 30 Wabasso Street (the property for which acquisition funds are requested from CPA funds under docket item #257-07). [09-11-07 @4:10 PM]

**ACTION: APPROVED 4-1 SUBJECT TO SECOND CALL (Yates opposed; Albright not voting)**

**NOTE:** The Chairman explained that the acquisition of funds to purchase 30 Wabasso Street has yet to be approved by the Finance Committee. Both the acquisition of funds item and this item are scheduled for discussion in Finance on Wednesday, October 10, 2007. Due to the time sensitivity and the Public Facilities Committee's upcoming schedule, it is the Chairman's hope that the request for funds to clear the structures from the property can be voted this evening subject to second call.

Ald. Yates stated that as this property is to be used for passive recreation the expenditures are legitimate CPA expenditures and he sees no reason to be using City funds. Therefore, he will be voting in opposition of the item. Ald. Gentile assumes that there has been

a determination that it is not possible to use CPA funds. However, he would like to see the explanation of why CPA funds are not being used. He would suggest that the item be approved subject to second call. Ald. Salvucci moved approval subject to second call, which carried unanimously.

#345-06      ALD. SCHNIPPER requesting that the contingency on smaller Public Buildings' projects be increased from 5% to at least 8%.

**ACTION:**      **HELD 5-0 (Albright not voting)**

**NOTE:**      Commissioner Parnell requested that the Committee hold the item, as he has not gathered all of the backup information from surrounding communities. A motion to hold the item carried unanimously.

#83-06      ALD. SCHNIPPER & GENTILE requesting discussion with NStar regarding frequent power outages in the Newton Lower Falls area in particular Grayson Lane.

**ACTION:**      **HELD 5-0 (Albright not voting)**

**NOTE:**      Ald. Gentile and Sangiolo have requested that the item be held, as there have been multiple outages in the Lower Falls area in the past month. The Committee held the item for discussion with NStar representatives.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman

## PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2007

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chairman), Weisbuch, Albright, Salvucci, Gentile, Yates and Mansfield  
Absent: Ald. Lappin

Also present: Ald. Baker, Coletti, Sangiolo, Lennon, Linsky, Merrill and Parker

City personnel: Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer), Nick Parnell (Commissioner of Public Buildings), Arthur Cabral (Budget and Project Specialist; Public Buildings Department), Sandy Pooler (Chief Administrative Officer), Joseph LaCroix (Fire Chief), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk) and Shawn a Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

### **REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#76-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$300,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of conducting a study of the municipal buildings throughout the city. [02-27-07 @ 4:16 PM]

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 6-0-1 (Gentile abstaining)**

**NOTE:** Commissioner Parnell presented the item to the Committee. It is a request to conduct a study of 51 municipal buildings throughout the City. The School Department is doing their own study on the school buildings. There will be analysis of each of the 51 buildings. The study will include an evaluation of the physical conditions of both the interior and exterior of those facilities. The study will look at the physical plan analysis and pertinent recommendations will be made for the buildings including evaluating the building envelope, structural, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical and life safety systems. The consultant will be expected to consider issues on energy conservation, sustainability, and life cycle analysis and will give the City a database of all of their findings with cost estimates and a potential plan for addressing problems.

Ald. Schnipper asked if the \$300,000 was enough money to study all 51 buildings. The Commissioner stated that \$300,000 should be enough to get a comprehensive study. Some buildings are going to require more money. He will get the draft RFP to the Board and the draft will be given to the Designer Selection Committee for their comments. The Commissioner would like to know if the Aldermen feel there are any buildings missing from the study.

Ald. Mansfield asked how the \$300,000 figure for the study was determined. Commissioner Parnell checked with different study architects to find out what they would charge. The study encompasses any municipal building that has plumbing and electrical system. Ald. Gentile questioned why if we have had the study on the fire stations for a year and a half and we are no closer today to doing any of the much needed work, why should he vote to approve money for this study. The fire stations are also part of the study and will tie in with the existing fire stations study. The City has a good handle on the HVAC, electrical and mechanical for the fire stations but the envelope of the buildings, the roofs and the windows need to be studied. Ald. Gentile will not vote against the item but will abstain in order to digest the information. He could not vote for the item knowing the fire station study was sitting on a shelf. Ald. Salvucci asked why the fire station study has not come before the Board. The Commissioner explained that he is aggressively trying to do the envelopes of the fire stations, such as the roofs at Station 4 and 7. They will continue to move forward in that way until there

is a plan developed on how to move ahead. A motion to approve the item was made and it carried with six in favor, none opposed and one abstention.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2007

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chairman), Weisbuch, Albright, Salvucci, Gentile, Yates, Mansfield and Lappin

Also present: Ald. Baker, Coletti and Harney

City staff: Nick Parnell (Commissioner of Public Buildings), Arthur Cabral (Budget and Project Specialist; Public Buildings Department), Lou Taverna (City Engineer), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer), Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer) and Shawna Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

### REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#76-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$300,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of conducting a study of the municipal buildings throughout the city. [02-27-07 @ 4:16 PM]  
**Public Facilities Approved 6-0-1 on 3/7/07; Finance Motion to Approve Fails to Carry 2-4-1 on 03/12/07; Item Recommended to both Committees on 3/19/07**

**ACTION: HELD 7-0 (Mansfield not voting)**

**NOTE:** The Board of Aldermen at the March 19, 2007 meeting recommitted this item. The Mayor has amended his original request for \$300,000 for a municipal building study. The amended request is for \$250,000 for a study of twenty-six of the largest municipal buildings. These buildings have boilers, bathrooms, pipes, electrical and cooling systems. The approximate cost of the study is \$.63 per square foot. Commissioner Parnell provided the Committee with a revised excerpt from the draft Request for Qualifications with a list of the twenty-six buildings including the year built and total square footage of the buildings, which is attached. The study will provide a database of existing conditions; deficiencies that need to be addressed, life expectancy of and information about the buildings. The study will enable the City to prioritize the repairs needed for each of the buildings. The Commissioner does not see any full renovations of the buildings but he will be able to aggressively state what needs to be replaced.

Ald. Lappin asked what would happen with the studies paid for with CPA funds that have been done on some of the buildings on the list. The Commissioner responded that the new study would piggyback on the existing CPA studies. The new study will address the interiors of the building, as the CPA studies usually only focus on the building envelope. The Commissioner pointed out that the information gathered from the buildings study could be used for a CPA fund application, as the Community Preservation Committee is requiring a study before funding projects. Ald. Coletti inquired why the cost of the study for 26 buildings is \$250,000, when the original request was for a study of 51 buildings for \$300,000. It seems like the actual cost per square foot has increased. Ald. Coletti would like to see a breakout of the value of the work for each of the buildings. Many of the 26 buildings on the list are mundane, small building and many of them are garages. If you review the cost for each building, the main library, city hall and the police station make up about 60% of the money that is being spent on the study. The

main library is fairly new and \$59,000 seems excessive for the newest building in the City. City Hall needs approximately \$4 million worth of work and he questions why the city would spend \$51,000 on a building that we know what it needs. The Police Station was just renovated for \$5 million and should not require such an extensive study. Many Aldermen were led to believe that the buildings that were going to be reviewed had a tremendous impact on the infrastructure of the City. When the Finance Committee discussed this item, the members were told that there was nothing that was going to be done with fire stations until after January 2008, after the study is completed. The fire stations have been removed from the study list. Ald. Coletti is concerned that the city is not going to do any work on the fire stations and they are only going to deteriorate even further. He does not understand why the Mayor would hold up critical work, while waiting for the study. Ald. Coletti believes that the study is a stall. He suggested that the Committee ask the Commissioner and the Mayor when they are going to move forward on the critical items and if there is a plan to address building maintenance and repair requests that will be made in July. Ald. Coletti pointed out that the Mayor is going to release the fire stations study in April, but he believes that the Mayor will not be announcing that there will be any money directed towards repair of the stations. The study does not give him a great sense that the city is making a commitment to begin working on the schools or fire stations. It is wrong to delay this work until the study is completed.

Ald. Gentile asked if the study goes forward and it identifies serious health and safety issues, how the city would respond to those issues. Ald. Gentile is fairly sure that the study will find some safety issues that cannot be ignored. The Commissioner will actively and aggressively address any life safety concerns. In the normal course of action, the Public Buildings Department addresses any safety issues. Although Ald. Gentile is not a fan of studies, he pointed out that several Aldermen over the years have requested this type of study. The Commissioner replied that it is his job to come up with a study of the city's facilities. The study will give the city a planning guide for the issues in the buildings that need to be addressed. The city has no planning guide and it is an embarrassment that we do not have a planning document. Ald. Salvucci pointed out that the Mayor will need to come up with the funding to address the issues that the study raises and he does not see that happening in the near future.

Ald. Gentile stated that what keeps getting in the way of the study are the fire stations. We have had information for over a year and a half regarding the fire stations. There was a break down of needs to be done in the stations with estimated costs. The Board has been sitting by and waiting for a plan to address the fire stations. The city must address the fire stations; however, nothing is being done. It is truly frustrating that there is no plan to address the deplorable condition of the fire stations. If there were a plan for the fire stations, the money for a building study would not be a concern. It is amazing to Ald. Gentile that the Administration does not understand that the Aldermen want the fire stations repaired and it should be the first priority. The Aldermen have been waiting for the fire station for over a year.

Ald. Albright felt that the fact that there was a study on the fire stations and no work has been done on the stations calls the whole idea of a study on the municipal buildings into question. Why should the city do more studies until the findings from the fire stations study have been addressed. The Commissioner stated that the fire stations study would be complete in the next couple of weeks. Ald. Lappin asked why the firm who performed the study was paid

before the study was complete. The Commissioner explained that the city got a very good deal on the study. Ald. Schnipper stated that she was one of two people to vote for the building study in Finance because it included the fire stations and it said to her that the fire stations would be done. She is now inclined not to vote for the study until the piece regarding the fire stations comes forward. Some of the stations are so deplorable that work has to happen there. The city has a near catastrophic situation in most of the firehouses and the city is not addressing the situation. It really does not create any level of comfort to do yet another study when no work has been done on a study that has shown catastrophic conditions.

Ald. Coletti has not heard that there is a request for any money from the supplemental budget to address the fire stations or anything else. The city has \$3 million that has not been spent for snow removal; there is another \$5 million in overlay surplus that is just sitting there. The city has significant cash reserves that should be used for something. The city also has plenty of bonding capacity and the Mayor is coming in with \$4.5 million for AstroTurf for Newton South High School instead of bonding for the fire stations.

Ald. Gentile moved hold on the item because he felt that there should be no action on the item until the fire stations study is released. The motion carried unanimously. Ald. Yates reminded the Committee that if the Committee wants to make it clear that the fire stations are a priority; they should look at the Capital Improvement Program and amend it.