

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2006

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

Absent: Ald. Gentile

Also present: Ald. Linsky and Johnson

City personnel: Lou Taverna (City Engineer), John Daghlian (Associate City Engineer) and Shawna Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

#464-05 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting an extension of the public sewer main on WOOD END ROAD from an existing manhole in front of 71 Wood End Road easterly 200'± to BOWDOIN STREET, then northerly 100'± on Bowdoin Street to Hillside Road, then easterly 150'± on HILLSIDE ROAD to 87 Hillside Road to service #93 Hillside Road, which is mistakenly connected to the public drain system,

NOTE: In accordance with Sec. 2-9 of the City Charter, the Mayor has declared this to be an emergency measure, necessary to protect the health of the people and property of the City of Newton, thereby requiring a separate vote.

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: John Daghlian and Lou Taverna joined the Committee for the discussion of this item. The home at 93 Hillside Road was renovated a few years ago and the owner abandoned the septic system for a sewer hook-up. During the renovation, the sewer service was erroneously connected to the public drain system. The sewer discharge is currently flowing into Laundry Brook, through Cold Springs Park, the library drainage ditch, the ponds at City Hall, Bulloughs Pond and then into the Charles River. The Utilities Division discovered the error during routine maintenance of the city's drainage system. The hook-up occurred in September of 2004 but an occupancy permit for 93 Hillside Road was not issued until June 2005. The problem has been reported to both the Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency. The city will not be fined, as there is only a minimal amount of pollution that will be diluted without any remediation. Ald. Lappin asked if there was any type of sanitization that could be done to clean up the affected areas. Mr. Taverna thought that there be a disinfectant that can be used.

In order to correct the problem, the City will need to extend the sewer main on Wood End Road to Bowdoin Street then to Hillside Road. Several residences in the area are still on a septic system and at least two of the homeowners wish to connect to the sewer system. The estimated

cost of the construction is \$130,000. The owners will be assessed a total of \$10,451.50 in accordance with the City's ordinances (attached).

Ald. Weisbuch asked if the City was doing anything to ensure that the problem does not occur again. John Daghlian responded that the City is creating a database of streets without sewer that will be checked before sewer permits are issued. Several Aldermen questioned whether the City was seeking remediation from the engineering firm responsible for the error. Mr. Taverna stated that the Law Department is handling all legal issues concerning the hook-up.

The public hearing was opened and Nicholas Zessoules, One Bowdoin Street asked what the cost of the sewer betterment would be. It was explained that it would be assessed as a sewer betterment (assessments attached) and Mr. Zessoules could ask for the betterment to be paid in increments over twenty years. Scott Cooper, One Bowdoin Street, asked how long the project would take. Mr. Taverna estimated that the construction would last 6 to 8 weeks and would begin as soon as the project receives Board approval. He also explained that residents would have access to their homes and driveways throughout the project. However, the final paving cannot take place until the spring because of the weather. Charles Hoban, 93 Hillside Road, is strongly in favor of the petition and is looking for a resolution to the sewer problem at his home. While doing the renovations to his home, he decided that it would be sensible to remove the cesspool and connect to the City sewer system. Anne Sullivan, 3 Bowdoin Street, asked if it was possible to work with the contractor to hook –up at the same time as the extension was being installed. Mr. Taverna stated that the City does not get involved in those negotiations but he would be willing to facilitate a meeting between the neighbors and the contractors.

Ald. Mansfield moved approval of the item with the condition that access to the homes be maintained, the street is paved from curb to curb and detours are provided. The motion carried unanimously.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#464-05(2) **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting a transfer of funds in the amount of \$130,228.79 from funds appropriated for the completed Lexington Street sewer extension project to an account for the purpose of funding emergency sewer construction, including extension of the sewer main on Wood End Road, Bowdoin Street, and Hillside Road in Newton Highlands. **NOTE: In accordance with Sec. 2-9 of the City Charter, the Mayor has declared this to be an emergency measure, necessary to protect the health of the people and property of the City of Newton, thereby requiring a separate vote.**

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: Lou Taverna and John Daghlian were present for the discussion of the funding of the above project. There was a brief discussion of the funding, as it was covered during the discussion of the above petition. The Committee asked that they be notified when the bids were in. Mr. Taverna explained that if the bids are higher than the estimated costs the difference would

come from the sewer operating budget. With that, Ald. Yates moved approval, which carried unanimously.

#246-05 ALD. LINSKY, SCHNIPPER, JOHNSON AND ALBRIGHT requesting a discussion with representative(s) of NStar regarding why sections of Newtonville seem to be experiencing ongoing brown-outs despite representations by NStar that service to the area has been improved.

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

NOTE: Joseph Walsh and Susan Soergel from NStar were present for the discussion of this item. The item was discussed on September 21, 2005 and held for further information (report attached). Mr. Walsh provided the Committee with the answers to questions raised at the earlier meeting and with information regarding the reliability of Circuit 277-08, which serves portions of Newtonville (attached). Ald. Linsky explained that the issue is the frequency of the outages in a rectangular area of Newtonville (list of area attached).

Ms. Soergel stated that there is no issue with capacity on Circuit 277-08; however, NStar will be reducing the load on the circuit in the near future. This will allow for a few more years of growth in the area. Ms. Soergel also explained that the new condominiums on the corner of Walnut Street and Otis Street will be on Circuit 277-08, which is a different circuit than the area that has had outages.

Ald. Albright pointed out that the main reason for the item is the outages on Otis Street, which is on different circuit than Circuit 277-08. Vicky Stein, 23 Otis Street, stated that she would really like to know why she has experienced reoccurring outages. Ald. Johnson would like answers regarding the outages in Newtonville. Ald. Schnipper asked if it was possible to get a list of the circuits and what homes are on what circuit. Ms. Soergel explained that NStar cannot give out that information for security reasons. Ald. Schnipper asked if NStar is given specific addresses could the circuit information be provided. Ms. Soergel responded that as long as there are specific addresses NStar can provide the circuit information. Ald. Johnson asked if it would be possible to give the number of homes on a circuit, such as the condominium circuit. NStar has received and reviewed the capacity of the circuit, which will serve the condominiums and there is enough capacity. Ald. Linksy, Albright and Johnson will compile a list of addresses for NStar to look at.

Ald. Salvucci asked if NStar can tell if there is an outage on a circuit. Ms. Soergel explained that if the circuit is not a high voltage line there is no remote sensor, therefore, NStar relies on phone calls from customers to determine if there is an outage.

Mr. Walsh will ask the NStar Engineering Department to look at all of the circuits in the Newtonville area and determine if there is a faulty circuit and if any have reliability issues. John Daghljan suggested that NStar look at service connections of specific addresses have reoccurring outages.

Ald. Yates moved hold on the item until NStar has checked the other circuits in Newtonville, which carried unanimously.

27-03 ALD. SALVUCCI, SCHNIPPER, LINSKY, STEWART, LAPPIN AND YATES
requesting a review of all change orders to date with Public Buildings
Commissioner and the Project Manager on the Newton South High School
project.

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

NOTE: The Committee voted the item no action necessary, as all change orders have been reviewed.

Chairman's Note: The Committee had a brief discussion with Mr. Walsh, NStar Customer Service Representative, regarding double pole removal. There are over 900 double poles in the City of Newton. NStar will be working on the removal of double poles on the north side of Newton in the first half of this year. NStar will be sending a contractor to remove the double poles and with the rate settlement, NStar will be able to recoup the cost of removing the poles. Mr. Walsh will provide the Committee with a list and report on the existing double poles.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman