

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2006

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

Also present: Ald. Harney, Lennon, Linsky and Sangiolo

City staff present: Lou Taverna (City Engineer), Rob Ricci (Community Preservation Planner), Danielle Bailey (Community Development Planner) and Shawna Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

#371-05      KIT YEE KWONG TAM, 24 Silver Lake Avenue, petitioning for laying out, grading and acceptance of SILVER LAKE AVENUE as a public way from the intersection of Adams Street easterly approximately 260' to the easterly property line of 24 Silver Lake Avenue.

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:**      Lou Taverna joined the Committee for discussion of this item. The petition was previously discussed in November and held in order to get input from other abutters who would be financially impacted if the street were accepted. Mr. Taverna has spoken with the two other abutters and they are not in favor of the street acceptance. The total estimated cost of the project is \$34,000, which would cover full depth reconstruction, curbing and sidewalks for 142' of roadway. Mr. Taverna believed that if the petition were approved the work would be done in the late summer or early fall and would occur on a Saturday.

Several Committee members asked what options the people in favor of the street acceptance would have if the petition were denied. Mr. Taverna explained that they would have the option to pay for reconstruction of the street without acceptance as a public way. The cost of these repairs would only be assessed to the homeowners who signed the petition for these types of repairs.

David Proia, 30 Silver Lake Avenue, spoke on the petition. He is in favor of making the street a public way. The road is traveled by the public on a daily basis. He feels very strongly that as a taxpayer, he should be able to drive on his own street without risking damage to his vehicle.

There was some concern regarding making a portion of the street a public way. Mr. Taverna stated that he has checked with the Law Department and there are several streets within the City, which are partially private. Ald. Weisbuch pointed out that no one in opposition of the petition has shown up for either of the meetings on the petition.

Ald. Gentile moved approval of the petition. He felt that as two of the four abutters were in favor of the petition and as one of the other abutters is a commercial property and has the means to pay the betterment the petition should be approved. The Committee was in agreement and voted to approve the petition unanimously.

#424-05      ALD. SANGIOLO & HARNEY requesting an update from the School Department regarding the energy audit that was begun during last year's budget review.

**ACTION:**      **HELD 8-0**

**NOTE:**      Michael Cronin, Ald. Sangiolo and Ald. Harney joined the Committee for the discussion of this item. Mr. Cronin reviewed the contents of the Day Middle School Energy Audit Report. The report includes recommendations for four conservation measures and five equipment capital investments at Day Middle School. Also included in the report is a study by Energy & Resource Solutions, Inc. for the Newton Public Schools, which is attached.

The largest use of electrical energy is the HVAC system at the school. The study recommends several options to reduce the energy consumption, which include minimizing the cooling of the building in August. If that is implemented it will have an immediate savings with no investment. In addition, the study recommends upgrading equipment and repairing the roof top units, which would require a minimal investment with payback within a short time.

Ald. Albright is concerned that there is no one to maintain the HVAC systems within the City. Mr. Cronin responded that he has spoken with the Public Buildings Commissioner regarding creating a position within the Public Buildings Department for an HVAC specialist. The Commissioner will be requesting funding for this type of position during budget discussions. The City needs to look at energy savings throughout the City's buildings, however, there will need to be funding in order to pursue this avenue of savings. In addition, the systems must be supported through City personnel or they will be neglected.

Mr. Cronin explained that there are several cost saving gains through implementation of energy conservation practices and upgrades in equipment at several schools. He was asked if he had any sense of the costs to replace systems within the schools. Mr. Cronin responded that each building is cost specific in terms of replacing the systems. However, most investments in energy conservation bring immediate payoffs for the investment. Ald. Sangiolo asked if there were an opportunity to prioritize replacement of the systems by which would bring the biggest savings. The roof top units at Day Middle School need to be replaced and when they are replaced will generate a large amount of savings. Ald. Weisbuch would like to see a portion of the savings generated by energy conservation go directly back into funding energy efficiency.

Eric Olson, Chair of the Citizens' Commission on Energy, urged the Board to push for funding for energy conservation. He also suggested using an energy conservation company to study all City buildings, as there are many available conservation savings that could be implemented at no cost or very little cost within all City buildings. He is aware that the Town of

Belmont used an energy conservation company to do a study and has implemented some of the recommendations. Former Alderman Lipsitt volunteered to contact the Town of Belmont for more information on the study and recommendations. Arvin Grabel of the Citizens' Commission on Energy spoke of the need to replace the roof top units at Day Middle School as the efficiency is going down every year. Deb Crossley of the Citizens' Commission on Energy stated that it is key that a systematic energy audit of all City facilities is performed at the level of the Day Middle School energy audit.

Ald. Gentile suggested that the Committee docket an item to further investigate the possible benefits of hiring an energy solutions company. All of the Committee members were in favor of docketing this item. Ald. Yates moved hold on the item for further discussion, which carried unanimously.

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES ON 03/20/06**

**REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRESERV. AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

#96-06 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$753,700 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding the *Stearns and Pellegrini Parks Phase I Improvements* recreation project.

**CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. APPROVED 7-0-1 (Linsky abstaining) ON 2/28/06**

**FINANCE APPROVED 5-0-3 (Linsky, Schnipper and Salvucci abstaining) SUBJECT TO SECOND CALL**

**ACTION: APPROVED AS AMENDED 5-3 @ \$723,138 (Albright, Salvucci and Mansfield opposed)**

**NOTE:** Danielle Bailey, Robert Ricchi and Charles MacMillan (Vice-chair of the Community Preservation Committee) joined the Committee for discussion of this item. The Board of Aldermen referred the item to the Public Facilities Committee at the previous Board meeting. It was referred to Public Facilities to determine whether it was possible to have in-house forces perform some of the work resulting in cost savings for the City. The project is a four-phase project and the first phase is spread over two years, with the understanding that the additional phases will be funded next year. There is no objection to the plans for the parks but there is concern that a large amount of CPA funds will be used for the project and there is a possibility that the next phases will not be funded.

Danielle Bailey reviewed the plans and funding for phase one of the project (attached.) CDBG funds will be used to fund new tennis courts and walkways at Stearns Park and the construction will be undertaken in 2006. The CPA funds will be used for improvement of accessibility for disabled citizens, the playgrounds, landscaping and curb appeal for the parks. In addition, the parking lot, water play area, picnic tables, the back portion of the play area and fencing at Pellegrini Park will be improved.

Ald. Mansfield pointed out that the Public Facilities Committee never approves an appropriation for a project without seeing the plans for the project. Mr. MacMillan spoke on the phasing of the project. \$619,000 will be carried over, which will allow the project managers to plan for the future. The Community Preservation Committee has committed to the phasing of the project. The additional funding for the project will be presented to the Board in July of this year for approval. Ald. Linsky pointed out that the design numbers seem high and he is not sure what a reasonable design fee is. He also questioned whether the same designer should oversee the project. Several other Aldermen felt that the 15% figure for design fees should be reduced. Ald. Schnipper asked what would happen if the second phase were not approved. Ms. Bailey explained that each of the phases can stand alone and only the work that is funded would be performed. Ald. Albright suggested prioritizing the project.

The Committee members asked Mr. Taverna if it was possible for the Public Works Department to do some of the work. Ms. Bailey responded that it is not possible for the Public Works Department to perform the work at Stearns Park but it was possible for the parking lot at Pellegrini Park to be done by Public Works. Mr. Taverna explained that the Public Works Department is willing to construct the parking lot and the cost savings would be approximately \$40,000. He went on to state that he would have Mr. Mula, the Construction Inspector, check on the project every day.

Ald. Gentile suggested amending the amount of the item by reducing the design fee to 12.5% for design and oversight. Ald. Gentile moved approval of the item with the amendment that the amount be reduced by \$30,562. Several Committee members requested that the construction documents be presented to the Board before the funding of phase two of the project is approved and also that the Law Department confirm that the parking lot can be constructed by the Public Works Department. The motion carried by a vote of 5-3.

#113-06      ALD. SALVUCCI requesting an amendment to the City of Newton Ordinances §26-50(c) relative to minor temporary repairs by striking the word qualifying allowing the Commissioner of Public Works to fill potholes on all private ways.

**ACTION:**      **NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0 (Weisbuch not voting)**

**NOTE:**      Ald. Salvucci moved the item no action necessary, as he has spoken with the Commissioner of Public Works and his concerns can be addressed without an amendment to the ordinances. Therefore, the Committee voted the item no action necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman