

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2006

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

Also present: Ald. Hess-Mahan

City personnel: Lou Taverna (City Engineer), David Turocy (Deputy Commissioner Public Works), David Tannozzini (Energy Officer), Gayle Smalley (Associate City Solicitor), Sandy Pooler (Chief Administrative Officer), Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer), Dori Zaleznik (School Committee Member), and Ann Lerner (School Committee Member)

#269-06      COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Ch. 40, Sec. 15, abandonment of a City drain easement in the middle of the property at 21 BERKELEY STREET and acceptance of a 25' wide at the front and rear yard and 17.5' wide along the side yard drain easement to be located on the west side of the property.

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 6-0 (Gentile and Yates not voting)**

**NOTE:**      Gayle Smalley and Lou Taverna joined the Committee for discussion of items #269-06 and #269-06(2). The two items are very closely related and should be discussed in conjunction. The request from the Public Works Commissioner is to abandon an easement located on private property and accept a new easement on the same property. The Puckers would like to relocate the main drain located in the middle of the property and locate it in the proposed new easement on the west side of the property in order to reconstruct a garage.

The proposed drain easement is 25' wide at the front yard and 17.5' wide along the side yard. The City Engineer has reviewed the design and it meets all of the City's requirements. The Commissioner of Public Works does not believe that the current easement has any current or future value to the City of Newton as long as the proposed easement is approved. The Commissioner also requested that the Board of Aldermen set zero dollars as the minimum amount to be paid for the abandonment.

Ald. Salvucci asked if the City could accommodate the main drain on the public way. Mr. Taverna responded that the physical topography would not allow the drain to run down the street and there is no other alternative. Ald. Salvucci asked if the City would be paying for the new main drain. Mr. Taverna explained that the owners have requested the relocation and the City does not need to take any action with the drain if it were to remain the same. Therefore, the owners of the property will bear the entire cost of the project.

Attorney Jason Rosenberg further explained that the current drain easement runs right through the middle of the property rendering it unbuildable. The City has a very old-fashioned easement, which is very vague. It would be good to rectify the vague easement. The property owners' title company will pay for the entire project and the City will gain a new drain. Everybody benefits and there is no cost to either the City or the property owners.

Ald. Yates asked if the new drain would work as well as the current drain. Mr. Taverna responded that there is enough slope for the new drain to function as well as if not better than the current drain. With that, Ald. Lappin moved approval of both #269-06 and #269-06(2), which carried unanimously.

#269-06(2) KENNETH AND LESLIE PUCKER, 21 Berkeley Street, West Newton, petitioning to construct a main drain from a proposed manhole through a proposed easement on the west side of the property at 21 BERKELEY STREET to the Myrtle Brook Drain Easement.

**PETITIONER TO PAY ENTIRE COST**

**ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (Gentile and Yates not voting)**

**NOTE:** See above note.

#159-06 PRESIDENT BAKER & ALD. SCHNIPPER presenting the City of Newton Energy Action Plan for review and such action that may be appropriate by the Board of Aldermen.

**ACTION: HELD 8-0**

**NOTE:** The Citizens' Commission on Energy joined the Committee for the presentation of the Energy Action Plan. Halina Brown presented the main ideas of the Energy Action Plan in a PowerPoint presentation. The Commission has worked on the plan for two years and unveiled it last November. The Energy Action Plan is available in the Clerk's Office or online at <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/sunergy/EAP021005.pdf> should anyone wish to review it.

The Public Facilities Committee reviewed the Citizens' Commission on Energy's Energy Action Plan. The Energy Action Plan provides a guide to action for both the community and the municipal sector. The object of the plan is to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. There are financial, environmental and health benefits if Newton is successful in the reductions. The Commission has set two goals to be met by 2010. The first is to reduce energy use and greenhouse emissions in the community to 7% below the base year of 1998, which is a reduction of 160,000 tons of greenhouse gas per year. The second goal is to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions within the municipal sector to 20% below the base year of 1998, which is a 15% reduction in energy use from the current annual rate. The Commission believes both goals are attainable, as Newton is recognized for its environmental leadership and there still are many opportunities to reduce energy consumption.

Ald. Salvucci suggested that the Citizens' Commission on Energy investigate the mechanicals for the proposed Newton North High School and make recommendations to the Board. Deborah Crossley of the Citizens' Commission on Energy explained that the Commission is working with the High Performance Building Committee regarding the proposed high school. Ald. Yates had several suggestions for additions to the plan, which he provided to the Committee (attached). Ald. Yates also felt that it would be beneficial if the Energy Action Plan were part of the Comprehensive Plan. It would be a useful guidance tool for city policies. Ald. Mansfield agreed with Ald. Yates. It is also useful to think of what the Citizens' Commission on Energy can advise the Board on, such as Land use petitions. The Chair asked the members of the Citizens' Commission on Energy if they could see themselves in an advisory role. The Chair, Eric Olson, responded that they would like an advisory role. There are many organizations out there to help the City make the right choices in energy systems and the Commission is familiar with them. Deb Crossley suggested that the Commission have input into the site plan review process for special permits. Halina Brown felt it would be most useful if the Commission advised on policy rather than a case-by-case basis.

The Energy Action Plan also includes a piece on street lighting. George Woodbury from Lite Smart Consulting gave a PowerPoint presentation of the street lighting options (attached). It is the intent to get rid of the mercury vapor bulbs by 2008. Studies show that streetlights that are the right color and provide the right level of light give drivers better visibility. Newton is over lit and there is no uniformity in the types of light bulbs used.

There are many different types of bulbs to choose from depending on which is most suitable. Mr. Schuckel explained that guidelines need to be established for the types of bulbs used. The thought is to assign bulbs based on the class of roadway. Compact fluorescent or QL bulbs would be used on residential streets and high-pressure sodium bulbs would be used for arterials. Mr. Schuckel also stated that the Fire Department has been involved with the discussions on street lighting options and is onboard with the changes. The City will save \$500,000 in energy costs per year after implementing the changes. NStar is offering an energy conservation grant that Newton is eligible to apply for, which funds 45% of project costs.

The Chair thanked the Citizens' Commission on Energy for all of their hard work on the Energy Action Plan. The Committee opted to hold the item for further discussion on both the energy reduction portion and the street lighting portions.

#160-06      PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE requesting that the City further investigate possible benefits of hiring an energy savings performance contractor for possible energy conservation and cost saving.

**ACTION:**      **HELD 8-0**

**NOTE:**      David Anderson of Amaresco gave a PowerPoint presentation (attached) on energy savings performance contracts. Energy savings performance contracting provides cities and towns with the option of hiring an energy services company to reduce energy use and cost without using capital funds. The energy services company guarantees energy savings and when

the contract has ended the city or town receives all of the continued savings. Mr. Anderson provided case studies to highlight the flexibility the city will have in addressing energy saving mechanisms depending on what the city wants to address. Amaresco's mission is to deliver long-term value to the customer through innovative technologies and strategies.

Energy service contracting is a way for the city to implement energy conservation. Costs are paid entirely by the energy service company. The company comes in assesses all of the facilities and come up with a comprehensive plan. The company would do the design, engineering, construction and maintenance to the extent the city wanted it maintained. Training is an option on implemented systems. The most typical way of funding the contract is through a tax-exempt municipal lease. The city will own all of the new equipment. The energy contractor will guarantee the savings, which means if the savings are not met; the energy service company will cover the difference. Although, the energy services contractor only guarantees energy savings not money savings, which may mean the city will end up paying if energy costs rise.

Louise Bruyn asked how much can the City depend on Amaresco still existing in twenty years. Mr. Anderson responded that there is no guarantee but would hope the company still existed. Dan Rubin, Vice-president of the Green Decade Coalition, spoke on hiring an energy performance service contractor. He is a strong supporter as energy prices are soaring and the city will be in much better shape if it can cut energy consumption. Chris Hill, member of STAND for Children, stated that he strongly supports hiring an energy services contractor. He is worried that the city will attempt to do it on its own and miss opportunities.

This is the first presentation by an energy savings performance contractor, as the Committee plans to hear other presentations by others it opted to hold the item.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman