

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2004

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chairman), Albright, Salvucci, Stewart, Yates, Mansfield and Lappin
Ald. Gerst attended the Programs & Services Committee meeting

Also Present: Ald. Baker

City personnel present: Nicholas Parnell (Commissioner of Public Buildings), Robert Rooney (Commissioner of Public Works), Lou Taverna (Director of Utilities), Elaine Gentile (Director of Environmental Affairs; Dept. of Public Works), Karen Griffey (Business Manager, Utilities Division) and Shawna Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

#64-04 PRESIDENT BAKER recommending PETER BARRER, 24 Hazelton Road, Newton Centre, be re-appointed as an Aldermanic appointee to the DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE, term of office to expire 12/31/05 (60-day Board action date 3/20/04).

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: Mr. Barrer was present for the discussion of his reappointment to the Design Review Committee. His resume was attached to the agenda for review by the Committee. Mr. Barrer spoke about the Design Review Committee's involvement in the Newton South renovations. In particular, he highlighted the use of energy efficient systems and green practices put in to place at Newton South High School

Ald. Yates asked if Mr. Barrer was aware of the air quality issues at Newton North High School. Mr. Barrer is aware of the problems and thinks it is one of the rationales for rebuilding the school or building a new high school. Ald. Yates asked if it was within the purview of the Design Review Committee to look at the existing building and give guidance on how to correct the problem until the building is changed. Mr. Barrer responded that Design Review's charge is to review designs and projects that have been approved by the City. Therefore, it is probably not within the Design Review Committee's charge. Ald. Yates asked Mr. Barrer to keep the existing conditions at Newton North in mind, as it is not certain how the City will proceed. Mr. Barrer stated that it is a complex problem and much more serious than whether the vents are covered with books.

Ald. Stewart asked if people involved in the building profession were in agreement with the agenda of the Green Decade Coalition. Mr. Barrer stated that to his knowledge, the only issue is cost effectiveness. Ald. Yates moved approval of the item, which carried unanimously. The Committee thanked Mr. Barrer for his service to the City.

#124-04 PRESIDENT BAKER recommending Mark Chudy, 34 Prescott Street, Newtonville be appointed as an Aldermanic appointee to the Design Review Committee for a term of office to expire 12/31/05 (60-day Board action date 04/17/04).

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: Mr. Chudy was present for the discussion of his appointment to the Design Review Committee. He has over thirty years of experience as an electrical engineer. He has been involved in the design of several lighting and telecommunication systems for educational facilities. At this point in his life, he has the time to give back to the community. The Committee had previously reviewed the resume attached to the agenda and felt that Mr. Chudy was a good fit for the Design Review Committee. Ald. Yates moved approval, which carried unanimously. The Committee thanked Mr. Chudy for his willingness to serve on the Design Review Committee.

#105-04 ALD SCHNIPPER requesting a discussion with members of the Designer Selection Committee regarding selection of an architect for Newton North High School.

ACTION: **HELD 6-1 (Stewart opposed)**

NOTE: Joe Michelson, Arthur Cohen and Albert Fine of the Designer Selection Committee, and Nick Parnell were present for the discussion. The Chairman explained that the Committee was interested in the kind of process the Designer Selection Committee will be going through to select an architect for the new high school. The Designer Selection Committee and Design Review Committee will be meeting jointly regarding the project. Joe Michelson explained that at the most recent meetings most of the discussion has focused on how the project will be delivered. There is some question whether the project will be done through Chapter 149 or some other means of delivery service. There are different methods of delivering a product utilizing public bidding but not utilizing public sub-bid. Other cities and towns have requested and received exemptions from parts of Chapter 149 through special legislation. This would give the contractor the opportunity to choose their own sub-contractors. It would also open the project to more architects because certain architects do not like to work under Chapter 149 sub-bid file. The way the project is delivered will determine the type of architect the City will get for the project.

Arthur Cohen stated that the State has formed a commission to review Chapter 149 and make recommendations regarding amendments. Mr. Cohen also stated that with a project of this magnitude there are not a lot of qualified contractors that do public construction. He also stated that regardless of delivery of the project the City needed to give the architect and contractor enough time to do the work.

There has also been discussion at Designer Selection meetings about splitting the building phases in order to allow different contractors for each phase. If the City were to do this, they would need to carry scheduling contingencies. The Designer Selection Committee is currently reviewing RFQs and looking at the qualifications and experience need for this type of architectural project. They are also looking carefully at the consultants for architects.

The Chairman asked what the Designer Selection Committee's reaction was to an architectural contest for the design of the high school. Arthur Cohen stated that it is not realistic to have a full-blown free for all contest but they are discussing modifications to an open competition. Mr. Fine responded that a contest adds a layer of politics and complexity. There are only a few architects in the area capable of this type of large project. The Committee would like to see the question of a competition laid to rest. The Designer Selection Committee will have a formal reply regarding a contest after their next meeting. Mr. Anatol Zuckerman submitted a letter to the Committee supporting a competition for design (attached). He also spoke in favor of the idea of a contest. He feels that it is a good way to get the best possible design. Ald. Sangiolo also submitted a letter to the Committee requesting that the Designer Selection Committee consider holding a citywide or statewide competition (attached).

Ald. Yates moved hold on the item for further updates and information on the progress the Designer Selection Committee is making in selecting an architect. Ald. Stewart felt that it was not necessary to hold the item, as the information requested was provided. The other members of the Committee felt that it would be useful to have further updates. The motion to hold was approved. Nick Parnell announced to the Committee that there will be a tour of Newton South High School on March 20 at 10 AM and anyone interested should meet at the front of the school. The Committee also felt that it would be helpful to tour Newton North High School and have an opportunity to speak with the faculty regarding the air quality. The School Department will need to be contacted regarding this and a time set up where the faculty is available.

#144-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the area along UNION STREET in Newton Centre be designated as Picadilly Square.

ACTION: **HELD 7-0**

NOTE: Ald. Mansfield asked that the item be held until he had an opportunity to discuss it with the Mayor. Therefore, the Committee voted unanimously to hold the item.

#106-04 ALD. GERST requesting a report on proposed improvements to the Utilities Department's meter reading and bill procedures.

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0**

NOTE:

Karen Griffey, Lou Taverna and Commissioner Rooney were present for the discussion of this item. The Commissioner reviewed the restructuring and goals of the Utilities Division of the Department of Public Works. The management staff is focusing on streamlining different processes within the division. It is the hope that a 100% actual meter read can be achieved. The staff will cross train and strengthen problem-solving skills. There will be a general review of the policies and there will be possible changes in those policies.

The Utilities Director and backflow technicians have been relocated from City Hall to the Elliot Street Yard and the plan is to relocate the meter readers, as well. The number of readers and technicians will be reinforced and current job descriptions reviewed. The water permits have been consolidated into the Engineering Division. The office has been renovated to create better working conditions.

There was some question if the changes within the Division qualified as a reorganization. After review of the Charter, it was decided that as there was no change to any ordinances it could be classified as a restructuring. The Committee was pleased with the progress made in solving problems within the Utilities Division. Ald. Yates moved no action necessary, which carried unanimously. Ald. Stewart recently provided further information on architectural design competitions, which is attached to the report.

#499-03

ALD. BAKER, BASHAM, MANSFIELD, JOHNSON, & PARKER requesting discussion of incentives for recycling of waste not currently recycled so as to reduce costs to the city and increase the amount of recycled articles with a minimum of administrative cost or homeowner inconvenience.

ACTION:

NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0

NOTE:

Elaine Gentile, Commissioner Rooney and President Baker were present for the discussion of this item. President Baker and the co-docketors filed this item to investigate ways to enhance recycling in the City. The Commissioner stated that more and more fees will be charged for trash collection as the cost of disposing of trash is on the rise. Currently, the City spends approximately \$6,000,000 a year on trash. The City's 20 year favorable contract is expiring in four years. When the contract expires, the City will need to decide what direction the City needs to go in terms of disposal and fees. The cost of disposing of trash has been rising at a rate of 3-5% per year. Residents can put almost anything out for trash collection. The more we can take out the less the cost to the City. The Commissioner heard loud and clear the Board's message that they would prefer not to charge more fees. Ald. Stewart stated that he is in favor of a fee for trash, and would like to explore that possibility. One of the ways to avoid the fees is to provide for voluntary removal and the Public Works Department has investigated different ways to provide for the voluntary removal.

Ald. Yates has noticed that there are items put out for recycling that should be brought to the Rumford Avenue Recycling Center. He asked if there were stickers that could be placed on those items. The Commissioner responded that a sticker program is being implemented in the upcoming week. He provided the Committee with a handout of the various stickers (attached).

Elaine Gentile provided the Committee with the recycling initiatives including on-going programs and planned programs, a draft list of odd materials that can be recycled, reused or donated and a list of possible items to swap and recycle at a proposed recycling and reuse day (attached). She has begun to drive through the streets looking at trash and categorizing it. She is looking for what people put out for bulk items and what they are recycling in order to analyze it and find ways to encourage residents to increase recycling. White good collection has begun and the City has extracted over 35 tons from the waste stream as of February 20th. The City has started a recycling re-education in the municipal buildings and is in discussion with the School Department to begin one at the schools. Ms. Gentile has met with all Departments regarding source reduction. The source reduction program has resulted in an 8% reduction in the purchase of paper. Ms. Gentile reviewed the list of draft odd materials and explained that once the list is cleaned up it will be on the City website.

Ald. Baker was very pleased with the ongoing and proposed recycling initiatives.
Ald. Yates moved no action necessary on the item, which carried unanimously.

#15-04 ALD. BAKER requesting discussion and planning of upcoming committee agendas, process, future work, and how to streamline committee work on minor or routine approvals in order to allow time to focus on more major or non-routine matters.

ACTION: **HELD 6-0 (Salvucci not voting)**

NOTE: The item was held without discussion.

All other items were held without discussion. The Committee adjourned at 10:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman