

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2003

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chairman), Gerst, Linsky, Salvucci, Stewart, Yates, Mansfield and Lappin

Also present: Ald. Fischman and Lennon

City personnel present: Mayor Cohen, Fran Towle (Commissioner of Parks and Recreation) and Robert Rooney (Commissioner of Public Works)

#395-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, ALD. LIPOF, LAPPIN AND FISCHMAN
requesting that the traffic island at the intersection of Baldpate Hill Road, Dudley Street and Brookline Street be named the Richard B. Ross Memorial Square.

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Mayor Cohen and John Rotenberg, Mr. Ross' brother-in-law, joined the Committee for discussion of this item. Mayor Cohen explained that over the past few years the City has tried to ease the suffering due to September 11, 2001. He feels that a memorial to Mr. Ross, who was aboard one of the planes that hit the World Trade Center, would be a way to help Mr. Ross' family heal.

Mr. Ross lived on Baldpate Hill Road; therefore, the intersection would be the perfect place for a memorial. Dr. Goldman, who is a resident of Baldpate Hill Road, tends to the island and would be very pleased to have the island named after Mr. Ross. The entire neighborhood is in support of the naming and the Mayor feels it is the right thing to do. Ald. Fischman and Lappin both know the family well and feel it is a wonderful tribute to a great person.

Mr. Rotenberg told the Committee about Mr. Ross and his contributions to the community. Mr. Ross was a community activist and very involved in coaching little league, basketball and soccer. He was also a mentor for many young people getting their start in business.

Ald. Yates asked if it would be possible to place a placard at the site explaining who Mr. Ross was. The Committee thought that was a great idea but questioned where the money for the placard would come from. The Mayor explained that the Department of Public Works had agreed to handle the cost. Ald. Lappin moved approval of the item, which passed unanimously.

#339-03 ALD. SALVUCCI on behalf of Anthony R. Cucchi, requesting that the square at Watertown and Adams Streets be named San Donato Square.

ACTION: **HELD 7-1 (Salvucci opposed)**

NOTE: This item was previously held in order to have a public hearing on the item. Ald. Salvucci explained that this is a request for a memorial to the ancestors of Nonantum residents from San Donato. There is a large portion of the population in that area who are descendants of people from San Donato. Ald. Stewart felt that the people in the neighborhood should decide the naming by hearing the views and opinions of those people.

The Chair opened the public hearing and Mr. Edward Gourdeau, 80 Dalby Street, spoke. He is extremely passionate that the square not be named San Donato Square. He is concerned that during World War II Italy fought against the United States and was anti-Semitic at the time. He is a descendant of San Donato and has visited there. He feels that it would be more appropriate to name the square after a veteran, and place signs at the entrance of the City declaring San Donato Newton's sister city.

Mr. Gino Luchetti, 52 Clinton Street, read a letter from his grandfather, Anthony Pellegrini, into the record. The letter stated Mr. Pellegrini's strong objection to the naming of the square. He would like the signs to be placed at either end of the City.

Anthony Pellegrini, Jr., 56 Clinton Street, also spoke against the petition. He feels it is not in the best interest of the City to single out one group of immigrants. Mr. Pellegrini also submitted a petition from Newton residents opposed to the naming of the square (attached).

Mr. Cucchi explained that he has been to San Donato and the people are not anti-Semitic or communists. He was proposing naming the square because San Donato is Newton's sister city and that should be recognized. He pointed out that he had provided a petition signed by people in favor of the sign (attached).

Ald. Salvucci stated that he feels that because it was Mr. Cucchi's idea and not someone else's there is a lot of opposition to the sign. Ald. Stewart would like to know what the objection is to putting the sign at the entrances of the City. Ald. Salvucci said that there is supposed to be unveiling of a sign on Watertown Street at the border of Newton and Watertown. Ald. Gerst thought it seemed like a wonderful idea but did not want to approve the petition if there was a great deal of objection to it. He thought that perhaps it could be an advisory ballot question. Ald. Yates voiced his opinion that it was a nice thing to do but it seemed distressing to some. He felt that we should contact the Sister Cities Organization and see if they had any information or parameters on recognizing sister cities. Ald. Stewart asked if it was possible to come up with a consensus between the

two parties. Ald. Salvucci felt that this was unlikely. Ald. Gerst moved hold until there was a clearer sense from the community on what should be done.

#141-03 ALD. YATES requesting a report form the Commissioners of Public Works and Parks and Recreation on the restoration of the Robert Braceland Playground to full use in the spring.

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 8-0**

NOTE: Ald. Yates moved no action necessary on this item, as the playground has been fully restored.

#139-03 ALD. YATES requesting a re-study of snow dump sites within the City considering improved efficiency, proximity to sites to be cleared and lessened neighborhood impact.

ACTION: **HELD 8-0**

NOTE: Commissioners Rooney and Towle were present for discussion of this item. Ald. Yates explained that the recent letter regarding snow dumpsites that was provided to the Aldermen does not appear to be what was agreed upon. He would like the sites to be numbered in the order they will be used, with the Braceland Playground being the last site.

Commissioner Rooney explained that it is not easy to add or remove sites from the list. The sites on the list have been the same for many years and they have served the City well. Fortunately, the City has not had to use all of the sites. He went on to explain that the Public Works Department's sites are used before the parks. The Rumford Avenue site is used first until capacity is reached. Nahanton Park is being prepared for use as one of the first non-city sites used when capacity has been reached at all the City sites. The site at Nahanton has been changed to off Winchester Street where there are no residences. The Commissioner does not want to predict which sites will be used but all things being equal Nahanton Park will be used after the Rumford and Elliot Street Yards. Commissioner Towle explained that City officials and community groups picked these sites in 1997.

Ald. Schnipper felt that a playground for children should be the last option as a dumping site as it is expensive to repair. Ald. Stewart asked if there was any equipment the City could purchase to melt the snow so it did not have to be dumped. Commissioner Rooney explained that there is equipment but it is very expensive and the melted snow would be contaminated, therefore, it could not be dumped in the drains.

Ald. Lappin suggested moving the playground to the last site on the list. Commissioner Rooney explained that the list was not in the order they would be using for dumpsites. It is the Commissioner's hope that there will be no need to use the playground this year.

Ald. Yates would like a letter for the record from the Commissioner stating that the Braceland Playground will only be used if absolutely necessary.

Commissioner Rooney responded that the Committee report would provide the record. The Committee felt that a letter would be useful and Ald. Yates moved hold until a letter was provided.

All other items were held without discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman