

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 2002

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

Absent: Ald. Gerst

Also present: Ald. Baker, Bryson, Samuelson, Parker, Basham and Lipsitt

City personnel: Bob Rooney (Commissioner of Public Works), Gayle Smalley (Associate City Solicitor), Juris Alksnitis (Planning), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer) and Edward Murphy (Fire Chief)

#208-02      KEYSPAN petitioning for a grant of location to install 170' of 4" gas main in OLD FARM ROAD from the existing 6" gas main in Oak Hill Street at Old Farm Road west to house No. 170.

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 6-0 (Mansfield Not Voting)**

**NOTE:**      Fran O'Leary, Keyspan Permit Representative, presented the petition to the Committee. The owners of 170 Old Farm Road are converting to gas and the service will provide heat and hot water. The Department of Public Works had no conflicts with the petition. The public hearing was opened and no one spoke for or against the petition. Ald. Salvucci moved approval, which passed unanimously.

#209-02      BOSTON COLLEGE requesting modifications to the pedestrian crosswalks at the intersection of HAMMOND STREET, BEACON STREET and COLLEGE ROAD (in conjunction with special permit petition #90-00)

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 5-0-1 (Yates Abstaining; Mansfield Not Voting)**

**NOTE:**      This request is related to a condition of Special Permit Board Order #220-01, which requires Boston College to petition to reconstruct the intersection and modify the crosswalks at Beacon Street, Hammond Street and College. Several representatives from Boston College, Vanasse Associates and Baker Design Group were present for discussion of this item. The new design of the intersection will enhance pedestrian safety.

The crosswalk at the corner of Hammond Street, which crosses the width of Hammond Street and College Road will be relocated 20' northwest on Hammond Street and a crosswalk will be added on College Road. This will eliminate a wide

crossing and will separate the pedestrians and vehicles as much as possible. Hammond Street at that point is a one way and pedestrians will only have to look in one direction. The cast iron fence along Beacon Street will be continued to close access routes to McElroy Hall. The crossings will be clearly marked with luminaires. The sight lines at the crossings are much improved and all access ramps will be rebuilt.

Ald. Baker raised several concerns. The access to Beacon Street from McElroy hall will be moved further away from the intersection requiring students to walk further to reach the crosswalk at Beacon Street. Ald. Yates and Baker felt this would encourage people to cross the street without using a crosswalk. It was explained that this was the best design for pedestrian safety.

The sidewalks where the proposed crosswalk on Hammond Street is to be located are not continuous. Ald. Baker would like sidewalks to be installed to the corner of Beacon Street on both sides of Hammond Street. A representative of Boston College explained that the original plans included sidewalks but Roy LaMotte asked that they be removed in order to promote the correct flow of pedestrian traffic. Commissioner Rooney explained that it is the intent of the Department of Public Works to put sidewalks in Hammond Street when it is reconstructed.

The Committee requested a memo from Roy Lamotte regarding the sidewalk on Hammond Street (Attached). Ald. Salvucci moved approval of the item, which was approved.

#210-02      VERIZON petitioning for a grant of location to place a pole anchor guy at pole185/12 on Grove Street

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 5-1 (Schnipper Opposed)**

**NOTE:**      Gary Savignano of Verizon was present for the discussion of this item. The petition is for a pole anchor and guy wire to relieve strain on the pole. The pole is leaning over an intersection and is very dangerous. Ald. Schnipper reiterated her concerns regarding the safety of guy wires. The Committee felt that the guy wire was necessary because of the danger of the leaning pole. The public hearing was opened and no one spoke for or against the petition. The Department of Public Works had no conflicts with this petition. Ald. Stewart moved approval of the item, which passed by a vote of five in favor and one opposed.

#211-02      VERIZON petitioning for a grant of location to install a guy and anchor to be placed on the westerly side of Allison Street at pole 15/6.

**ACTION:**      **APPROVAL FAILED TO CARRY 2-3-1 (Schnipper, Yates, Lappin Opposed; Linsky Abstaining; Mansfield Not Voting)**

**NOTE:** Gary Savignano was present for discussion of this petition. This is a petition to install a guy and anchor as required by Verizon's engineering standards. Their standards require that a guy and anchor should be placed on the first and last poles in a string. The Committee asked who was liable if a pole topples after refusal of a guy wire. Gaylen Smalley gave an informal answer that it is the liability of the primary pole owner.

The public hearing was opened and no one spoke for or against the petition. The Department of Public Works had no conflicts with this petition. Ald. Stewart moved approval of the item, which failed to carry

#212-02 NSTAR petitioning for a grant of location to install approximately 370' of conduit from pole 413/6 to 413/9 in Sumner Street and Commonwealth Avenue.

**ACTION:** **HELD 7-0**

**NOTE:** Docket Item #213-02 was discussed in conjunction with this item as they are related. Maureen Carroll of NStar and Gary Savignano of Verizon were present for discussion of this item. NStar is requesting a grant of location to install conduit in Sumner Street and Commonwealth Avenue. They are also planning to place a transformer on a pole on Sumner Street and Verizon is petitioning for a guy and anchor to prevent strain on that pole.

The public hearings for both petitions were opened and no one spoke for or against them. The Department of Public Works has no conflict with the Verizon petition. However, the Department of Public Works is concerned that Commonwealth Avenue was reconstructed three years ago. They are recommending approval of the NStar petition with street reconstruction per street opening requirements. They will require flowable fill, mill and overlay, infared of all joints, complete thermoplastic traffic marking replacement and complete traffic signal loop repairs and any other necessary reconstruction. Maureen Carroll could not state whether NStar would be willing to agree to these requirements. She will speak with representatives of NStar and let the Committee know.

The Committee held both items, as the Verizon petition will be unnecessary if NStar is not willing to restore the street to Public Works' standards.

#213-02 VERIZON petitioning for a grant of location to place guy and anchor on the easterly side 53' southerly at existing pole 413/9 on Sumner Street.

**ACTION:** **HELD 7-0**

**NOTE:** See above note.

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#55-02 ALD. YATES requesting that the water/sewer discount rate be made available to homeowners who receive Fuel Assistance, Supplementary Security Income, Food Stamps, Supplementary Disability Income, General Relief, Low Income Sewer and Water Assistance, School Breakfast and Lunch and other income based State and Federal programs.

**ACTION:** **HELD 7-0**

**NOTE:** Gayle Smalley was present for the discussion of this item. Ald. Yates has observed that the subsidies that the City offers are not utilized. They are not well advertised and in order to obtain them it is a lengthy process. He feels that if the water/sewer discount rate is tied to various federal and state programs more people will benefit.

In 1989 the Board of Aldermen adopted the water/sewer discount. It was proposed that it be piggybacked on four different tax programs, the largest being 41A. If the Board is to implement different discounts, there are legal considerations. Under state law the rates must be just and equitable. The federal requirements allow water/sewer discounts for low income but there must be notice, the cost must be distributed to other users or a person must fall below the federal poverty line or receive state aid.

The Committee supports the item but more research is needed. Ald. Yates moved hold, which passed unanimously.

#401-01 ALD. BRYSON requesting a discussion regarding the naming/dedication as a Veterans' Memorial of one of the two traffic islands located at the intersection of Lexington Street and Commonwealth Avenue.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 7-0**

**NOTE:** Ald. Bryson joined the Committee for discussion of the item. A flagpole will be added to the traffic island between Keyes Drugstore and the Mobil Station. The flagpole is to be dedicated to the veterans of Auburndale, as well as all Newton Veterans. The Auburndale Community Association will fund the flagpole. The flag will fly all of the time and lighting will be provided at night. Please see the attached information. Ald. Lappin moved approval of the item, which passed unanimously.

**REFERRED TO PS&T, PUBFACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#244-02 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$140,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of installing vehicle exhaust ventilation systems in the City's six firehouses.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 7-0**

**NOTE:** Chief Murphy presented the item to the Committee. The Public Safety and Transportation Committee approved the item this evening. There are six firehouses in the City of Newton that are fifty years or older and have little or no ventilation. Approximately 15 to 20 years ago the Public Buildings Department installed crude ventilation systems, which takes the heat as well as some of exhaust out of these buildings.

All of the trucks run on diesel fuel, which is the most cancer causing exhaust. The state has tested the exhaust levels in the stations and it is high. The new equipment attaches right to the apparatus and little or no exhaust escapes into the fire stations. Ald. Lappin moved approval of the item, which passed unanimously.

**REFERRED TO PUB. FAC. & FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#225-02(2) **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting that the FY03 Street Light account be reduced by the sum of \$157,000 and that this sum be transferred to the NEXUS transportation fund for FY03.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 6-0-1 (Stewart Abstaining)**

**NOTE:** Juris Alksnitis was present for the discussion of this item. The transfer is necessary in order to fund the Nexus. The money removed from the street light account will be replaced with funds from the parking meter receipts account.

The Committee had a brief discussion regarding Nexus service. Nexus is now geared towards senior transportation but there will be a fixed route, which runs Monday through Friday from 12:00 pm to 5:30 pm. Attached is a memo from Ald. Samuelson urging the Committee to approve the item and a chart with Newton's public transportation information. Ald. Yates moved approval of the item and the motion carried.

**REFERRED TO PUB. FAC. & FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#225-02(3) **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting that the sum of \$70,000 be appropriated from Parking Meter Receipts for the purpose of funding the FY03 street light account.

**ACTION:** **HELD 7-0**

**NOTE:** This item was held at the request of the Executive Office.

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#124-02(3) **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** submitting proposed FY03 Water/Sewer rates for Board of Aldermen approval.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 6-0-(Salvucci Not Voting)**

**NOTE:**

This was a continuation of the public hearing on June 17, 2002. Ald. Parker, Lipsitt and Basham were present for discussion of this item. Mr. Pooler asked that the Committee approve the rates without the condo shift, in order to give the Board time to consider other policy changes. Ald. Parker suggested a more progressive rate structure but the rates still reflected the condo shift. Mr. Pooler pointed out that Ald. Parker would need to adjust his figures.

The Committee decided to docket an item for discussion regarding more progressive rates and the condo shift. Ald. Yates moved approval of the water/sewer rates, which carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman