

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ZONING AND PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 2005

Present: Ald. Yates (Chairman), Ald. Lennon, Hess-Mahan, Danberg, Sangiolo, and Johnson;
absent: Baker and Lappin

City staff: Ann Cornaro, Director of Information Technology and Joseph Mulvey, Assistant
Director of Information Technology; Mike Rourke, Chief Administrative Officer; Mike Kruse,
Director of Planning & Development; Michael Baseman, Assistant City Solicitor

#472-04 ALD. LENNON & SALVUCCI requesting an updated from the Executive
Department about the status of the ongoing reorganization of the Inspectional
Services Department and the search for an Inspectional Services Commissioner.

ACTION: HELD 6-0

NOTE: Alderman Lennon explained at length the concerns that he has heard raised by frequent customers of ISD. They claim that questions are long delayed in being answered, that a petition may be reviewed and one piece of individual information sought only to have more questions raised when that one is delivered, thus costing unnecessary time when supporting materials can not be developed simultaneously, that there is no set of uniform answers even to fairly basic questions, and that staff seem dismayed by customers' presence. Mr. Rourke responded that the re-organization was not complete and that the effective functioning of the Department has been impaired by the long absence of the Commissioner and the requirement that the Chief Inspector/Plans Examiner should also serve as Acting Commissioner. He also explained some details of the way the process works. The new Customer Service Clerks are supposed to take basic applications and refer customers with specialized questions to the appropriate staff like the Conservation Commission and Historic Commissions staffs. The Inspectors can issue Building Permits for simple things like the uses of right in a district. Only more complicated issues are supposed to be referred to the Plans Examiner or the Chief Zoning Code Official. It may be that some staff are unsure of their jurisdictions or of the provisions of the code and thus refer petitioners for other reviews mistakenly. Mike Kruse walked through the Organizational Chart (see attached) of the two Departments and emphasized that only the Acting ISD Commissioner could answer some of the questions. He also explained that the progress that had been made and the next steps to be taken to complete the re-organization.

Ms. Cornaro and Mr. Mulvey demonstrated the software (CommunityPlus module from sungard Pentamation) that will be used to handle permits and zoning and code enforcement, eliminating many of the difficulties that Aldermen have observed with the Department according to Mr. Rourke. It is cutting edge in the state, more advanced than Brookline's system but, according to Mr. Kruse, similar to systems in use in other regions.

#292-04 ALD. SANGIOLO, HESS-MAHAN, HARNEY proposing the FAR calculation of half-story be amended in Chapter 30.

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-0

NOTE: This item was encompassed another item.

HEARING SCHEDULED FOR 2/15/05 AT 9:00 P.M.

#237-01 ALD. MANSFIELD proposing to amend Secs. 30-1, 30-11, 30-12, and 30-13 of the Revised Zoning Ordinances to clarify the definitions of and specify the distinctions between restaurants, retail food establishments, fast food establishments, and food processing and preparation as allowed and permissive uses in Business, Manufacturing and Mixed Use Districts.

HEARING SCHEDULED FOR 2/15/05 AT 9:00 PM

#238-01 ALD. MANSFIELD & SAMUELSON proposing to amend Sec. 30-1 and 30-11(g)(5) of the Revised Zoning Ordinances to clarify the definition of and restrict the permissive use “drive-in food service establishment” to Limited Manufacturing Districts only.

HEARING SCHEDULED FOR 2/28/05:

#18-05 NEWTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION submitting in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, Section 3, a recommendation that ARTICLE III., HISTORICAL COMMISSION AND DISTRICTS, of the City of Newton Revised Ordinances, 2001, be amended by establishing a local historic district in AUBURNDALE.

HEARING TO BE SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 25, 2005:

#354-04 ALD. BAKER AND SANGIOLO proposing that the Zoning Ordinances be amended in order to address building mass and height, better reflect usable floor area in attic and basement spaces, clarify measurement of building height when the roof line is changed, address upper story additions involving dormers and finished attic areas, and address large additions significantly increasing building size and mass, through amending the following provisions including but not limited to Section 30-1 definitions pertaining to “attic”, “height”, “story, half”, “floor area, gross”, “space, habitable”, adding new definitions as appropriate pertaining to dormers and roof types, and amending Section 30-15, Table 1, Footnote 7(3) pertaining to calculation of FAR in the case of existing structures and such other related provisions as may apply.

All other items were held without discussion.

Respectfully submitted,
Ald. Brian Yates, Chairman