

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ZONING AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

BUDGET REPORT

MONDAY, MAY 12, 2003

Members present: Ald. Yates (Chairman), Ald. Lennon, Lappin, Johnson, Baker, Gentile, and Sangiolo

City officials present: Inspectional Services Commissioner Mark Gilroy; Inspectional Services Bookkeeper Judy O'Brien; Planning Director Michael Kruse; Chief Administrative Officer Michael Rourke; Committee Clerk Linda Finucane

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#168-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City (#124-02(11)) of Newton Charter, submitting the FY04 Municipal/School Operating Budget totaling \$256,208,165, passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY04-FY08 Capital Improvement Program, submitted in October, 2002. EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION 4/22/03.

ACTION: PLANNING BUDGET APPROVED 4-0-2 (Gentile, Sangiolo abstaining; Lappin not voting)
INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT BUDGET HELD
6-0 (Lappin not voting)

NOTE: Before the two budgets were presented, Mr. Rourke explained that the proposed re-organization of these departments was not being filed at this time so that input could be obtained from Board of Aldermen before submitting reorganization for an up or down vote. Nevertheless, most of the discussion focused on the changes made in the budget and those to be made in the reorganization. Mr. Kruse presented his budget and a work plan of current tasks. His administrative assistant will become the overall administrative assistant for the Departments with three customer service clerks reporting to her. Two will be existing ISD staff given new functions. The third will be the current Planning receptionist. The bookkeeper in the planning Department's Community Development division will take over bookkeeping functions for the entire expanded department. The Committee questioned how these three people would become well enough versed in all aspects of development in the city to serve the extensive information and referral role proposed for them. Mr. Rourke and Mr. Kruse said that extensive training would be provided.

ZONING AND PLANNING COMMITTEE BUDGET REPORT

May 12, 2003

Page 2

The other questions focused on the current Associate Director who is slated to become the Zoning Administrator and answer Zoning questions too technical for the customer service staff. The Committee questioned his qualifications to readily interpret the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Kruse explained that for the last few years he has been supervising the Planners who administer the detailed work with the ordinance and before that he had been administering the very complex CDBG regulations which are just as complex as the Zoning Ordinance. Alderman Yates pointed out that before the Associate Director's long tenure in CDBG, he had written the Land Use Memos.(Alderman Yates had served as a Planning Aide in Department this time in the 1970's well before Mr. Kruse had come to the city.) Members then pointed out the long list of tasks that the Associate Director currently carries and wondered what would be become of them. Mr. Kruse answered that the tasks on the first page of the work plan including staffing ZAP would be carried over but that the tasks on the second page would be transferred to others. Despite serious misgivings on the first steps toward the re-organization, the Committee voted 4-0-2 with aldermen Gentile and Sangiulo abstaining to approve the Planning Department and related revolving accounts as submitted.

The ISD budget concerned the Committee because it included the elimination of the Zoning Administrator's position and anticipated the elimination of the Commissioner's position and its replacement with a Land Use Enforcement Officer to follow up on the 100 or more enforcement actions requested of the Department each year as well as complete the long overdue inspection of multi-family properties. The Committee applauded the creation of such a position but not at the forfeit of a second position leaving the Department worse over than it is now. Alderman Gentile also questioned why the Chief Building Inspector would take over supervision of the non building inspectors when he had previously served as Zoning Enforcement Officer in Brookline and thus would be well qualified to take the new position. Alderman Yates wondered why we needed a Chief Building Inspector and a Senior Building Inspector. It was explained that the Senior Inspector could help the other Inspectors in the field while the Chief Inspector would be mainly in the office serving in his other function as Plans Examiner backing up the Customer Service Clerks. Alderman Baker felt that the non-Zoning enforcement functions of the Enforcement Officer were being slighted. It was pointed out that they were listed in the backup materials. Nevertheless, because the budget appeared to weaken the Department's abilities to carry out the functions the Committee valued and the reorganization appeared to make it worse, the Committee voted to hold the ISD pending revisions from the Mayor. The vote was unanimous.

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#124-02(11) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY04-FY08 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, pursuant to Section 5-3 of the NEWTON CITY CHARTER, which requires Board of Aldermen approval of a plan to finance new local capital projects totaling \$160,847,242 over the next several years:

SUMMARY

PUBLIC WORKS (GRANT/FEE FUNDED).....\$ 58,022,114
PUBLIC WORKS (CITY FUNDED).....\$5,820,000

ZONING AND PLANNING COMMITTEE BUDGET REPORT

May 12, 2003

Page 3

PUBLIC SAFETY	\$3,349,000
PUBLIC BUILDINGS.....	\$3,941,400
PUBLIC EDUCATION	\$80,156,728
PARKS & RECREATION	\$7,479,000
OTHER	\$2,079,000
TOTAL.....	\$160,847,242

ACTION: CONSERVATION PORTION APPROVED AS AMENDED 6-0 (Lappin not voting)

N.B. Ald. Lappin was in the CPC Executive Session for Kessler Woods.

NOTE: The CDBG projects had previously been approved as part of the Consolidated Plan Annual submission. The Conservation Tree and Pathway improvement were pushed back a year with \$35,000 to be spent in FY04 and 34,000 in each of the following years. The Flowed Meadow Improvements had been done a year early and were deleted. The Phase 5 of Houghton Garden was increase to \$490,000 to reflect its true cost. The Conservation Section of the CIP was adopted 6-0 with these amendments.

All other items were held without discussion and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ald. Brian Yates, Chairman

Attachments

CIP pages re Conservation

Planning Department Work Program/July 1, 2003 – June 30-2004