City of Haverhill



City Council Minutes

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

Remote Meeting

Present – President Barrett, Councillors LePage, Bevilacqua, Michitson, Sullivan, Jordan, McGonagle, Daly O’Brien and Macek.

City Clerk – Linda L. Koutoulas

President Barrett, Vice President LePage, Councillor Michitson and City Clerk Koutoulas participated from the City Council office.

President Barrett read the following statement: This meeting of the Haverhill City Council is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker’s Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the “COVID-19 Virus”.

In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor’s Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

The Order, which you can find posted with agenda materials for this meeting allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting.

Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will not feature public comment.

**Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, Governor Baker issued an Emergency Order temporarily suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law,  G.L. c. 30A sec. 20. Public bodies otherwise governed by the OML are temporarily relieved from the requirement that meetings be held in public places, open and physically accessible to the public, so long as measures are taken to ensure public access to the bodies' deliberations "through adequate, alternative means."**

1. Opening Prayer
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of minutes of prior meeting

The minutes were approved Yeas 9, Nays 0

1. Assignment of the minutes review for the next Meeting

Councillor Macek was assigned the minutes

1. Communications from the Mayor

Communication from Mayor Fiorentini requesting to address the Council to give an update on Haverhill’s efforts regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis

Mayor Fiorentini informed that there are 219 cases with 2 deaths. He thanked the people of Haverhill for all their sacrifices. He shared information about his conference call with Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito. We are at the eye of the storm and next week will be critical. He urged people to stay in their homes. Nursing homes are having difficulties. The National Guard has been called in to assist with testing and/or whatever is needed. He singled out and thanked Lightspeed Manufacturing company for making scuba gear into N95 masks. He sent out a big thank you to nurses and CNAs and commended them. Mayor Fiorentini informed that the city has adopted new rules about wearing masks in public and grocery store employees will have to wear masks. He informed that the upcoming budget will be difficult as the state is anticipating $2.5 billion deficit. There will be a city/school hiring freeze except for the Police Department; freeze on all capital projects except the Consentino project will go forward.

1. Communications from Councillors to introduce an individual(s) to address the Council:
2. Public Participation- Requests under Council Rule 28
3. Communications and Reports from City Officers and Employees:

Abatement report from Christine Webb, Assessor for the month of March 2020

PLACED ON FILE Yeas 9, Nays 0 32C

1. Utility Hearing(s) and Related Order(s)
2. Hearings and Related Orders:

Document 37: Petition from Attorney Robert Harb requesting for owner/applicant Lynn Garceau a Special Permit to convert a 3-family dwelling to 4-family in the RH Zone by connecting the main building to the barn at 367-369 Hilldale av; Assessor’s Map 528, Block 1, Lot 83; *Related communication from City Council President, Melinda Barrett, postponing this hearing to May 5 2020*

POSTPONED TO MAY 5 2020 Yeas 9, Nays 0 37

Document 44: Petition from Attorney John McKenna for applicant Amerco Real Estate Co and U-Haul Company of Eastern Massachusetts requesting Special Permit under the POD Ordinance for Storage Containers pursuant to Zoning Ordinance Section 120-16; for the use of more than 2 regulated storage containers for more than 6 months at 211-219 Lincoln av; Rivers Edge Plaza; *Related communication from City Council President, Melinda Barrett, postponing this hearing to June 2 2020*

POSTPONED TO JUNE 2 2020 Yeas 9, Nays 0 44

1. Appointments:

Confirming Appointments

No Schedule

Non-Confirming Appointments

1. Petitions:

No Schedule

1. Motions and Orders

No Schedule

1. Ordinances (File 10 days)

No Schedule

1. Communications from Councillors:

Communication was received from Councillor Colin LePage requesting a status update from Mayor

Fiorentini regarding the “organization of our Facilities Maintenance Department” as previously discussed at the January 28 2020 City Council meeting

COUNCILLORS LEPAGE AND JORDAN SHARED THEIR FRUSTRATION ABOUT THE JT. FACILITES COMMITTEE NOT MEETING SINCE LAST JULY AND HAD A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL PROJECTS. CHIEF OF STAFF ALLISON HEARTQUIST INFORMED THAT MATRIX HAS BEEN CONTRACTED TO A STUDY. SHOULD HAVE RESULTS BY BEGINNING OF MAY. MS. HEARTQUIST WILL CHECK WITH HEATHER FORGIONE TO GET UPDATES AND WILL SHARE WITH COUNCIL.

ON MOTION OF COUNCILLOR JORDAN TO SEND LETTER TO MAYOR ASKING TO HAVE JOINT FACILITIES MEETING SCHEDULED. COUNCILLOR BEVILACQUA INFORMED THAT HE RECEIVED TEXT FROM SCOTT WOOD ASKING THE COUNCIL TO CONTACT HIM DIRECTLY

PLACED ON FILE 58C

Communication was received from Councillor Colin LePage requesting a status update from Mayor

Fiorentini on the Consentino Middle School and the J.G. Whittier Middle School Statement of Interest (SOI)

applications with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA)

SUPERINTENDENT MAROTTA INFORMED THAT THE NEXT STEP FOR THE CONSENTINO

SCHOOL WILL BE THAT A VOTE WILL BE TAKEN THIS THURSDAY AND AFTER THAT THE

FEASIBILITY STUDY AND THEN HIRING AN OPEM. THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE SUGGESTED

THAT THEYSUBMIT SOI FOR WHITTIER PROJECT

PLACED ON FILE 58D

Communication was received from Councillor Colin LePage requesting a discussion concerning the

ongoing municipal, public and private construction projects in Haverhill

COUNCILLOR LEPAGE INQUIRED ABOUT WHITTIER SCHOOL ROOF, HIGH SCHOOL POOL

ROOF, CITY HALL RETAINING WALL. COUNCILLOR JORDAN INQUIRED ABOUT THE STATUS

OF THE RFP FOR THE FIRE STATION WINDOWS AND INSTALLATION OF GENERATOR.

MS. HEARTQUIST INFORMED THAT THE MAYOR IS SEEKING AN OPINION TO SEE IF THE

RETAINING WALL CAN BE DELAYED FOR 1 YR; IN ORDER TO SEND OUT RFP FOR WINDOW

REPLACEMENT AN ARCHITECT NEEDS TO BE HIRED; WHITTIER SCHOOL ROOF IS

SCHEDULED TO START NEXT WEEK. COUNCILLOR JORDAN INFORMED THAT THE POOL ROOF

SHOULD BE COMPLETED IN 3 WEEKS AND THE TRACK IN 8 WEEKS

PLACED ON FILE 58E

Communication was received from Councillors Jordan, McGonagle and Daly O’Brien requesting a

discussion regarding the need to move forward now with the new animal shelter

MAYOR FIORENTINI INFORMED THAT ALL CAPITAL PROJECTS ARE ON HOLD; ROAD PAVING

AND SIDEWALKS ARE ON HOLD.

COUNCILLORS STRESSED THE NEED TO MOVE FORWARD ON THIS PROJECT AS THE

BUILDING POSES SEVERE HEALTHY AND SAFETY ISSUES FOR WORKERS AND GENERAL

PUBLIC. COUNCLLORS OFFERED SUGGESETIONS FOR RECONSIDERING,I.E., ANOTHER

LOCATION, PRE-FAB, BONDING RATES VERY LOW. MS. HEARTQUIST INFORMED THAT

THEY HAVE EXPORED OTHER LOCATIONS BUT FOUND NOTHING SUITABLE. PEST

EXTERMINATOR WILL BE THERE SOON AND HANDYMAN WILL REPAIR HOLES.

ON MOTION OF COUNCILLOR MICHITSON TO HAVE INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DO AN

INSPECTION OF THE SITE AND PROVIDE REPORT TO COUNCIL AND TO SEND LETTER TO

MAYOR TO RECONSIDER PROJECT Yeas 9, Nays 0

COUNCILLOR MACEK ASKED FOR THIS ITEM TO BE ON 4/21 FOR A STATUS UPDATE 58F

Communication was received from Councillor Michael McGonagle requesting to have the Traffic and

Safety Committee review a request for a “no outlet” sign at the entrance of Jericho Road

REFERRED TO TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMITTEE Yeas 9, Nays 0 58G

Communication was received from Councillor Joseph Bevilacqua requesting recognition of the 50th

anniversary of Earth Day and its importance

COUNCILLOR BEVILACQUA INFORMED THAT THIS YEAR’S ANNUAL EARTH DAY CLEAN UP

OBSERVATION, APRIL 23, WAS CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19. HE PRAISED DAVE LABRODE’S

EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE THE EVENT. COUNCILLORS ENCOURAGED THE COMMUNITY TO DO

THEIR PART WITH CLEANING UP THEIR YARDS.

PLACED ON FILE 58H

Communication was received from Councillor Joseph Bevilacqua requesting a discussion regarding the

tracking of known coronavirus cases

COUNCILLOR BEVILACQUA INFORMED THAT GOVERNOR BAKER CAME UP WITH A

PROGRAM TO TRACK THOSE WHO MAY HAVE COME IN CONTACT WITH PERSON WHO HAS

COVID-19. HE WANTED ASSURANCE FROM THE MAYOR THAT THE CITY IS NOTIFYING,

CALLING FAMILY, FRIENDS AND CO-WORKERS WHO MAY NOT KNOW THEY WERE IN CLOSE

CONTACT WIH AN INFECTED PERSON.

LETTER TO MAYOR Yeas 9, Nays 0 58I

Communication was received from Councillor Joseph Bevilacqua requesting a discussion regarding a

proposal for the City to hire laid off nurses during this emergency period

COUNCILLOR BEVILACQUA MOTIONED TO HIRE LAID OFF NURSES TO WORK WITH HEALTH

SERVICES AND THE NURSING STAFF. PRESIDENT BARRETT READ AN EMAIL FROM KATIE

VEZEOLOS, SCHOOL NURSE MANAGER, INFORMING THE COUNCIL THAT THE CITY WAS

WELL POSITIONED WITH ITS CURRENT NURSING STAFF

NO SECOND ON MOTION

PLACED ON FILE Yeas 9, Nays 0 58J

Communication was received from Councillor John Michitson requesting to discuss remote working and

learning impact during this COVID-19 crisis

COUNCILLOR MICHITSON GAVE A POWERPOINT PRESENTATION. HIS PRESENTATION HIGH-

LIGHTED HOW LIFE HAS CHANGED OVER THE COURSE OF A FEW WEEKS GIVING EXAMPLES

OF HOW BUSINESSES, ACADEMIA, GOVERNMENT & SCHOOLS ARE REMOTELY WORKING.

SUPERINTENDENT MAROTTA SHARED SCHOOL SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES. CONCERNS

WITH CYBER SECURITY, BANDWITH AND SUPPORT FOR KIDS ALONE AT HOME.

ON MOTION OF COUNCILLOR MICHITSON TO SEND A LETTER TO THE MAYOR TO FORWARD

CONSIDERATIONS IDENTIFIED TO FOLD INTO HIS PLANNING ACTIVITIES

LETTER TO MAYOR Yeas 9, Nays 0 58K

1. Unfinished Business of Preceding Meeting:
2. Council Committee Reports and Announcements:
3. Documents referred to committee study
4. Long term matters study list

Meeting adjourned 9:52 o’clock P.M. Yeas 9, Nays 0

Attest: *Linda Koutoulas*

City Clerk