

**MINUTES OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES & PUBLIC PROPERTY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 28, 2019**

A Natural Resources and Public Property Committee meeting was held on Thursday, Feb. 28, 2019 at 6:00P.M. in the City Council office, Room 204.

Committee Members: Councillor Sullivan, Chairperson and Councillors LePage and Bevilacqua.

Attendees: Ed Felker, Roland Plourde, Dave LaBrode, Leandra Privitera, Neil Kelleher, Jon Jepson, Ralph Basiliere, David Lefcourt and Keith Gopsill.

1) **Doc. #93-L/18**-Communication from President Michitson requesting to introduce Dave LaBrode to discuss street tree plantings.

The Chair opened the discussion by introducing longtime Haverhill resident and community volunteer, Dave LaBrode. Dave explained that he has been involved with improving the city's parks and recreational facilities for many years and has personally cared for certain trees across the city, most notably at Winnekenni Park. Dave explained the history of planting trees inappropriately and sometimes in the wrong locations for many years throughout the city. He suggested the city adopt tree planting guidelines to be applicable to all tree plantings on public property. He noted that Southborough adopted tree planting guidelines and provided an online link to the Committee. The Chair next recognized David Lefcourt who explained that he works for the Public Property/Tree Department in the city of Cambridge. He said they too have adopted tree planting guidelines. Both Dave LaBrode and David Lefcourt said they are members of the Mayor's Tree Advisory Committee but haven't been actively meeting. Councilor Bevilacqua spoke next and suggested that any tree planting guidelines should include language specifically prohibiting planting under power lines but should be placed directly across the street from said power lines whenever possible. He also suggested the guidelines include the usage of material known as "flexi-pave" that surrounds the base of new tree plantings to better protect the soil and roots from damage. Dave LaBrode added that tree pits should never be less than 4x4 or 3x5 feet in diameter but that many of our old trees were not planted to this standard. He also suggested we need to better educate Parks Department staff on proper tree planting and tree types.

A motion was made by Councilor Bevilacqua to send a letter to the Mayor requesting he assign his Tree Advisory Committee with the task of researching and reviewing other cities and town's tree planting guidelines, including Southborough and Cambridge, in order to make a recommendation to the Mayor and Council for adopting our own tree planting guidelines. The motion also included a recommendation that Neil Kelleher, Parks Department Supervisor, be appointed to the Tree Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded by Councilor LePage and the item passed 3-0.

2) **Doc.#93-W/18**-Communication from Councilors Sullivan and Bevilacqua requesting to discuss possibility of entering into an agreement with Lorraine Post 29 VFW to rehab and lease Clement Farm house located at 1314 Main Street, Haverhill.

The Chair gave a brief overview of the history of this request made to the Council as the VFW closed its headquarters a couple of years ago and sold the property. Councilor Bevilacqua noted the important role all veterans have played in our city's and nation's history and suggested that Clement Farm could be renovated with the assistance of veterans and other interested veterans' organizations. Keith Gopsill, Commander of Lorraine Post 29 VFW, was introduced next and he explained that ideally the VFW would indeed like to join with other veterans organizations in making the renovation and restoration of the Clement Farm as a multi-purpose facility led by the Haverhill Veterans Council and extending offers to include the Disabled American Veterans, Marine Corp. League, Korean War Veterans, and American

Legion organizations to work together on this project with all to be afforded an opportunity to have an administrative office and common space in the building.

As had been discussed previously, it was announced by the Chair that the next step is to go visit the property with the appropriate city department heads to determine the scope and size of a renovation project, and to discuss next steps on determining the cost to bring the property back to Code and to pristine condition again. The site visit has been scheduled for Friday, March 15, 12:00 p.m. and will include a representative from both the city's Building Inspector's office and Fire Department. Ralph Basiliere offered to contact both the City Solicitor to find out if there are any restrictions on use of the property and/or whether it is considered to be a historic building on the National Register of Historic Places and the Conservation Department to see if there are any issues with conservation.

A motion was made by Councillor Bevilacqua and seconded by Councillor LePage to further explore the possibility of restoring and leasing the Clement Farm by moving to the next step which is the site visit, and then return to the discussion with updated information when ready. The item passed 3-0.

3) **Doc.#121-H/18**-Communication from Councillor Bevilacqua requesting to introduce discussion relating to Haverhill Youth Soccer with David Lefcourt, President and Edward Felker, Chair Field Committee.

Councillor Bevilacqua introduced David Lefcourt who along with Ed Felker gave the committee a brief overview of the Haverhill Youth Soccer League as well as the condition and availability of public soccer fields throughout the city. They explained that they work with both Vin Ouellette and Tom O'Brien to schedule fields depending on whose jurisdiction the fields belong. They explained we have all purpose fields at the Hunking, Consentino, and Bradford Elementary Schools, and also use the field at Haverhill High and St. James Park. They also expressed the importance of having new soccer fields dedicated exclusively for soccer created in the city, as well as better maintaining the all-purpose fields currently used by the league and others for soccer games.

Councillors broke the item down into two parts: short term and long term improvements and goals. It was suggested by Councillor Bevilacqua that the city and school department should focus on making substantial improvements to existing fields, including but not limited to the Consentino School. David Lefcourt and Ed Felker noted that they would like to replace the old worn goal posts at Consentino with new portable goal posts. It was suggested that a meeting be set up as soon as possible with Vin Ouellette to further discuss ways to improve the existing fields and better schedule the league's games at the various fields. Also, to discuss future use of either or both Cashman and Swasey Parks as possible soccer fields. A meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 12, at 8:30 a.m. in Vin Ouellette's office to discuss short term improvements.

Long term improvements would be to recommend that the city include creating at least two new soccer fields somewhere in the city, with an eye on vacant land at Riverside Park. Councillor LePage suggested we look into including the creation of said soccer fields as part of the Mayor's Master Plan that is currently being reviewed by the Mayor's Master Plan Committee.

A motion was made by Councillor Bevilacqua to proceed with a meeting with Vin Ouellette to discuss short term field improvements and better scheduling of soccer games, as well as send a letter to the Mayor urging him to include a minimum of two new dedicated soccer fields as part of the forthcoming Master Plan. The motion was seconded by Councillor LePage and the item passed 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15p.m. upon motion of Councillor Bevilacqua, seconded by Councillor LePage, and passed 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas J. Sullivan

Thomas J. Sullivan, Chairperson
Natural Resources and Public Property Committee

March 13, 2019