

(The following is not a verbatim transcript of comments or discussion that occurred during the meeting, but rather a summarization intended for general informational purposes. All motions and votes are the official records).

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Monday, December 4, 2017, in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 P.M. by the Chair.

Present Council Vice-President Michael W. Favicchio, Chair
 Councilman Kenneth J. Hopkins, Vice-Chair
 Councilman Christopher G. Paplauskas
 Councilman Paul J. McAuley
 Council President Michael J Farina

Absent: Councilman Trent M. Colford, St.

Also Present: Robert Strom, Director of Finance
 John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor
 Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
 Heather Finger, Stenographer

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting and they stand approved as recorded. Motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE:

OLD BUSINESS:

PUBLIC HEARINGS/NEW BUSINESS:

Anthony Liberatore, Director of Parks and Recreation, appeared to speak regarding proposed Ordinance 11-17-02 and stated that he does not think that it would be necessary to use city funds for this project. He indicated that Stan Winman from RI Dream Center of Praise Tabernacle contacted him asking if he had any projects for them. He told them that Beachmont Field needed an additional basketball Court and would need to tear down the tennis court and place a dog park and they agreed.

Dan and Kristin Prout, 130 Gladstone St., appeared to speak regarding a dog park and stated that the residents of Cranston deserve a dog park in Cranston. Mr. Toronto stated that he would be willing to assist with getting a dog park in the City. He would like to be a part of making it happen. There could be fundraisers held similar to what other cities and towns have done to make this happen.

Ms. Scotti appeared to speak in favor of a dog park in the City.

Byron Cohoon, President of South Kingstown Dog Park Association, appeared to speak and stated that their dog park opened May 1, 2010 and they have over an acre of land and it is a grass park. Initial cost of the park was \$40,000. Ongoing maintenance costs and maintenance are not paid by the town, not one dollar. The Association pays for all improvements. They had numerous fundraisers to pay for the dog park. It is a tremendous asset to the town and people come from around the State to use it. He indicated that there are some working issues that would need to be worked on, but a dog park is a good thing for the City and he thinks the Council should consider it.

Councilman Hopkins asked Mr. Cohoon how big South Kingstown's facility is. Mr. Cohoon stated that they have a permanent fenced in area, which is a little over an acre of land.

Valerie Schule, 27 Farm St., appeared to speak regarding a dog park in the City and stated that she is not opposed to a dog park, but as a taxpayer, she is opposed to paying for it or pay for the Parks and Recreation staff to clean up the dog park.

- **Real Estate Tax Abatements**

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Abatements as recommended by City Assessor. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements**

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Abatements as recommended by City Assessor. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Tax Assessment Board of Review Decisions as of December 31, 2016** (For Informational Only).

No action need.

- **Tax Interest Waiver Approvals**

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman McAuley, it was voted to recommend approval of the above list of Tax Interest Waiver Approvals as recommended by City Treasurer. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Tax Interest Waiver Denials**

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman McAuley, it was voted to recommend approval of the above list of Tax Interest Waiver Denials as recommended by City Treasurer. Motion passed unanimously.

11-17-02 Ordinance authorizing the City to utilize Eastern Recreational Impact Fees for a dog park at Beachmont Field. Sponsored by Councilman Stycos.

Councilman McAuley motioned to recommend approval of this Ordinance. Council President Farina seconded the motion for discussion purposes.

Under Discussion:

Councilman Stycos stated that there was a neighborhood meeting approximately one month ago and Councilman McAuley attended that meeting also. Councilman Stycos stated that at that meeting, he asked the people present to vote in favor or opposed to a dog park and the vote was 18-3 in favor. Since then, he spoke to the main person who was opposed and was concerned about the woman who lived across the street from the proposed dog park area who was not at the meeting. He then spoke to the woman and she was in favor of a dog park. In the meantime, the woman has decided to move. This is why the man was opposed initially. Councilman Stycos stated that there is a strong support from the residents in the area for a dog park. To try to cram a basketball court and a dog park in this area, there would not be enough land so this could be limited to small dogs. As to the Ceiba Geigy property, in the short term, it is not a realistic proposal because that site is still under the Environmental Protection Agency because of the contamination issue.

Council President Farina asked Mr. Liberatore how long before he knows for sure that the Dream Center agreement will be codified. Mr. Liberatore stated that he is telling the Committee this evening that there is an agreement. He also stated that he would rather not use Recreation Impact Fees because he has other projects for these Fees to be used for.

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to amend the above Ordinance as follows: line #21, after "authorized", delete "under the authority vested in the Impact Fees Ordinance (No. 96-49, October 28, 1996), to utilize an amount not to exceed \$10,000 of Eastern Cranston Recreational Impact Fees".

Under Discussion:

Mr. Liberatore stressed that this will not be the dog park, it will be a dog park. He can give an update on dimensions of the property for the next Council meeting.

Councilman Hopkins stated that if Mr. Liberatore is talking about putting in two courts, this will leave a very small area for a dog park.

Roll call was taken on motion to amend the above Ordinance and motion passed unanimously.

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

**11-17-05 Ordinance Authorizing the City to Construct a Dog Park at Florida Ave.
Sponsored by Council President Farina.**

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman McAuley, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Lisa Kirshenbaum, City Council Grant Writer, appeared to speak and stated that she and Mr. Liberatore looked at various sites for a dog park and looked at costs, size and fencing. The one that fit the bill mostly was Florida Ave. They looked at Calise and Sherman Fields and space behind the Animal Shelter, but they were not feasible.

Councilman Paplauskas stated that he has concerns with the Florida Ave. area, such as the tot park is fairly new and the limited amount of parking in the area. He asked that this Ordinance be continued so discussion can be held with the neighborhood.

Councilman Lanni asked if anyone has looked at the Cullion property on Pontiac Ave. There are acres there and it is right in the middle of the City and City currently owns it. As to the Florida Ave. location, there is a baseball field there, the only one in Knightsville.

Mr. Liberatore stated that when he first came to the City, this baseball field was used by T-Ball and Instructional Teams. Over the past six years, no one has used it as far as organized teams. Councilman Lanni stated that the neighborhood kids use it and this issue needs to be discussed through a neighborhood meeting.

Councilman Lanni asked what the plan is for the tot park. Mr. Liberatore stated that it will stay there.

Council President Farina stated that as to the Cullion property, it was reviewed and the Administration had concerns about use of that site other the Open Space and it is being researched.

Councilman McAuley thanked Mr. Liberatore and Ms. Kirshenbaum for all the information provided this evening and to the speakers for coming out in the cold to support this issue.

Councilman Stycos asked how many square feet the Florida Ave. site has. Mr. Liberatore stated that he will provide that information at the next Council meeting.

Mr. Strom stated that # 7 of the Ordinance addresses Fund 203, which was set up for bonds. He questioned whether we would use this Fund or look for grant sponsorship or donations first. Council President Farina stated that this is the first step. Once this Ordinance is approved, then the Grant Writer can start searching for grants. If for some reason we do not get enough in grants, then we could use funds from this Fund.

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman McAuley, it was voted to continue this Ordinance and in the meantime, the Chair will coordinate a community meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Audit Committee appointments:

- **Mark Perrotti re-appointment. Councilman Lanni**

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Hopkins, it was voted to re-appoint Mark Perrotti as a member of the Audit Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Douglas Smith, Attorney appointment. Council Vice-President Favicchio**

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman McAuley, it was voted to appoint Douglas Smith as a member of the Audit Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees