

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Regular meeting of the Public Works Committee was held on Thursday, January 14, 2010 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 P.M. by the Chair.

Present: Councilman Mario Aceto, Chair
Councilman Robert J. Pelletier
Council President John E. Lanni, Jr.
Councilman Richard D. Santamaria, Jr.
Council Member Michelle Bergin-Andrews

Absent: Councilman Anthony J. Lupino, Vice-Chair

Also Present: Councilman Emilio L. Navarro
Councilman Paul H. Archetto
Robin Muksian-Schutt, Director of Administration
Richard Bernardo, Director of Public Works
Evan Kirshenbaum, Assistant City Solicitor
Robert Strom, Director of Finance
Maria Medeiros Wall, City Clerk
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
Heather Finger, Stenographer

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

On motion by Councilman Pelletier, seconded by Council President Lanni, it was voted to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE:

OLD BUSINESS:

9-09-3 Ordinance in amendment of Title 3 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Administration and Personnel" (Cranston Tree Ordinance). Cont. from 11/12/2009.

Marie Sweet, 174 Gladstone St., Chair of Conservation Commission, appeared to speak in favor of this Ordinance and stated that since the October meeting, a meeting was held with Connie Daniels of the Planning Department and Rick DeGrandpre of the Engineering Department and further amendments have been made to the Ordinance and typographical errors have been corrected.

Diana Gordon, 363 Pontiac Ave., appeared to speak in favor of this Ordinance and stated that this Ordinance is good for the City.

Councilman Archetto, sponsor of this Ordinance, appeared to speak in favor of this Ordinance and stated that it is a positive bill and needs to be passed for the good of the City. No one appeared to oppose.

Councilman Santamaria asked what is wrong with the original Tree Ordinance. Councilman Archetto stated that he introduced this Ordinance on behalf of his constituent. Councilman Santamaria asked if the original Ordinance will be stricken or not. Councilman Archetto stated that we would have to look at the current Ordinance so we are not being redundant.

Council President Lanni indicated that there is no fiscal note attached to the Ordinance to see what the cost of the staff would be. He also indicated that we need to make sure that we would not be interfering with a property owner's rights in clearing tree roots and State Statute also needs to be looked at.

Ms. Sweet stated that this did come up in conversations she had with the Tree Warden and the Planning Department and it is handled right now according to procedure in place. She indicated that there is no Tree Ordinance at this time. The only one she is aware of is the Ordinance introduced in March of 2006 reflecting trees.

Richard DeGrandpre, Tree Warden, appeared to speak.

Councilwoman Bergin-Andrews referred to Section 2.53.070, second line of the Ordinance and questioned what "under his control" means, since the tree would be the City's.

Chair asked who in the Law Department reviewed this Ordinance. Solicitor Kirshenbaum stated that he is not sure, he did not.

On motion by Council President Lanni, seconded by Councilwoman Bergin-Andrews, it was voted to continue this Ordinance for the Law Department's and City Council legal counsel's legal opinion and whether a fiscal note is needed. Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Snow Storm Operations: Report from Administration on operational aspects of this season's snow storms to date.

Ms. Schutt referred a handout of costs per storm and stated that the \$48,000 for the December 19th storm was primarily for vendor and manpower.

Chair asked if there were any issues with getting any privates in to plow for that storm. Ms. Schutt stated that it is sort of a hit or miss. You don't want to call the privates in too early, but if you wait too long, they may not be available because they could be called to plow for someone else.

Ms. Schutt clarified that there was a misunderstanding for the January 8th storm from a constituent that the City was out of salt. That is not true, we did not even touch our reserve pile at Park View. We did not run out of any equipment. RI DOT did deliver salt to us for the December 31st storm.

Councilman Navarro asked how much was delivered by DOT and was there a cost to the City. Ms. Schutt stated that the cost of the material was the same. This is where we get the material anyway.

Mr. Bernardo stated that the material was already on order that we were supposed to be receiving on Monday and instead was delivered to us on Sunday at no additional cost. This gave us extra protection in case the storm got worse. We had 600 tons on order.

Councilman Navarro asked how much of the 600 tons do we have left. Mr. Bernardo stated that it is mostly all there. We use it often, including the School Department.

Councilman Santamaria suggested having an answering machine at Highway to receive snow storm complaints in place of having a person sitting there to answer the questions over and over and this would save money. The only issue would be emergencies. The answering machine could be checked periodically.

Western Cranston Sewer Tie Ins:

Update report from Administration on sewer ties ins in Western Cranston including schedule of events to date and dates for future executive session.

Solicitor Kirshenbaum stated that there are a lot of sewer related issues that have come up to light and it would be best to handle this in an Executive Session meeting. This meeting would be approximately two to three hours. He will keep the Council updated and work with the City Clerk in scheduling this meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Councilwoman Bergin-Andrews stated that she has received a letter from Mr. Florio of 49 Normandy Dr. regarding a problem with Kent County Water and this letter was also sent to Mayor Fung. She asked that the Administration look into having the Department of Public Works have Kent County Water Authority look into the problem Mr. Florio is having. Mr. Schutt stated that she will have the Director of Public Works look into this.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees