

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Regular meeting of the Public Works Committee was held on Thursday, July 13, 2006 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

The meeting was called to order at 6:22 P.M. by the Chair.

Present: Councilman John E. Lanni, Jr., Chair
Councilman Terence Livingston (appeared at 6:30 P.M.)
Councilman Jeffrey P. Barone
Council President Aram G. Garabedian

Absent: Council Member Maria A. Bucci, Vice-Chair
Councilman Michael S. Pisaturo

Also Present: Council Member Cynthia Fogarty
Councilman Allan W. Fung
Council Vice-President Paula McFarland
Paul Grimes, Director of Administration
Robin Muksian-Schutt, Deputy Director of Administration
Evan Kirshenbaum, Assistant City Solicitor
Marco Schiappa, Director of Public Works
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
Heather Finger, Stenographer

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Council President Garabedian, it was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting and they stand approved as recorded.

CORRESPONDENCE:

OLD BUSINESS:

Pond View Rd. – DEM Violations (Cont. from 6/15/2006). (Director of Public Works – report and recommendations)

Chair stated asked that this item be continued to next month in order for the Public Works Director to discuss this matter with the property owner's engineer.

This item is continued to next month's meeting.

11S-05-1 Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 12 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places" (Snow and Ice Removal). Continued from 3/16/2006.

On motion by Council President Garabedian, seconded by Councilman Barone, it was voted to table this Ordinance. Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Public Hearing regarding proposal to make Wayland Avenue a one-way road.

Mr. Schiappa stated that a request was made to him in early June and was asked by DOT his opinion in making this a one-way road. After meeting with School Department heads, DOT representatives, Police Chief, Fire Chief and other departments, it was determined that none of these departments were in favor of making this road a one-way. He has since received a traffic analysis from DOT and he met again with those departments and they still do not agree to making this a one-way road.

Antonio Ferrara, owner of property at 61 Wayland Ave., appeared to speak and stated that there have been a lot of accidents at Wayland Ave. and Atwood Ave. Making this a one-way road, will not help the problem. He suggested placing a traffic light at this intersection. Councilman Barone asked if coming up on Atwood Ave., and place a “no left turn” sign was placed, would it help the problem. Mr. Ferrara stated, no.

Jeanne Thomason, 231 Wayland Ave., appeared to speak and stated that she, along with other residents, have copies of letters dating back to 1975 from various elected officials of improvements to be made to their street and every time they have been cancelled. She also stated that there are no sidewalks on Wayland Ave. and the City is encouraging people to use Wayland Ave. to get to the bike path, which makes it very dangerous for people to use this street walking or riding their bikes to get to the bike path. The residents are frustrated because every two or three years the residents are promised something and nothing has been done. Councilman Barone asked Mr. Schiappa if there is a staff report from any department heads that he has met with. Mr. Schiappa stated that some of the department stated some issues. The Fire Department’s issue is response time. The Police Department’s issue is where all the cars that use this street today would go or move to. The School Department’s issue is special needs children that live on this street that are picked up by special ed buses, which need to go to their house to pick them up. This is a main thoroughfare for their buses to go from the Junior High School to the High School. Councilman Fung asked if there could be some sort of traffic calming device installed in this street to address speeders. Mr. Schiappa stated that there could be. Chair stated that this is a State road and all the City could do is make a recommendation to the State.

Greg Rocha, 173 Wayland Ave., appeared to speak and stated that there are no sidewalks, the road is only approximately 30 feet wide and cars do not slow down. Speed has always been a problem. He realizes that money is tight and there are other priorities, but to the residents of this street, this is important. By making Wayland Ave. a one-way, it would not effect the neighborhood side streets, since Phenix Ave. is the only road that runs parallel to Wayland Ave. As to the issue from the Fire Department, if they are responding to an emergency, he believes that it would not prevent them from going down a one-way street. The School Department’s issue of buses, looking at re-routing the bus routes could be looked at. He stated that there have been 81 accidents within a three-year period at this intersection. Council President Garabedian asked if there have been any pedestrian accidents on this street. Mr. Rocha stated that he has not checked into this. Councilman Barone suggested looking at placing a “no left turn” sign on Atwood Ave., which might eliminate most of the traffic and also have the State look at placing sidewalks. Council Member Fogarty stated that a resident in the audience suggested to her that an island be built in the Phenix and Scituate Ave. intersection, which would prohibit traffic coming down from Scituate Ave. and this would still keep this a two-way street.

Thomas Oskowitz appeared to speak and stated that by making this street a one-way street, it would make traffic in the nearby streets worse. He has lived in this area for over thirty years and has never seen any accidents.

Randall Schrader, 161 Wayland Ave., appeared to speak and stated that because of the large development on Scituate Ave., these people are using Wayland Ave. as a cut through. He is the one who suggested the island being built at the intersection of Phenix Ave. and Scituate Ave., which would allow Wayland Ave. to remain a two-way road.

Ed Thomason, 231 Wayland Ave., appeared to speak and stated that if the one-way is approved, then a mis-alignment of the intersection of Phenix and Scituate Ave. needs to be done.

Thomas Dettore, owner of property at 48 Atwood Ave., appeared to speak and stated that some of the accidents do take place at Phenix Ave. and Scituate Ave., but they also occur on Wayland Ave. and Atwood Ave.

Bob Rocchio, representative of DOT and State Traffic Commission Secretary, appeared to speak and stated that this request came to DOT from Representative Palumbo. He stated that he is not here to push this proposal, but to explain it. He does think this is a good solution for the property owners.

Frank Riccio of Cataldo Associates, appeared to speak and stated that he conducted a study, which indicated that there is a large number of cut-throughs in this area. He found that one-way is the best option to solve this problem. They did a speed study on Wayland Ave. and found speeds between 36-38 miles per hour. There is a speeding issue. He also conducted a traffic count in February, 2006 and found that eastbound onto Atwood Ave. – 238 cars in the AM and 220 cars in the PM; westbound – 121 cars in the AM and 279 cars in the PM. Council Member Fogarty indicated the following statistics: 1250 cars on Phenix Ave. and Wayland Ave. intersection and 500 of those ending up on Wayland Ave. She questioned how making Wayland Ave. a one-way street would cut this amount of cars down. Mr. Rocchio stated that it won't, speed and number of vehicles and shoulder width would not cut down on the traffic. Mr. Schiappa stated that two traffic counts were done at this intersection and they were done during school vacation. Councilman Lanni asked who does the ranking for the TIPS program. Mr. Schiappa stated that the Public Works, Planning Department and Administration does this. The last time this street went in, it was ranked number 3. Councilman Lanni stated that at one time, Wayland Ave. was a City street, he questioned what would be the possibility of getting Wayland Ave. back as a City street. Mr. Schiappa stated that he does not know the process. Council President Garabedian suggested that the Council could consider, when developing the TIP, in placing seed money to move the project forward. Chair stated that he has a problem with this. He can't see spending taxpayers' money fix their own road. Councilman Barone agreed with Chair. He stated that he would like to be part of urging the State as a Council or a Committee in doing everything they can to fix this road. He could not justify in spending City money for the State to fix their own road.

Joanna Unsworth, 14 Invernia Rd., appeared to speak and stated that two things need to be addressed is speeding and sidewalks. A one-way would not seem to be any help to her.

Jeanne Thomason, 231 Wayland Ave., appeared to speak and stated that she has called the City and State to find out who owns lower portion of Wayland Ave. and who owns the upper portion of Wayland Ave. and everyone tells her they do not know. Chair stated that at some point, he would think a Resolution would be sent to the State prior to their final State meeting.

Auburn/Eden Park Neighborhood Beautification Issues

Chair stated that residents of Eden Park neighborhood, were asked to attend this meeting to discuss this issue, but is not listed on the agenda. He asked for a motion to suspend the Rules.

On motion by Council President Garabedian, seconded by Councilman Barone, it was voted to suspend the Rules. Motion passed unanimously.

John Case, 28 Shirley Boulevard, appeared to speak and stated that he and other residents are present to address the following issues:

- Trash cans on Rolfe St., which have been removed;
- Signage issues – Ordinance is not being enforced in some areas;
- “Adopt a Spot” at Pontiac Ave. and Rolfe St.
- 50/50 Tree Program

Mr. Schiappa addressed the 50/50 Tree Program and stated that there is an Ordinance on the Agenda tonight regarding this. As to the “Adopt a Spot”, the person in the position in the City which handled this is no longer with the City and position has not been filled. If there is anyone who is interested in adopting a spot, they can call him and he will take care of it. A picture of the spot in question to be adopted was presented to Mr. Schiappa by one of the residents. He did indicate that liability insurance is requested from the person who is interested in adopting a spot. Mr. Schiappa also addressed the trash cans issue. He stated that he is working with Economic Development in looking at getting these back on the streets again. The reason they were removed was because the use was being abused.

Janice Harrall, 56 Shirley Boulevard, appeared to speak and stated that she is the one, along with others, who called the City and are interested in adopting a spot at the intersection of Pontiac Ave. and Rolfe St. She questioned why liability insurance is needed from whoever wants to adopt a spot. Ms. Schutt addressed the liability insurance issue and stated that it is City property and any time anyone does anything on City property, presents a liability. She suggested Ms. Harold work together with the Chamber of Commerce as to the issue of insurance. This has been the policy in the City. Ms. Harold stated that as a group of citizens, how would they provide the umbrella policy? Ms. Schutt suggested working with the Chamber of Commerce and maybe there is a business who would like to join the group in this adopt a spot. Council President Garabedian suggested adopting an Ordinance encouraging people to adopt a spot under certain circumstances, that would not require the person to provide insurance.

Marylou Carlomusto, 128 Shirley Boulevard, appeared to speak and addressed the signage issues. She stated that Pontiac Ave. looks terrible and questioned how it got this way. She is offended, as a taxpayer, that the citizens have to adopt a spot or pay for a trash receptacle. Councilman Lanni asked the Administration to look into this situation and see what the Building Inspections Office can do, especially looking into the signage issue. Council Member Fogarty stated that the Council adopts Ordinances and has done their part in what the City should look like or should be and it is the Administration that implements those and then Court, if the person is cited. Ms. Schutt stated that the Highway Department does go out and rip signs off telephone poles per the Mayor's request. The procedure is when a complaint comes in, it goes to the Constituents Affairs Officer. She will then forward those complaints to the Department to enforce, remove and then it would go through the Court system if problem is not addressed. The Administration does rely on residents to call and notify the City of any complaints. Council Member Fogarty asked that the Building Inspector be asked to appear before the Council at the next meeting so the Council can ask him questions of what is lacking on Code Enforcement and he provide a record of violations.

Kevin Fitta, 131 Shirley Boulevard, appeared to speak regarding trash cans on Rolfe St. He stated that there is trash there now and asked if this can be cleaned up on a regular basis until the cans are placed there again. He asked that the Administration ask business owners on Rolfe St. to clean up in front of their business. Ms. Schutt stated that the Administration is currently working closely with the Chamber of Commerce in helping the City in this matter.

Shirley Winslow, 168 Chestnut Ave., appeared to speak and questioned how many times the Council is going to continue the issue with the Park Theatre. The area looks terrible. Her street looks awful, grass is not being cut and trash is everywhere. She questioned where the pride of the City has gone. She also spoke regarding the Valley School on Rolfe St. and stated that kids are hanging around all the time. She asked how this school was approved for this area. Ms. Schutt stated that there is an agreement that the kids were not to be out without adult supervision. The City, legally, cannot kick them out. The City has asked them to look at the parking situation. As to the grass not being cut on Chestnut Ave., this is under the Building Inspector's Department. The City can only enforce what the City is aware of and she asked for residents to call it in to the City.

Mary Staton, 274 South Clarendon St., appeared to speak and asked how often the Police patrols this area of Doric Ave. because there has been some vandalism there. Ms. Schutt stated that the Parks and Recreation Department has received some complaints and patrol is being increased in this area.

Bob Harrall, 56 Shirley Boulevard, appeared to speak regarding the trash cans on Rolfe St. He stated that the City needs to look at the future of Rolfe St. and start looking at how we use our Community Development money. Ms. Schutt stated that Community development money can only be used for neighborhoods that qualify and half of Rolfe St. qualifies.

Raymond Durfee, owner of Durfees Hardware, appeared to speak and stated that the only way to turn this street around is to clean it up to start with.

Valerie Chiulli, 27 Farm St., appeared to speak and stated that snow removal is a safety issue throughout the City.

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Council President Garabedian, it was voted to re-instate the Rules. Motion passed unanimously.

Waste Management – Pickup of refuse, recycling and yard waste

Jerry Dugan of Waste Management appeared to speak. Councilman Barone stated that the reason Mr. Dugan was asked to appear at this meeting is due to the fact that he has received complaints regarding pickup of yard waste, recycled materials and the manner in which it is picked up. His issue is yard waste is not picked up on the same day the trash and the recycled material is being picked up. If any trash falls onto the street or sidewalks, it is not being picked up. He stated that Council Member Bucci has also had similar complaints in her Ward. He asked Mr. Dugan what can be done regarding this issues. Mr. Dugan stated that towards the end of May, there have been ten men who have left their employment. Currently, there are twelve new drivers and twelve new laborers, who are being trained at this time. As to the trash not being picked up off the ground, this is not a manpower issue. He will speak to his workers. Councilman Fung stated that he received a complaint from a resident who had grass clippings left out for two weeks during the fourth of July week. Two of his neighbors complained and Waste Management went out and picked up just their yard waste and not the rest of the street. Mr. Dugan stated that going forward, it will get better. Chair asked that this problem be resolved as quickly as possible because the Council has to answer to the constituents. Council Vice-President McFarland stated that this issue is a big concern to her as well. The last couple of years has been bad. She has been on the Council for eight years and the first six years on the Council, she never had any complaints. Council President Garabedian stated that he will be introducing an Ordinance where the Council would receive a monthly report of complaints coming into the City regarding Waste Management.

Marylou Carlomusto, 128 Shirley Boulevard, appeared to speak and stated that approximately one year ago, she called Waste Management regarding trash bins being thrown across the street and since then, she is impressed with the improvement.

Carol Stenmark, 50 Althea Dr., appeared to speak and stated that trash pickup has greatly improved.

Ronald Blackmar, 143 Natick Ave., appeared to speak and stated that over the last year, he has seen recycle bins being dumped in the truck and half of the trash ending on the ground and bins being tossed on the ground. He has had five bins cracked.

6-06-1 Ordinance in amendment of Title 15 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Buildings and Construction” (Building Code-Public Buildings).

Council President Garabedian, sponsor, appeared to speak in favor. No one appeared to oppose.

On motion by Councilman Livingston, seconded by Council President Garabedian, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance. Motion passed on a vote of 4-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmen Lanni, Livingston, Barone, Council President Garabedian -4.

6-06-5 Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 9.08 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Public Peace, Morals and Welfare” (50/50 Tree Program).

Councilman Livingston stated that he is hesitant to put another financial burden on the taxpayer. He was advised by the City Clerk that there is a State Law requiring that the Cities and Towns would be responsible for paying for this. Mr. Schiappa stated that he is not aware of this law.

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Councilman Livingston, it was voted to table this Ordinance. Motion passed unanimously.

6-06-6 Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 12 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places” (Sidewalk 50/50 Program).

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Councilman Livingston, it was voted to table this Ordinance. Motion passed unanimously.

Request from Cox Communications for installation of services for Jefferson @ Independence Place

Mr. Schiappa appeared to speak and stated that Engineering has reviewed this request and have no objections.

On motion by Councilman Livingston, seconded by Council President Garabedian, it was voted to approve this request. Motion passed unanimously.

Petition from National Grid for pole location at Summit Drive

Mr. Schiappa appeared to speak and stated that Engineering has reviewed this request and has no objections.

On motion by Councilman Livingston, seconded by Councilman Barone, it was voted to approve this request. Motion passed unanimously.

Petition from National Grid for pole location at Marine Drive

Council President Garabedian questioned if this request is for the proposed concrete plant and if the City recognizes this street as a public road. Mr. Schiappa stated that he would have to check into this.

On motion by Council President Garabedian, seconded by Councilman Livingston, it was voted to table this request. Motion passed unanimously.

Petition from National Grid for pole location at Webber Street

Mr. Schiappa appeared to speak.

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Councilman Livingston, it was voted to approve this request. Motion passed unanimously.

Petition from National Grid for pole location at Koutsogiane Drive

Mr. Schiappa appeared to speak.

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Councilman Livingston, it was voted to approve this request. Motion passed unanimously.

Petition from National Grid for pole location at Pontiac Avenue

Mr. Schiappa appeared to speak and asked for a continuance on this request per the Engineering Division.

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Councilman Livingston, it was voted to table this request. Motion passed unanimously.

Petition from National Grid for pole location at Greenfield Street

Mr. Schiappa appeared to speak.

On motion by Council President Garabedian, seconded by Councilman Livingston, it was voted to approve this request. Motion passed unanimously.

Petition from National Grid for pole location at Warwick Avenue

Mr. Schiappa appeared to speak and stated that National Grid has withdrawn this request. No action is needed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees