



Committee on City Services and the Northampton City Council

Committee Members:

Chair: Councilor Maureen T. Carney

Vice-Chair: Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge

Councilor Dennis P. Bidwell

Councilor James Nash

Meeting Minutes

Date: December 3, 2018, 4 p.m.

Location: City Council Chambers

212 Main St., Northampton, Massachusetts

Present: Councilor Maureen T. Carney, Chair
Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge, Vice Chair
Councilor Dennis P. Bidwell
Councilor James Nash

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

At 4 p.m., Councilor Carney called the meeting to order. On a roll call, Councilors Bidwell, Carney, LaBarge and Nash were present.

Also present: City Clerk Pamela Powers

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There being no members of the public present, there was no public comment.

3. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

A. 18.198 Appointments to Various Committees - Referred by City Council 11/01/2018
Conservation Commission

Randy Krotowski, 171 Emerson Way, Florence

Term: October 2018-June 2019

To fill the unexpired term of Lisa Fusco

Councilor Carney asked to dispense with the regular order and jump to the appointment of Randy Krotowski since Councilor LaBarge needed to leave early.

Councilor LaBarge said she had a lengthy talk with Mr. Krotowski. He and his wife spent 30 years moving 14 times all over America for career reasons. Some time ago they started looking for a place to retire and put down roots and chose Northampton after a year-long search.

His background includes construction engineering and environmental remediation experience and given a life-long passion for natural history he felt that the Conservation Commission and

Planning Board were the highest and best use of his abilities. Outside of his work, his volunteering experience has been with wildlife preservation, entrepreneurial organizations and historical preservation. He is very familiar with dealing with the consequences of poor, uniform development.

He believes in long-term sustainable development and that planners must find a way for development to occur in an environmentally-sensitive manner. He is more a pragmatist than a realist, He believes there will be continued development until population growth slows so he thinks it is important that it be done in a positive and sensitive way.

Councilor LaBarge moved to make a positive recommendation for the appointment of Randy Krotowski to the Conservation Commission. Councilor Nash seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.

4. 2018 STATE ELECTION UPDATE

City Clerk Pamela Powers was present to give an update on the Clerk's Office handling of the 2018 mid-term elections, including the process of early voting and her staffs' experience with new voting equipment. She passed out a spreadsheet showing the number of voters casting ballots on Election Day and during early voting.

72% of voters either came to the polls, came to early voting or requested an absentee ballot, she reported. She showed the breakdown of turnout by ward. Ward 2A had the highest voter turnout.

2,557 registered voters cast ballots during the two-week (ten days plus a Saturday) period leading up to the election as opposed to going to the polls or requesting an absentee ballot. "It was great," she enthused. Poll workers were energized and had staff there to help them. The office was reconfigured with temporary polling booths and she had registrars and constables in the hallway directing residents to voting booths and checking them in.

It was about half of the people they had for the presidential election two years ago and she anticipates they will have about 5,000 come in for the next presidential election.

Councilor Nash asked if she thought the current arrangement of using the registrar's office for voting purposes will work in two years.

Absolutely, Mrs. Powers responded. The voting booths weren't at constant capacity most days, except for the final day.

The elections office was eligible for two grants; one from the Auditor's office and one from the Elections Division. The grant required that she post early voting hours in two newspapers. They were eligible for \$1,800 in reimbursement as a result of meeting the requirements and having polls open for four hours. (The ad was \$900, she acknowledged.)

Ms. Powers showed the schedule of early voting. Interestingly, they were not reimbursed for hours that the office was not usually open.

She ran with a skeletal crew during the early morning hours.

She drew attention to the cost of the election. Election Day itself cost \$19,566.50, while the total cost of election activities was \$31,649.50. She will be reimbursed for \$8,936, so the city portion of the cost is \$22,713.50.

She referred to handouts showing state mandates for early voting procedures.

The Clerk's office offered New Voting Equipment Training for wardens and deputy wardens. For clerks and deputy clerks she did a training on hand-counting procedures for the election with numerous write-in candidates. She did a few one-on-one training sessions for people who couldn't make scheduled trainings.

They had a couple of issues with the new machines. She is not totally convinced it was the machines themselves. There is one button that if pressed five times in a row shuts the machine down. The ballot box has an emergency bin so that if people come in and the machine is not functioning poll workers can put the ballot in the emergency bin.

They had an issue at the polling place for 6B where something was on the scanning head of the voting equipment. It seemed to work its way as the day went on. She was very pleased with the response from the vendor, LHS. For the primary they had somebody stationed there full-time. On the other Election Day somebody was a phone call away.

The machine separates out the ballots if a write-in candidate is indicated by a completed oval, she indicated. The state came out and did training for handling/counting the ballots for write-in candidates.

Councilor Bidwell asked if she had compared notes with other town clerks and whether they had similar experiences.

They did, Mrs. Powers said. They were done counting by 11:30 p.m. and she was here until 12:45 a.m.

Councilor LaBarge thanked Mrs. Powers and all her staff. Councilor Nash said he was really impressed with the way her staff handled the primary.

5. **MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 5, 2018**

Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the minutes of November 5, 2018. Councilor Nash seconded. The motion carried 4:0.

Councilor LaBarge departed at 4:25 p.m.

6. **ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE**

B. **18.198 Appointments to Various Committees - Referred by City Council 11/01/2018**
Housing Partnership

Alexander Jarrett, 8 High Street, Florence

Term: October 2018-June 2019

To fill a vacancy left by the resignation of Alison Brauner

Human Rights Commission

Jeromie Whalen, 31 Union Street, Northampton

Term: October 2018-June 2019

To fill the unexpired term of Christine Young

Councilor Bidwell said he spoke with Alex Jarrett who many of them know through his role in Pedal People. He is also a serious student of cooperative business ventures generally and a student of affordable housing. He is a very curious guy with a lot of creative ideas about housing and fortunately for them, he wants to take those ideas to the housing partnership. He has been attending meetings so he is all geared up.

Councilor Bidwell moved to forward the appointment with a positive recommendation. Councilor Nash seconded. The motion passed unanimously.3:0.

He had the pleasure of meeting with Jeromie Whalen at the Roost last Friday, Councilor Nash related. Mr. Whalen spoke to them in the spring about teacher salaries. This speaks to the type of advocate he is. He is open to being critical but also to engaging people in conversation; a sense he had throughout the hour they spent together. He thinks he's going to be a fine addition to the Human Rights Commission.

Since high school, he has been volunteering at Camp Sunshine every summer for children with life-threatening illnesses. This summer he went to Puerto Rico to help deliver generators and also spent time at a school in Lebanon for Syrian refugees. He currently serves as a technology teacher at NHS, where he has created a virtual reality interactive video with NHS students with embedded video instructions on learning to detect warning signs of abuse. He thinks he will be a great addition.

Councilor Nash moved to forward the appointment of Jeromie Whalen to the Human Rights Commission with a positive recommendation. Councilor Bidwell seconded. The motion carried 3:0.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Members discussed information requests for upcoming meetings. They expressed an interest in meeting with Police Chief Kasper and asked the administrative assistant to reach out to the Mayor's office to request her attendance at the January meeting. Members mentioned looking for a general update and any issues related to the NETA operation and anticipated opening of new retail marijuana stores. The police department has been called in to provide some additional security for NETA in transporting cash, Councilor Nash said. They also expressed interest in hearing about the handling of holiday festivities like First Night and the holiday stroll.

8. Adjourn

Upon motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Prepared By:

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