



Committee on Legislative Matters and the Northampton City Council

Members

Councilor William H. Dwight, Chair

Councilor Maureen Carney

Councilor Alisa F. Klein

Councilor David A. Murphy

MEETING MINUTES

Date: September 9, 2019, Time: 5 p.m.

Location: City Council Chambers, 212 Main St., Northampton, Massachusetts

1. **Meeting Called to Order and Roll Call:** At 5 p.m., Councilor William H. Dwight called the meeting to order. On a roll call, the following councilors were present: William H. Dwight, Maureen T. Carney, Alisa F. Klein and David Murphy. Also present were: Senior Planner Carolyn Misch and City Councilor Jim Nash.
2. **Announcement of Audio and Video Recording**
Councilor Dwight announced that the meeting was being audio and video recorded.
3. **Public Comment**
Since no members of the public were present, there was no public comment.
4. **Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**
Councilor Klein moved to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2019 and August 12, 2019 Legislative Matters Committee meetings as a group. Councilor Murphy seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.
5. **Continuation of Public hearing (from August 12, 2019)**
Public Hearing Notice published July 29, 2019 and August 5, 2019 per M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 5.
 - A. **19.105 An Ordinance to Rezone Five Parcels from General Industrial to Office Industrial - referred by City Council 7/11/2019**
Councilor Dwight opened the continuation of a public hearing on a proposed zoning change to rezone five parcels from GI to OI and to rezone Map 5, Parcel 32 from GI/FP to SC.

Councilor Carney moved to reopen the public hearing. Councilor Klein seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.

It was noted that there was no presentation at the last meeting since the committee did not have a quorum to convene.

The only member of the public to attend the last meeting was the owner of Chartpak, Councilor Klein said. The owner was notified that the public hearing was being continued to September 9, 2019.

Ms. Misch said had spoken with a number of people at Chartpak and they didn't really have any concerns.

The proposed change came about based on a request from CRD Metalworks on River Road in Leeds, Ms. Misch related. The former cable company was looking at opportunities to reuse its building. Rezoning the property from General Industrial (GI) to Office Industrial (OI) matches overall city goals in transitioning to OI uses throughout the city, she observed. The two are very similar districts but OI allows a little more flexibility, particularly for the reuse of old mill buildings.

One thing OI doesn't allow is the big warehouse/trucking facility, which is only allowed in GI, Ms. Misch observed. In the city's long-term zoning vision, GI is limited to the Industrial park, which is a preferable location, she noted.

Pursuant to the request from CRD, instead of just transitioning one GI parcel in Leeds to OI, planners decided to transition all remaining GI parcels to OI, which allows residential uses above the first floor and additional uses in buildings built prior to 1939.

The other part of the proposed change is converting a parcel to special conservancy (SC) because it is all in the floodplain and it's not likely that anything would get permitted that close to the river. It makes sense to designate it as SC instead of GI or OI since it is all floodplain (FP).

Having an FP overlay is indicative of what building code and any conservation commission permit would require.

Councilor Murphy asked if owners would still be allowed to do manufacturing, and Ms. Misch said absolutely.

That's what that building was purposed for, Councilor Murphy asserted. "As long as they're cool with it, that's okay with me."

They held a public forum in Leeds and informed everybody within a good radius, Councilor Klein shared. It had a good turnout, probably about 40 people. A lot of questions were asked and answered very ably by Ms. Misch. Any of the concerns that people had were quelled by the answers. She let people know that they were now considering it at the council level.

She understands that Chris Deval, the owner of CRD, is now trying to sell the property, Councilor Klein added. The zoning change was kind of initiated by his request because he wanted to do self-storage units and now he wants to sell the property. "That is I think making people a little nervous in the adjacent neighborhoods" because they don't know who will buy it and what the use will be.

All uses will be under OI and are so similar to uses allowed in GI she assumes any buyer would see them as comparable, Ms. Misch responded. She would assume the transition in zone would not make that much difference to someone looking at the property.

No one came to the Planning Board hearing in August and the Planning Board voted unanimously to adopt the ordinance, Misch reported.

Zoning is not grandfathered as of the date of sale, Ms. Misch clarified.

Councilor Dwight asked if there was any other factory inventory planners went through and decided OI made more sense?

There are a few other spots down in Florence that are still GI, Ms. Misch said. The Planning Board has even talked about merging the two districts and getting rid of the distinction. Members had a protracted discussion and their biggest concern was allowing residential use in the Industrial park. The goal is to change everything but the industrial park and Packaging Corp., she indicated.

Councilor Klein moved to close the public hearing. Councilor Murphy seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0. The hearing was closed at 5:13 p.m.

Councilor Murphy moved to forward the ordinance with a positive recommendation to the full City Council. Councilor Klein seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.

B. 19.102 An Ordinance Relative to Parking on Glendale Road

The ordinance is lifting the parking restrictions that used to be in place when the dump was open, Councilor Nash explained. When the dump was open, cars and trucks would line up and there needed to be a way for them to cue up to enter the dump. This is no longer needed so they are getting rid of parking prohibitions.

Councilor Dwight asked if the gauge of the road is wide enough to accommodate parking on both sides.

Councilor Nash said he wasn't sure. He confirmed there are no curbs present. He offered to drive out there to verify the road width.

They do have other anomalies where they allow parking on both sides of the road and if there was indeed parking there, it would block the road, Councilor Dwight acknowledged.

Councilor Nash confirmed that the Transportation and Parking Commission (TPC) is recommending the ordinance and that the ward councilor, Councilor LaBarge, is in favor of the change.

If Councilor LaBarge has signed off on this his guess is that she's done her due diligence with her constituency, Councilor Dwight observed.

Councilor Murphy moved to advance the ordinance with a positive recommendation. Councilor Carney seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.

C. 19.110 An Ordinance Relative to Bus Stops on Bridge Street

Presently there is a westbound bus stop on Bridge Street at Lampron Park, primarily for people disembarking from the bus and walking to their homes in the neighborhood or downtown, Councilor Nash explained. The bus stop is in conflict with the parking lot proposed on Bridge Street for parking and drop-off at the Bridge Street School. It happens to not be an official bus stop. Transportation and Planning Commission members want to make an official westbound bus stop across from the post office.

The idea is to pair bus stops, he advised. [The post office] is a great location for people to get off the bus. People from UMass or Amherst can get to the train station and it is at the edge of downtown. The relocation will alleviate the parking confusion at Bridge Street. They have worked with the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) with this and this is their recommendation.

Referring to the pairing idea, Councilor Klein asked if it would block the street if an eastbound and west-bound bus are stopped at same time.

The stops are actually offset, Councilor Nash confirmed. The PVTA worked in conjunction with the DPW, he added.

Councilor Carney moved to forward the ordinance with a positive recommendation to the full council. Councilor Murphy seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.

D. 19.114 An Ordinance Relative to Stop Signs on Fulton Avenue

Consideration of this ordinance will be deferred to the next meeting since a recommendation from the TPC is still pending, members noted.

6. New Business

A. Rescheduling October and November Meetings (both fall on holidays)

Members discussed rescheduling the October and November meetings and decided to meet Monday, October 7, 2019 at 5 p.m. and Tuesday, November 12, 2019 at 5 p.m. with the administrative assistant to confirm the availability of the meeting room.

7. Adjourn

Councilor Carney moved to adjourn. Councilor Murphy seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0. The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Prepared By:

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