

(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).

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Regular meeting of the Public Works Committee was held on Thursday, December 10, 2020 via Zoom webinar.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 P.M. by the Chair.

Present: Councilmember Lammis J. Vargas
Councilmember John P. Donegan
Councilmember Edward J. Brady
Councilmember Christopher G. Paplauskas, Vice-Chair (appeared at 6:30 p.m.)
Councilmember Kenneth J. Hopkins, Chair

Also Present: Council Vice-President Michael W. Favicchio
Councilmember Aniece Germain
Councilmember Steven A. Stycos
Daniel Parrillo, Director of Administration
Kenneth Mason, Director of Public Works
John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor
Leanne Zarrella, City Clerk
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
Heather Finger, Stenographer

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

On motion by Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Vargas, 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:

None.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Vincent Moses, 826 Natick Ave., appeared to speak and stated that he wished to address two issues: 1) All the utility poles starting along Natick Ave., have been marked for replacement and he is asking this Committee to request that these replacement poles be placed as far back of the roadway as possible in order to allow for a creation of a bike riding, jogging and walking lane along Natick Ave. If this extra lane was created, it would be a much safer means for the people engaged in these activities; 2) a broken section of the guardrail between pole 28 and 29 on Natick Ave. He has called the individuals supposedly responsible for this several times over the past few years and seems to have fallen on deaf ears. Director Mason stated that he will check this out. He indicated that the City does replace and repair guardrails as necessary.

Chair asked that Director Mason take a look at the first issue stated by Mr. Moses. Director Mason stated that he contacted National Grid and their engineering is coming up with plans to replace virtually all the poles on Natick Ave. and he has requested that they push them as far off the street as possible. The problem we have on Natick Ave. is it is a very narrow street. National Grid will be sharing the engineering drawings with him.

Chair stated to Mr. Moses that he and the area Councilman will work on this with Director Mason and will report back to him

OLD BUSINESS:

Councilmember Brady:

- **Natick Ave. poles**

Councilmember Brady stated that this is the same issue Mr. Moses spoke on and no further discussion is needed.

Councilmember Vargas:

- **Cranston Trees/National Grid**

Councilmember Vargas stated that this item was listed on the agenda to see if there is anything we can do as to National Grid going out and cutting trees particularly during hurricane season to avoid electricity going down during a hurricane. There was a concern from a constituent during the summer about how they leave them in horrific shape and she would like to know if there is anything that we are able to do at all? She asked Director Mason if there is any update at all or she can contact some of the legislatures in January. Director Mason stated that he does not have a lot to add to this, but the Tree Warden does meet with National Grid tree cutting contractors at the beginning of every season just to go over what sections of the City they will be working in. He indicated that we have a lot of City trees that are old and overgrown and probably should have never been planted underneath the electric lines and basically, if the city and town in the State is living with them.

Chair asked that Director Mason take a look at the growth of the trees and how it affects the sidewalks.

- **Yard Waste Pickup**

Councilmember Vargas stated an issue of yard waste not being pickup up and the company being backed up has been brought to her attention and she e-mailed Director Parrillo and Director Mason about it. She questioned if it is due to COVID or short on staff in the management side. This has happened for the last two to three weeks. She also stated that given the fact that they have been behind in pickups, she asked if the yard waste program can be extended another week or two because she believes it ends next week. Director Mason stated that Waste Management has been hit particularly hard for the last two to three weeks due to COVID and they have had six drivers and approximately three or four laborers out due to COVID. The most important aspect of Waste Management's work is to pick up the trash, which is #1, recycling is #2 and yard waste is #3, so if there is going to be anything that suffers, it is going to be yard waste. Their contract is for 37 weeks of yard waste pickup typically starting April 1st and running through December 15th and they are extending it to December 18th.

- **Update regarding speed bumps**

Councilmember Vargas stated that she was told by the Administration that the Administration was going to be releasing a policy on this matter around December 1st. She asked where or when will this policy be rolled out? Director Parrillo stated that the policy will be available Monday. He thanked Director Mason and the Traffic Engineer for doing a lot of work on it along with input from Police and Fire and along with policies from Providence, Johnston and Warwick.

Councilmember Paplauskas:

Councilmember Brady stated that Councilmember Paplauskas is not present, but he would to relay a request from him regarding constituent requests from Westwood to widen Elite Dr. from Scituate Ave. The requests are saying that the turn is difficult at times and the line of sight is different at Elite and it is also at an angle. If they can widen it a little, it may help.

Councilmember Paplauskas appeared on the call and stated that the width of the street is the problem onto Scituate Ave. He would just like to bring this to everyone's attention so if there is any road work in the future, we may be able to widen and straightened that out a little bit.

- **Trash and dumping on Wellington Avenue**

Councilmember Paplauskas stated that a constituent sent this in to Jay Andoscia and he believes this issue has been addressed. He asked Director Mason if this has been cleaned up.

Director Mason stated that it has not been cleaned up yet, but on Monday, they are going to mobilize a 30 yard dumpster and S & A Construction is going to fill the dumpster and dispose of it and they will be putting some concrete blocks to discourage anyone from driving up that hill.

Councilmember Stycos:

- **Policy of closing of parks due to litter and dogs**

Councilmember Stycos stated that from time to time, the Recreation Department gets annoyed that dogs are allowed to poop on ballfields and the response to that is lock up the ballfield. He would like to hear more about this, but if that is the policy, it is not a very good policy. We are in the middle of

a pandemic and people want to have some place to go and be outside and just does not make sense to lock up the parks particularly at this time. There also seems to be an attitude that the parks are really the property of various sports leagues. That of course is not true.

Director Parrillo stated that Mr. Wilson contacted him on this regarding Fay Field and he believes Beachmont, where he wanted to access the field and they were locked. He was told why they were locked because of the abuse of the property from vandalism to some dumping and some dog feces, but he told him that we would try to open them and see what happens. They opened them for two weeks and Fay Field was burned and Beachmont was vandalized and there was dog feces everywhere. After that happened, we decided to lock the fields just for the fact that we do not have the capability to monitor them for any vandals or any kids hanging out and Tony Liberatore, Director of Parks and Recreation, felt that that was the best remedy at this time since there was no organized leagues going on and the fields were being more utilized by adults to commit vandalism acts then to leave them open.

Chair asked if there has been any attempt to install security cameras there. Director Parrillo stated, no, there has not. Chair stated that maybe this is something that should be looked into.

Councilmember Stycos stated that he did not know about the vandalism. We just can't give into these people saying we are not going to have parks. He understands the frustration, but you can't lock up the parks especially in a pandemic and people have so few places to go and they have kids at home.

NEW BUSINESS:

Request from National Grid and Verizon for pole location at Koutsogiane Dr. *Ratify The Action.*

On motion by Councilmember Paplauskas, seconded by Councilmember Donegan, it was voted to approve this ratification. Motion passed unanimously.

Request from National Grid and Verizon for pole location at Wilbur Ave.

Clerk indicated that there is a scrivener's error on the application on the part of National Grid. The location should be for Whiting St. and not Wilbur Ave. The correct application has been since filed by National Grid.

On motion by Councilmember Paplauskas, seconded by Councilmember Vargas, it was voted to approve this pole location request. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:43 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees