



# PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MINUTES

Council Vice-President Lammis J. Vargas, Chair  
Councilwoman Aniece Germain, Vice-Chair  
Councilman Robert J. Ferri

Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli  
Councilman John P. Donegan  
Council President Jessica M. Marino, Ex-Officio

**THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2023 @ 6:00 P.M.**

The meeting of the Public Works Committee was held in the City of Cranston Council Chambers, Cranston City Hall, 869 Park Ave., Cranston, RI 02910, for the purpose of considering the following items listed on the agenda. Remote participation was available.

## **I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 P.M. by the Chair, Council Vice-President Lammis J. Vargas

## **II. ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by the Clerk. Stated as present: Councilwoman Renzulli, Councilman Donegan, Councilman Campopiano, Councilwoman Germain, Council Vice-President Vargas, and Council President Marino. Absent: Councilman Ferri

Also present: Asst. Solicitor J. Verdecchia. Chief of Staff A. Moretti arrived at 6:15 P.M.

## **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of minutes of the May 11, 2023 meeting

**MOTION made by Councilwoman Renzulli, SECOND by President Marino to approve the minutes of May 11, 2023.**

**VOTE:** Unanimous vote of the members present

## **IV. COMMITTEE BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER**

**2-23-03** *Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 15 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Buildings and Construction" (Poles Relocation). Sponsored by Councilman Donegan. (Cont. as amended 3/16, 4/13//2023 & 5/11/2-23)*

**MOTION made by Councilwoman Germain, SECOND by to continue to the July meeting.**

**VOTE:** Unanimous vote of the members present

## **Councilwoman Germain:**

- ***Request for a detailed plan of Budlong Pool Project and what is the timeline for this project? (Cont. from 1/23/2023 City Council and 2/16/2023, 3/16/2023, 4/13/2023 & 5/11/2023 Committees)***

At the last meeting, Councilwoman Germain requested information on the plan and timeline. There has been inconsistent information and speculation. She was hoping for answers this evening. No one from the administration was present at the time of discussion; therefore, she asked this item be placed on the next regular Council docket for June 26, 2023.

- ***Rats infestation and property management (Cont. 5/11/2023)***

There is a history of rat infestation in the city. We are coming into the summer months. She has received complaints. Residents are frustrated. She forwarded emails to the Clerk of the Committees today to be distributed to the membership.

T. Nelson has not seen the emails. If R. Zanni had to leave early. If she had forwarded them to the committee, T. Nelson would have been cc'd.

Councilwoman Germain read two of the emails aloud. She asked what the process is. What steps are being taken? Some properties have been vacant for a long time. They serve as shelter for the rats. She asked what the procedure is for follow up on complaints. Unkempt properties lead to rats. We need to tackle vacant and unkempt properties to prevent and eradicate rats.

A. Moretti explained an ordinance was put forward creating a public nuisance task force. Council supported. The goal of the task force was to meet regularly, identify nuisance properties around the city, and bring forward ideas for solutions. The Director of Building Inspections is to be the Chair, with representatives from Planning and City Council. Then COVID hit and it didn't happen. During the budget we heard many residents cannot afford home maintenance. The administration will work with Councilwoman Germain and get the task force started. The ordinance needs enforcement from the executive body. Rat infestation is not just a Cranston issue. Constituents need to report issues to the administration. Every reported complaint is logged. When the city receives minimum housing complaints the building inspectors drive out and issue violations. He understands residents are frustrated. There is a court process. Once referred to municipal court, it is out of the administration's hands. If an owner needs assistance, they are referred to resources on an individual basis. The inspectors do a great job following up with observed and reported incidents.

Councilwoman Germain asked again about a plan. Summer is coming. What will be done?

A. Moretti noted every community is having problems. We will always have a problem. The key is education and prevention. Rats multiply fast. Compared to the pandemic, we are receiving less complaints. They are responding to bait requests in about a week and a half. In the past it took two months. They are doing about 5 baitings per day. There are funds in the budget for harsher baiting. Construction and development bring rats. There is a self-responsibility to report. If let go, rats will breed very quickly. Every time a nuisance complaint has been filed, the administration has responded.

Councilwoman Germain asked that unkempt properties be placed on the next Public Works agenda.

## V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Susan Blake spoke with regard to Budlong Pool. She noted the lack of initiative. She echoes Councilman Ferri and Councilwoman Germain's opinions that the administration needs to hire a professional inspector before any assumptions are made about the integrity of the existing pool. Two years ago, the City Council unanimously passed a resolution allocating ARPA funds for the repair of the pool, not the replacement, yet we are still at square one. The Mayor's plan is not what the people want. It will enforce a growing socioeconomic divide. It will reflect badly on the administration if the pool is not re-opened at the same size. Step 1 is to have a professional inspection. It is overdue.

## VI. NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

*Petition of Narragansett Electric and Verizon New England Inc., to install new pole on Budlong Rd.*

**MOTION made by Councilwoman Germain, SECOND by Council President Marino to approve the pole petition for Budlong Rd.** There was no discussion.

**VOTE:** Unanimous of the members present

*Petition of Narragansett Electric and Verizon New England Inc., to install new pole on Pippin Orchard Rd.*

**MOTION made by Councilwoman Germain, SECOND by Councilman Campopiano to approve the pole petition for Pippin Orchard Rd.** There was no discussion.

**VOTE:** Unanimous vote of the members present

*Petition of Narragansett Electric to install new pole on Dyer Ave.*

**MOTION made by Councilwoman Germain, SECOND by Councilman Campopiano to approve the pole petition for Dyer Ave.** No discussion.

**VOTE:** Unanimous vote of the members present

**Council Vice-President Vargas:**

- *Marion Street "no parking sign"*

Council Vice-President Vargas reported to the Administration that the no parking sign is located on the wrong side of Marion Street. It should be on the eastern side of the street. She asked that it be switched.

A. Moretti confirmed it will be done.

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION made by Councilman Donegan, SECOND by Council President Marino to adjourn at 6:45 P.M. All Ayes**

Minutes approved as written July 13, 2023

Attest: Tracy A. Nelson, City Clerk