

(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, February 15, 2024 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:05P.M. by the Chair.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Councilman John P. Donegan
Councilman Richard G. Campopiano
Councilman Robert J. Ferri
Councilman Daniel R. Wall
Council Vice-President Lammis J. Vargas, Chair

Absent: Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli
Councilwoman Aniece Germain, Vice-Chair

Also Present: Anthony Moretti, Chief of Staff
Justin Mateus, Acting Public Works Director
John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
Heather Finger, Stenographer

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **Approval of minutes of the January 11, 2024 Regular meeting**

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilman Wall, it was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the January 11, 2024 meeting and they stand approved as recorded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. COMMITTEE BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER

Councilwoman Renzulli: (Cont. from 1/11/2024)

- *Western Industrial Complex” - Update from the City on their knowledge of any situation at this property, both historically and currently. Explanation of what the landowner can be doing by right, what (if any) permits have been pulled, what (if any) plans have been submitted, what (if any) discussions have been had with DEM recently in regard to this property. Noise complaints and enforcement of our noise ordinance. Any and all departments involved are asked to provide relevant information so we have a comprehensive understanding of this situation currently and going forward.*

Chair stated that since Councilwoman Renzulli is not present this evening, this item will be continued to next month’s meeting.

Councilwoman Germain: (Cont. from 1/11/2024)

- *Explanation on the plowing process. What went wrong? Why many roads have not been plowed on Sunday evening when the snow stopped? New contractors? No staffing? What is the issue?*

Chair stated that since Councilwoman Germain is not present this evening, this item will be continued to next month’s meeting.

Chair stated that Council President Marino is not present due to her attending Open House at Cranston High School West and she will join us as soon as that meeting is over.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

VI. NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

Council President Marino:

- *Update from Administration regarding the status of the City’s participation in the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank’s Community Septic System Loan Program*

Chair stated that Council President Marino indicated to her that she would still like Administration to give update regarding this item even though she is not present.

Chair stated that since no one is present from the Administration she asked Director Mateus if he could give any update.

Director Mateus stated that he will try to answer as best as he can with the information he has. He stated that as to the Septic Loan Program, Public Works had to go ad get an onsite Waste Management Plan, which they did do and as far as he knows, that has been sent to D.E.M. and we are waiting their approval on that Plan.

Chair asked that Director Mateus ask the Administration to email the Committee with an update on this.

Councilman Donegan asked that if the update could be placed on the full Council Docket of whether approval or denial is received by then.

- *Flooding events from September to current throughout the City; status of FEMA, State and other assistance; remediation and mitigation efforts*

Director Mateus stated that he does not have all the information regarding this item. He did state that the Mayor hosted a workshop a few weeks ago with RI Emergency Management, FEMA, Small Business Administration and they presented ways in which people can get financial reimbursement and assistance for damages during the storms. He can ask the Administration to provide an update to the Committee regarding this.

Councilman Donegan asked that this item also be placed on the full Council Docket for update.

Council Vice-President Vargas:

- *Trash removal at Riverview Terrace, 132 Fordson Ave.*

Director Mateus stated that this was also coordinated by Director Moretti. He does know that Highway personnel and Waste Management did go there to clean up the first effort. There was a second effort, which people were throwing large items out and the dumpsters could not handle it. Everything has been cleaned up and their recycling bins have been returned.

Councilman Ferri stated that he finds it very frustrating that no one from the Administration is present this evening.

Director Moretti arrived.

Director Moretti addressed the flooding issue under Council President Marino's correspondence and stated that, as everyone knows, the fundamental damage has to do with the Pocasset River and the Pawtuxet River. FEMA is providing some aid relative to the September flooding events, both the September events and in preparation for claims having to do with the events in January and February. Last week, the Mayor sponsored a workshop with FEMA, SBA, RI Emergency Management, RI Commerce, USBA Preservation Commission, and one other State agency, which he cannot recall at this time. There was a good turnout where the people were able to make claims and it was an informational session of various resources available. The Preservation Commission is the agency that has been granted millions of dollars to offer and to take homes along the Pocasset. We are told that that process should begin sometime in the Summer.

Chair stated that this information would be sufficient for now and will let the Council President decide, once she receives the update from the Administration, if more update or discussions is needed at the Council meeting.

Councilman Donegan indicated that there is a Representative from SBA present this evening and asked that she address the Committee.

Julie Garrett, Public Affairs Specialist for the Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience at the Small Business Administration, appeared to speak and stated that the reason she is present is to remind everyone that the deadline to apply for physical disaster loans for the September disaster is March 7th

Director Moretti addressed the trash removal item and stated that there are two large trash bins and small dumpsters located at that facility. That is covered under the City contract for waste pickup. Anything over that, is the responsibility of the property owner. There was two weeks' worth of trash and trash was placed in front of the bins and the trucks were not able to get to the trash. The Mayor's Office was involved and Deputy Chief of Staff McAuley went out there and got Waste Management to take everything, so we did a courtesy pickup under those circumstances. The second week there was a similar problem and at that point, we worked with HOA and they provided those dumpsters and go the area cleaned up.

Director Moretti addressed the RI Infrastructure Bank item and stated that Council President Marino was the one that brought this to the attention of the Mayor and encouraged it. Previously, the City had not applied for approval to qualify for this program. That was done later in the year last year and Director Zidelis, in late January, was able to submit the program application to the RI Infrastructure Bank and it is on their Board of Director's docket later this month for approval and approval is anticipated. The program is administered by RI Housing and the funds are available from Infrastructure Bank. We anticipate going live sometime in March with the program.

Chair stated that in the event Council President Marino has further questions, this item will be on the Council Docket.

- ***Waste Management contract; trash/recycling collection***

Chair stated that the contract expires in 2025. She asked if the Administration is keeping track of some of the items that are in their scope of work that perhaps need a little more TLC, some revamping or improvement on our end since the contract is going to expire. Director Moretti stated that we have not reviewed the contract. We know there are issues that the residents have faced. We anticipate starting the process of bidding this year since it is such a massive contract.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees