

(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, September 12, 2024 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 P.M. by the Vice-Chair.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli
Councilman Richard D. Campopiano
Councilman Robert J. Ferri
Councilman Daniel Wall
Councilwoman Kristen E. Haroian, Vice-Chair
Council Vice-President Lammis J. Vargas, Chair (appeared at 6:30 p.m.)
Council President Jessie M. Marino, Ex-Officio (appeared at 6:15 p.m.)

Absent: Councilman John P. Donegan

Also Present: Councilman Christopher G. Paplauskas
John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor
Justin Mateus, Acting Public Works Director
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
Heather Finger, Stenographer

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **Approval of minutes of the August 15, 2024 2024 Regular meeting**

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, it was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the August 15, 2024 meeting and they stand approved as recorded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. COMMITTEE BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER

Council President Marino:

- *Discussion regarding the Status of the citywide bridge and culvert inspections performed by Pare Corporation, including the report, its findings and plans (Cont. from 6/13/2024 & 8/15/2024).*

Director Mateus stated that all fourteen reports of the bridges and culverts have been finalized and the Asset Management report was submitted last week in a draft form. Public Works is reviewing that right now getting comments back for the consultant and then that document should be finalized. Anyone on the Council is welcomed to stop in Public Works and review the documents should they wish to.

- *Flooding events from September to current throughout the City; status of FEMA, State and other assistance; remediation and mitigation efforts (Cont. from 6/13/2024 & 8/15/2024).*

Director Mateus stated that one thing that stood out to him with this item was the recent news of the NRCS \$48.5 million for flood prevention between Cranston and Johnston. There is more to come on that. City officials will be meeting shortly with the State NRCS to come up with an action plan on that.

Council President Marino asked if that deals just with the Pocasset River. **Director Mateus** stated, yes. **Council President Marino** asked if that funding is being shared with Johnston or is that just for Cranston? **Director Mateus** stated that it is between the two municipalities. **Council President Marino** asked what the percentage of property or land is between Cranston and Johnston. **Director Mateus** stated that he has not heard a number in approximately a year. **Council President Marino** asked if it involves Commercial properties or if it is going to be exclusively just Residential properties. **Director Mateus** stated that from his conversations from a year ago, Commercial properties are included. Based on the article that is in the Cranston Herald, they are looking at 134 structures to be demolished and over 100 properties to be acquired.

PETITION of Narragansett Electric & Verizon New England, Inc. for new pole to hang new equipment on Country Meadow Ln (aka Country L.) (Cont. 8/15/2024)

On motion by Councilwoman Renzulli, seconded by Councilman Ferri, it was voted to approve this request. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilman Wall: (Cont. 8/15/2024)

- *Flood Mediation – Poplar Dr. and Poplar Circle area*

Councilman Wall stated that he would like to hear from the Public Works Director of what is being done because this is an ongoing issue there. He has had people reach out to him and told him that they have also reached out to **Director Mateus** and he has sent a number of emails with no response. This is concerning on several levels.

Director Mateus stated that it is certainly an issue there. The magnitude of the issue is comparable to the magnitude of the solution. This is not something that can be solved in a week, two weeks, a month or two months. This is something that needs to be studied, vetted, engineered, permitted and constructed. This is a long-term solution to mitigate the problem there. We know what the problem is and have started to go after Grants with this location in mind. They have gone after five Grants so far. The one that this particular location falls within is the OSCAR Grant and have not heard back whether we have received that Grant, but there are plans out there to start to address the situation.

Councilman Wall stated that what concerns him is the lack of response, but if the people in the area are not getting an answer and he can't get an answer after lengthy detailed emails with pictures no one can respond at all. He asked when the OSCAR Grant was applied for. Director Mateus stated that he believes it was submitted in July. Councilman Wall stated that his first notification to Public Works was in March. It would have been nice if some message, however it may be, text, email or memorandum, got to him. It was in March and now we are in September. There has been a lot of time to study. We have had some down time since we have had dry days and dry months. Wet weather is coming. It is going to get worse. He thinks now is the time to start studying it and really get under it. When the rain starts coming again, people are going to have their backyards and their basements flooded again. Director Mateus stated that the mitigation effort is going to require grant funding assistance. The OSCAR grant was due in July and that is why we submitted it in July. Funding of this magnitude is needed so their plan is revolving around the Grant schedule.

Councilman Wall asked why we are hearing about it now instead of March, April, May, June, July or August. That is the concern. He does not wish to sound combative, but he thinks we have to do better because this issue is ongoing.

Councilwoman Renzulli asked if a summary of what Director Mateus just stated could be presented to Director Moretti who can maybe send it out to the Council through the Communications Director so that the Council could share it with constituents or perhaps any members of the Council could speak to the Mayor to see if he can send a letter out to that area so that the people know that it is being worked on and it is a long-term effort and not to expect that next month it is going to be taken care of, but just to let people know it is being worked on. Director Mateus stated that he thinks that is a great idea. He thinks we would want to wait until we do get the approval for the Grant instead of putting out a letter stating that we are hopeful to get this and then worst case scenario we don't, he would hate to give people false hope. Councilwoman Renzulli suggested not mentioning the OSCAR Grant, but just state that we are working on this and looking for Grant money.

Council President Marino asked when the drains or culverts were last cleared. Director Mateus stated June of this year.

Councilman Wall asked that this item be listed on the agenda again going forward for updates.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

No one appeared to speak.

VI. NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

PETITION of Narragansett Electric and Verizon New England Inc. to install new pole on Whitewood Drive.

On motion by Councilwoman Renzulli, seconded by Councilman Ferri, it was voted to approve this request. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:

Council Vice-President Vargas:

- *Commercial Playground upkeep, mulch, updated toys, basketball blacktop needs sealant*

Director Mateus stated that he does not have any update on the status of this playground. He is filling in for Director Tessaglia, who just had surgery on his shoulder and has been out of work for a few weeks. He is present to take notes to relay to him. This will certainly be looked at and the items Chair has highlighted will be looked at.

- *Sanders graffiti on sign to be removed.*

Chair stated that she reached out to Director Tessaglia today and he told her that he would probably be providing whoever was present this evening on his behalf today, update on graffiti on the sign to be removed. There is graffiti right on the sign itself. Director Mateus stated that this will be looked at. He will make sure someone gets back to the Chair with an update on this.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees