

CITY COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEE
Ordinances & Administration
Monday, October 1, 2012 – 5:30 p.m.
1st Fl. Council Conference Rm. – City Hall
-Minutes-

Present: Chair, Councilor Sefatia Theken; Vice Chair, Councilor Robert Whycott; Councilor Steven LeBlanc, Jr.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Councilor McGeary; Councilor Ciolino; Councilor Cox; Linda T. Lowe; Jim Duggan; Robert Ryan; Mark Nestor; Lucy Sheehan

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. Items were taken out of order. There was a quorum of the City Council.

1. CC2012-055 (Cox) Change polling location for Ward 2, Precinct 2 to consolidate Ward 2 Precinct 1

Councilor Cox explained she held a meeting for the residents of McPherson Park concerning the Ward 2 consolidation of polling places, and found that most who attended were pleased there were alternatives to be taken to and from the polls and had the option of voting by absentee ballot which would be arranged for them in conjunction with the City Clerk's office. They expressed their appreciation that someone came to them to speak to the matter. **Councilor Whycott** stated that as the former City Clerk who has managed many elections, he strongly supports this change. He pointed out at the last Presidential Election parking was a problem at McPherson Park and this, in turn inhibited potential voters from casting their ballots. He also pointed out there was precedent to changing polling places/ consolidating precincts, and gave several examples. **Councilor Theken** explained that she had received calls from McPherson Park residents who expressed they would be shortchanged by the consolidation and inhibit them from voting. But she had assured them transportation would be in place for them, as well as other accommodations to see that they were able to cast their vote in the Presidential Elections. **Robert Ryan**, Traffic Commission Chair and head of Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) stated that the Commission thinks the consolidation is a great idea due to parking and safety issues during Election Days. CATA will have a sign up sheet at McPherson Park for transportation to and from the polling place at 140 Prospect Street, and will accommodate any resident of McPherson Park. CATA's "business express" bus already goes past McPherson Park on an hourly basis, and any CATA bus can be flagged down for pick up. Anyone using CATA as their transportation to and from the polls will not be charged for the ride on any CATA transportation on Election Day. They will have wheelchair accessible vehicles available. They have 30 vehicles in their fleet and all are wheelchair accessible equipped. **Councilor Theken** expressed the residents were pleased that a meeting was held. She acknowledged and thanked Council President Jackie Hardy and City Clerk, Linda T. Lowe who had also attended the meeting held on Thursday, September 27th. She also noted that there are approximately 1,700 registered voters in Ward 2, Precinct 2. She wanted to be sure that the consolidated polling place will be able to handle the addition of these voters efficiently as they had expressed concern to her there might be long lines just to get into the Our Lady of Good Voyage Youth Center to vote. **Councilor Cox** and the City Clerk will go back to McPherson Park before the end of Voter Registration, prior to the October 17th deadline to register voters who wish to be registered. **Councilor Theken** offered to take Councilor Cox around to introduce her to the McPherson Park residents. **Councilor Cox** also noted she personally spoke with former City Councilor Gus Foote who "gave his blessing" to the consolidation of the polling places. **Linda T. Lowe**, City Clerk stated that they signed up several absentee voters the evening of their meeting, and a woman who works through Action, Inc. took absentee ballots to McPherson Park to help see that handicapped folks who are her clients can vote if they are unable to or do not wish to travel to 140 Prospect Street on Election Day. She pointed out the Board of Registrars was in support of this change. Judy Peterson, a member of the Board of Registrars had submitted an email (on file) in support of the consolidation of the Ward 2 polling places prior to the meeting. **Mark Nestor**, Board of Registrars members was concerned that they don't turn people away because they can't access a polling place and so supported this change of venue. **Lucy Sheehan**, Board of Registrars agreed with Mr. Nestor. **Councilor Cox** commented she had heard many complaints about the lack of parking at McPherson Park during voting, and the unsafe conditions for pedestrians which helped to prompt her Council Order. **Councilor LeBlanc** expressed agreement for the consolidation the polling places. **Councilor Ciolino** also had received calls concerning this issue. The perception among seniors is that the Council is taking away their opportunity to vote, especially for those who are immobilized. There are 99 people in McPherson Park,

and many in Sheedy Park who are handicapped. They feel that their right is to vote at a nearby polling place is being taken away. He reiterated that this is the perception; that the Council is not taking away their right to vote in person. Many of these people can't get around, especially if the weather is poor on Election Day. He had informed these seniors they would make arrangements for transportation; but they expressed concern that they would be forgotten in the future, and feel abandoned. He would not support the consolidation. **Councilor Cox** expressed her surprise that the Councilor would not support this matter and dispel this perception. Other senior housing units do not have a polling place. She assured the seniors of the City will not be forgotten; they will be taken care of. **Councilor McGeary** stated the consolidation of the Ward 2 voting precincts would have his support at Council. He knew that CATA will provide additional transportation for all of the housing projects on Election Day. **Councilor Cox** will provide Curtis Clark and Sheedy Park information for absentee voting and of the transportation available to them which is free. **Councilor Whynott** commented that there is always resistance to change. When they moved the polling place from the Legion there was great resistance. There is no question this was for the greater good. **Councilor Theken** was not going to vote for this consolidation originally. She will not let the seniors be forgotten and that she will make sure they know they have voting options and transportation options for Election Day. She expressed her thanks to Mr. Ryan for all he is doing to provide transportation through CATA. She understood Councilor Ciolino's stance against the consolidation, but she encouraged that they work together to go to the housing complexes to educate the City's seniors on their options to dispel negative perceptions. **Ms. Lowe** stated they always want to have people take advantage of the right to vote. She assured her office will do their utmost to see that those who want to vote can, now and moving forward; and that she is certain the Gloucester Housing Authority will assist in the future. **Councilor Theken** suggested they need to go back to hands-on outreach in order to help seniors understand they care and that there is assistance for them to get to and from the polls safely and for free. **Ms. Lowe** stated they worked cooperatively with the Gloucester Housing staff that made sure handouts were distributed on this issue. **Mr. Ryan** assured Councilor Ciolino CATA will accommodate all the seniors at McPherson Park. They go to all the senior housing projects. CATA is here to serve the public.

MOTION: On motion by Councilor LeBlanc, seconded by Councilor Whynott, the Ordinances & Administration Committee voted 3 in favor, 0 opposed to recommend to the City Council pursuant to MGL c. 54, §24 and City Charter Sec. 8-6 to relocate the polling place for Ward 2, Precinct 2, from McPherson Park Building at 31 Prospect Street to Our Lady of Good Voyage Church Youth Center at 140 Prospect Street so that Ward 2 polling places shall be consolidated to one location beginning with the November 6, 2012 election.

The Committee recessed at 5:50 p.m. and reconvened at 6:29 p.m.

Councilors Hardy and Cox remained at the O&A meeting upon the reconvening of O&A. Councilors McGeary and Ciolino left the meeting during the recess.

2. Continued Business:

- A) CC2012-039 (Hardy/Tobey/Theken/Cox/LeBlanc) Amend GCO Chapter 8, Art. II Fire, Art. II Fire Department, Sections 8-16, 8-17 & 8-18 (Cont'd from 09/17/12)

This matter is continued to January 2013.

- B) CC2012-040 (Hardy/Tobey/Theken/Cox/LeBlanc) Amend GCO Chapter 17, Art. II Police, Art. II Police Department, Sections 17-16, 17-17 & 17-18 (Cont'd from 08/20/12)

This matter is continued to January 2013.

Councilor Theken stated they will bring back the matter of the health insurance and whether to adopt MGL on it. The ad hoc committee composed of PEC members and she met at the Addison Gilbert Hospital. There is still some information. There is much they've found out and that this will come back to the Committee soon.

- C) CC2012-050(Tobey) Request that City Council develops policy, rules or ordinance re: governing City Councilors' Communications (Cont'd from 09/17/12)

Councilor Hardy noted they are waiting for a representative from the Secretary of State, Public Records Division to come down to meet with the Council, and that the meeting will be held as a City Council workshop on October 26, 2012 at 10 a.m. in Kyrouz Auditorium. **Ms. Lowe** noted that the speaker will not be addressing Open Meeting Law matters.

This matter is continued to November 19, 2012 for a one item agenda meeting.

Councilor Cox left the meeting at 6:55 p.m. There was no longer a quorum of the City Council.

- D) CC2012-051(LeBlanc) Amend GCO Sec. 22-287 “Disabled veteran, handicapped parking” re: Summer Street #44

Councilor LeBlanc, who attended the Traffic Commission meeting of the 27th stated the Traffic Commission voted this matter down because the requestor had a driveway and that there was a shorter distance between the driveway to her doorway than by putting in a handicap parking space in front of the requestor’s house where parking is already at a premium on the street. This person has a temporary handicapped placard due to a medical procedure.

MOTION: On motion by Councilor LeBlanc, seconded by Councilor Whynott, the Ordinances & Administration Committee voted 0 in favor, 3 opposed to recommend to the City Council to Amend GCO Sec. 22-287 (Disabled veteran, handicapped parking) by ADDING one (1) handicapped parking space in front of Summer Street #44.

- E) CC2012-052 (LeBlanc) Amend GCO Sec. 22-270 “Parking Prohibited at all Times” re: Lincoln Avenue

Councilor LeBlanc stated this order starts the no parking zone at #15 just before Lincoln Park. This is on the westerly side. There is also a bus stop. There was parking during school hours with people parking on the right side of the street with the actual legal parking on the left side (Lincoln Park side). Emergency vehicles cannot get through, and it is a struggle for cars to make it through safely. The road does open up further down. The Traffic Commission voted unanimously to approve the order. **Councilor Theken** asked for measurements for the order so that the amendment to the Code of Ordinances includes that exact information rather than using house numbers and other landmarks to create the parameters of the no parking zone. **Councilor LeBlanc** would also put in a second Council Order for amending the GCO for a tow away zone for this same area as recommended by the Traffic Commission to have an enforcement portion also.

This matter is continued to October 15, 2012.

3. *New Appointment: Committee for the Arts Catherine Ryan (TTE 02/14/2016)*

The Committee reviewed Ms. Ryan’s qualifications and through direct questioning learned of her commitment to volunteering in the capacity as a member of the Committee for the Arts as well as her background of working with the City. **Catherine Ryan** stated she had a gallery in NYC for over 20 years. Her family lived in Gloucester for almost 30 years, and returned to the City six years ago. Since then she has volunteered for the ad hoc listening committee for the Harbor Walk; and was involved in the downtown arts cultural district. She understood that the arts involve not just painting but other formats as well. She spoke about the Harborwalk is bringing imagery of the City to the people. They are working to bring interaction among the arts with the community through the arts project for the Harborwalk. **Councilor Theken** encouraged Ms. Ryan to consider bringing more children into the arts. She knew of her commitment from interacting with her. **Ms. Ryan** also discussed several of her ideas for encouraging the arts in the community with the Committee. **Council President Hardy** asked if Ms. Ryan lived in Gloucester full time; and informed the Councilor she did.

MOTION: On motion by Councilor LeBlanc, seconded by Councilor Whynott, the Ordinances & Administration Committee voted 3 in favor, 0 opposed to recommend to the City Council to appoint Catherine Ryan to the Committee for the Arts, TTE 02/14/16.

4. *Memorandum from the Engineering Dept. re: proposed street naming & numbering plans & request for*

Review of the GCO Sec. 21-3 Street Names (Request for review of Ordinance withdrawn by Karen Andrews, Engineering Department 9/27/12)

Councilor Theken advised that the Committee was in receipt of an email from Karen Andrews of the Engineering Department stating that there is no longer a need for a review of the Ordinance, Sec. 21-3 and so wished to withdraw that request.

**By unanimous consent the Committee voted to allow for the withdrawal of the matter.
This matter is considered closed.**

Councilor Theken reported to the Committee that the matter of the health insurance and whether to adopt MGL to allow the City to have the option of joining the GIS will come back for the Committee's consideration soon. The ad hoc committee, composed of PEC members, the Personnel Director and a Personnel Assistant and herself, met at the Addison Gilbert Hospital recently. There is still some information to be gathered, but here is much they've found out; some in direct contradiction to what had been previously understood. Once the ad hoc committee completes their research and can collate it, this matter will come back to the Committee which is anticipated to happen soon.

A motion was made, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Dana C. Jorgensson
Clerk of Committees**

DOCUMENTS/ITEMS SUBMITTED AT MEETING: None.