

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING - WEDNESDAY EVENING
JUNE 25, 2008

PRESENT: Marshall, Cordeiro, Parella and Barboza

ABSENT: Herreshoff

ALSO PRESENT: Diane M. Williamson, Director of Community
Development
Derek Bradford, Bradford Associates
Derwent Jean Riding, President, Bristol
Historical and Preservation Society
Ed Cifune, Chairman, Historic District
Commission

The Council met in special session on Wednesday evening,
June 25, 2008 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers beginning
at 7:05 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Marshall presiding:

Documents Received:

- Bradford Associates, Bristol Downtown Public Building
Study, June 2008
- Jennifer Cavallaro, Owner, Beehive Café re Vending
Permit for Concerts in the Park - June 24, 2008

1. Director of Community Development Williamson re
presentation: Downtown Public Building Reuse Plan,
continued from June 18, 2008

Barboza/Parella - Voted
unanimously to instruct the Clerk
to correspond with the School
Committee and Superintendent of
Schools so as to relay the
Council's concern regarding the
decommissioning of the Reynolds
and Byfield Schools, indicating
the Council's expectations that
care must be taken to assure that
the buildings are protected from
deterioration and that a "punch
list" of attention items should be
forwarded to the Council as soon
as possible.

Barboza/Cordeiro - Voted
unanimously to consider the

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appointment of a "blue ribbon" committee to further study the report presented and to continue this matter until the regular meeting to be held on July 9, 2008.

Prior to the vote taken, Director of Community Development Williamson introduced Derek Bradford of Bradford Associates, noting that Mr. Bradford was retained by the Town so as to facilitate a study of the Town-owned buildings in the downtown area.

Director of Community Development Williamson reported that the Town was in need of a "bigger plan" for its buildings so as to prevent neglect. She noted the receipt of a small grant from the Certified Local Government program in which the Town participates due to its Historic District Commission.

The planning committee consists of Ms. Riding, Ms. Williamson and Mr. Cifune; with Mr. Bradford & Co., acting as consultants.

Ms. Williamson noted that since all of the buildings under consideration are within the Historic District, she thought it important to gage the opinions of Ms. Riding and Mr. Cifune; also the Historic and Preservation Society provided the necessary deed research to determine if there were protective covenants on any of the buildings which might restrict use.

The group identified sixteen (16) buildings owned by the Town and focused upon seven (7) of these all of which may need to find a new use.

Those studied include the Burnside Memorial Building, Town Hall, John Post Reynolds School, Byfield School, Walley School, the Naval Reserve Armory (Community Center), and the former Hydraulion Fire Station (now rescue station) at the corner of High and Franklin Streets.

Councilwoman Parella commented that since all of these buildings are within a six-block area it is of grave concern that the surrounding neighborhood is not negatively impacted by any Town action, or inaction.

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Director of Community Development Williamson agreed with Ms. Parella about the significance of this study and any subsequent plan.

Mr. Bradford noted that the buildings under consideration are "significant" and do impact the surrounding neighborhood. He noted that his study considered those known to be slated for decommissioning and recommended that these should be reused and not destroyed.

Councilman Cordeiro noted that Mr. Bradford was well-qualified to be a consultant for this group since he is a visiting scholar for architecture and urban design at Roger Williams University and is also associated with Rhode Island School of Design.

Ms. Williamson noted that Mr. Bradford was involved in the study of Route 1 and participated as the Town's consultant in the proposals for the redesign of Metacom Avenue.

Mr. Bradford explained that the study looks at the space and layout of the subject buildings and compares these to the present and anticipated Town "needs."

He provided copies of the "Bristol Downtown Public Building Study - June 2008" and presented the details of each building under consideration as noted in the Study.

During the presentation, Council Chairman Marshall recommended that reuse options should be presented and emphasized as "suggestions."

A discussion ensued concerning the planned decommissioning of the John Post Reynolds School and the potential for its use as a Town Hall. Mr. Bradford noted that the Town Council Meeting space was inadequate and that the school building has a large auditorium with a gallery. He suggested that the present Town Hall might be razed so as to provide more parking for the Burnside Memorial Building and downtown area in general - lessening the Town's dependence upon private parking lots.

Ms. Riding recommended that any parking lot development should be done carefully with proper landscaping.

Regarding the discussion of the Naval Reserve Armory, Council Chairman Marshall suggested that this building

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might parallel the Seamen's Church Institute in Newport with Councilwoman Parella suggesting that the local boating industry might choose to sponsor such an endeavor.

Mr. Bradford recommended that the building was in dire need of repair and a Harbormaster's Office employee "bitterly complained" about the physical condition of the facility.

Mr. Bradford also recommended that the "large open space" of the building should be preserved.

Councilwoman Parella thanked Mr. Bradford and the study group for being "realistic" about their suggestions and also that the group appeared to be concerned and "respectful."

Councilwoman Parella stated that she was concerned that the parking availability near the Reynolds and Byfield Schools might be problematic for the relocation of Town offices. She suggested that Byfield School might be a better choice for a future Town Hall since there was some limited parking on site.

Mr. Bradford reminded the Council of the small lot adjacent to the Reynolds School.

Ms. Riding noted that the existing Town Hall parking lot is in fairly close proximity to the Reynolds School.

Council Chairman Marshall stated that he was in favor of the appointment of a "blue ribbon" committee to further the plan for the downtown buildings and also suggested that the Council might consider funding same in the 2009-2010 budget.

Council Chairman Marshall also noted that care must be given so that decommissioned buildings do not deteriorate once closed with Director of Community Development Williamson stating that the Council should receive a "punch list" concerning pending maintenance items.

Council Chairman Marshall agreed and further noted that the Town should identify the issues relating to the continued operation of the buildings so that the information might be transferred to a responsible department.

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Mr. Cifune reminded the Council that a good plan to secure the buildings and provide minimal heat, etc., will assure that plaster is not damaged and pipes do not burst. He suggested that the information should come from the School Department and that the School Department should assume some, if not all, of the responsibility.

Councilman Barboza suggested that the Council should communicate with the School Department so as to outline the Town's expectations.

After the vote taken, Councilwoman Parella stated her disappointment that the School Committee apparently believes it can unburden itself of responsibility for decommissioned buildings noting that the Committee should "share in the plan." She also stated that there appeared to be an "attitude issue" that decommissioned buildings were solely the problem of the Town and not the School District.

Council Chairman Marshall again stated that the Town should expect a status report concerning the School Buildings slated for decommissioning with Councilwoman Parella suggesting that a "walk through" along with a knowledgeable individual would be prudent.

Director of Community Development Williamson noted that the Building Official might be able to be of assistance in this matter.

Mr. Cifune suggested that any existing maintenance contracts might be reviewed and needed work accomplished before these expire.

Councilwoman Parella suggested that the request to the School Committee should include a report on all maintenance contracts.

Councilwoman Parella also volunteered to serve on a commission that would be established for the implementations of the Town Buildings plan.

Council Chairman Marshall suggested that both Ms. Riding and Mr. Cifune should continue on the new "blue ribbon" committee.

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A discussion ensued regarding the future use of the Burnside Memorial Building with Ms. Riding noting that the first-floor room might become a display area for the Town's General Burnside memorabilia.

2. Independence Park Vendors

Parella/Cordeiro - Voted unanimously to limit the amount of park vending licenses to a total of three and to grant licenses for the duration of the 4th of July Concert series to the Bristol House of Pizza and the Beehive Café per the conditions as previously stipulated (in the granting of the first license to Sam's Pizza on June 18, 2008) - fee waived.

Prior to the vote taken, the Council noted the application of the Beehive Café for a park vendor's license for the Fourth of July Concert series.

Greg Gatos of the Bristol House of Pizza, who was present at this evening's meeting also asked the Council for a license for the 4th of July Concert series at Independence Park.

The Clerk suggested that he might be provided the authority to grant additional licenses for applicants already in possession of a bona fide victualling license.

After the vote taken, Mr. Gatos asked if he might be able to vend from his existing vendor "trailer" with the Council, by consensus, informing him that this would be acceptable provided that no cooking will be done on Town property. Mr. Gatos agreed that there would be no cooking done within the park.

3. Director of Community Development Williamson re request for Executive Session (Continued from June 18, 2008)

Cordeiro/Barboza - Voted unanimously to adjourn into Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (5).

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Parella/Barboza - Voted
unanimously to seal the minutes of
the Executive Session and resume
open session at 8:45 o'clock PM.

There being no further business upon a motion by
Councilwoman Parella, seconded by Councilman Barboza and
unanimously vote, the Chairman declared this special
meeting to be adjourned at 8:46 o'clock PM.

Louis P. Cirillo, CMC
Council Clerk