

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING - WEDNESDAY EVENING  
FEBRUARY 20, 2013**

PRESENT: Parella, Calouro, Stuart, and Sweeney

ALSO PRESENT: Antonio A. Teixeira, Town Administrator

ABSENT: Herreshoff

The Council met in special session on Wednesday evening, February 20, 2013 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, beginning at 6:41 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Parella presiding:

**\*AMEND ITEM**

1. Interviews/Appointment - Harbor Commission Advisory Committee (term to expire August 2013)

**\*AMEND ITEM**

- a. Andrew Noronha, 19 Monroe Avenue - interest/appointment

**\*AMEND ITEM**

- b. Michael Donahue, 108 State Street - interest/appointment

Stuart/Sweeney - Voted unanimously to consider an amendment to the Town Code to allow up to seven (7) members of this Committee.

Interview - Andrew Noronha

Prior to the vote taken, Mr. Noronha addressed the Council and informed members that he is familiar with most of the people who are concerned about the State Street Dock and Narragansett Bay in general. He added that he would like to assure that things are done correctly and that the Town's harbor assets are maintained for all to enjoy; citizens and visitors alike.

Mr. Noronha also informed the Council that he has many opinions and that he is not afraid to express these.

Councilman Stuart asked Mr. Noronha if he attends Harbor Commission meetings with Mr. Noronha responding affirmatively. He added that he is involved with the State Street Dock and also that he attends Town Council meetings.

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Councilman Sweeney asked to know if Mr. Noronha has a resume to share with Mr. Noronha responding that he has not prepared a resume. He added that he "worked on the water" when he was younger and is familiar with the coastline and the problems associated with it, including littering. He explained that he enjoys fishing and often "preaches" a no-litter policy. He also explained that he is observant and respects nature.

Mr. Noronha informed the Council of his opinion that the "water is for everyone."

Mr. Noronha stated that he plans to continue attending Harbor Commission meetings even if he is not selected to serve on the Advisory Committee.

Councilman Calouro asked to know if Mr. Noronha could share a particular recent Harbor Commission issue that he was pleased with.

Mr. Noronha informed the Council that he was pleased to participate in the discussion regarding the shore access at Mount Hope Farm which had a positive result for him.

Council Chairman Parella asked to know if Mr. Noronha attends meetings with Mr. Noronha responding that he attends many meetings and tries to encourage others to attend meetings and express their opinions.

Council Chairman Parella thanked Mr. Noronha for submitting his application.

Interview - Michael Donahue

Michael Donahue informed the Council that he has a "unique background," having been a commercial fisherman and also a contractor for the Coast Guard.

Mr. Donahue stated that he recognizes the issues of chemical imbalances.

Councilman Sweeney asked to know if Mr. Donahue might identify things he would like to change with Mr. Donahue responding that while fishing he pulled out a length of rusty mooring chain and that this chain posed a hazard. He explained that there is something he notices every day which concerns him.

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Mr. Donahue also questioned the configuration of the Town's docks and explained that Mr. Noronha is often at the shore and observes issues also.

Mr. Donahue explained that he believes that the Town's transient dock system appears to be ineffective and that he would like the opportunity to analyze this and make recommendations for improvements. He added that the Commission is studying this particular issue at this time also.

Mr. Donahue stated that he does not believe that the Harbormaster should be a "business agent." He also informed the Council that he has the time available and intends to attend meetings.

Council Chairman Parella thanked Mr. Donahue for applying for the position. She asked to know if the Committee might be expanded to allow for seven members.

The Clerk noted that the Committee is established by ordinance and that the Council can certainly vote to amend the ordinance.

**\*AMEND ITEM**

2. RIPEC Study Results

Stuart/Calouro - Voted unanimously to receive and place this matter on file and to endeavor to work with Administration to consider the applicability of the report in the future.

Prior to the vote taken, the RIPEC representatives provided two power point presentation handouts.

Ashley Denault, RIPEC Director of Research, provided an overview of the "final findings" presentation.

Council Chairman Parella asked to know if the report contains "cost of trash" with it being noted that this information appears on Page 13 of the report.

Council Chairman Parella noted that the plan the Council previously considered retains all employees and reallocates

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their time to do other tasks which are currently left undone due to staffing levels.

Ms. Denault agreed, stating that Council Chairman Parella was correct.

Town Treasurer Goucher noted that the alternative is to hire three or four new employees to take care of the undone "maintenance tasks."

Council Chairman Parella suggested that the full cost of hiring the new employees should be made known.

Ms. Denault also explained that there is opportunity to reduce transfer costs since there may be economies of scale with a more broad-reaching contract which includes rubbish collection. She added that this amount is also not included in the report.

Ms. Denault noted that the Town's possible next steps include a new RFP and also that she recommends that the Town also examines the efficiencies of the transfer station and the composting facility. She added that the Town should also consider a capital plan for replacement of equipment.

She also added that the "model" provides suggestion that the Town should purchase trucks in six out of ten years.

She also added that the Town could consider purchasing larger recycling "totes" which will allow for increased recycling.

Councilman Sweeney asked for a clarification of the information provided on Page 12, asking if this was for both residential and commercial recycling with Ms. Denault explaining that this considers residential only.

After the vote taken, Town Administrator Teixeira informed the Council that he would like to have approximately one year's time to review the matter thoroughly and develop a well-thought-out recommendation for future action.

**\*13. Workshop with RIPTA re Hope Street Bus Stops**

Calouro/Sweeney - Voted unanimously  
to ask RIPTA to have only three (3)  
bus stops between Constitution and

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Franklin Streets and to also assess within a six (6) month period as to whether or not the newly outlined "bus-only" areas will remain or be removed based upon the use of same.

Prior to the vote taken, Mark Therrien of RIPTA noted that the Rhode Island Department of Transportation painted the bus boxes and that he believes these to be a "good thing."

Mr. Therrien noted that the buses must be able to get to the curb in order to lower their wheelchair ramps. He suggested that there were perhaps too many bus stops and that some might be eliminated to return the bus boxes to parking spaces.

Mr. Therrien noted that he met with Director of Community Development Williamson and former Town Administrator Mederos and that he remains open to suggestions to mitigate the issue.

Mr. Therrien also noted that the stops along Hope Street appear to be very close together.

Council Chairman Parella informed those present that the current bus stops have been in place for her entire life and that she was uncertain as to the need to have a stop at nearly every corner.

Council Chairman Parella noted that the "big issue" to consider involves the so-called "bus boxes" since the bus drivers do not appear to be using these. She explained that since automobile parking is limited, the Town is reluctant to allow two or three parking spaces to be take-up by bus boxes if these are not being used. She added that it may be advisable to eliminate some of the bus stops rather than sacrificing the parking spaces.

Mr. Therrien admitted that the bus drivers are not utilizing the new bus boxes and explained that these drivers must be retrained. He noted that the bus boxes are of a certain configuration and cannot be made smaller.

Council Chairman Parella asked to know who decided that the buses should be made to pull out of the lane of traffic and the reason for this change with Mr. Therrien responding that

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the new buses have ramps which must be lowered to a curb-area in order to accommodate persons in wheelchairs.

Mr. Therrien admitted that the bus drivers are not utilizing the bus boxes and that training is needed to accomplish this.

Mr. Therrien reported that similar bus boxes are being configured in Pawtucket and Providence and that he was open to "removing a few" of the bus boxes.

Councilman Calouro noted that bus drivers appear to "nose-in" in order to pick-up and discharge passengers and that this practice should allow for a "reclaiming" of the parking spaces.

Mr. Therrien again suggested that the Council might allow him the opportunity for retraining of the bus drivers and that several of the bus stops could be eliminated leaving three stops in both directions.

Mr. Therrien noted that the intersection at Hope and State Streets is well utilized and recommended that that particular stop be retained. He also noted that the retraining of the bus drivers should take six (6) months.

Councilman Calouro asked to know when the permanent striping will be accomplished with Director of Community Development Williamson noting that the State DOT informs her office that this will be accomplished in April. She added that Town Administrator Teixeira, Principal Planner Tanner and she walked the route. She added that the State may be agreeable to providing more amenities for bus riders should some of the bus stops be eliminated. She noted that the group "has an eye toward" eliminating stops at Oliver, Bradford, and Church Streets and retaining stops at Constitution, State, and Franklin Streets.

Mr. Therrien noted that RIPTA is looking toward eliminating approximately 1,000 stops throughout the State and would appreciate the Town's willingness to cooperate.

Council Chairman Parella suggested that the Council might ask RIPTA to eliminate the bus boxes if the drivers are not adequately using them within six (6) months (consider at regular meeting of August 28, 2013).

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Director of Community Development Williamson stated that the Town Administrator will communicate with RIPTA concerning the Council's decision.

Mr. Therrien replied that he, too, was aware of this.

Director of Community Development Williamson noted that there is a plan to eliminate the Metacom Avenue RIPTA route.

Mr. Therrien noted that the route operates twice per day with very little ridership. He noted that the Hope Street route is very successful with an ample number of riders.

Council Chairman Parella asked to know if RIPTA has a park and ride stop in Bristol with Mr. Therrien responding that there is no park and ride stop in Bristol.

After the vote taken, Town Administrator Teixeira responded that he was in agreement with the Council's action concerning this matter.

Director of Community Development Williamson noted that there will be a meeting at the Barrington Public Library (this is the closest to Bristol) on March 6, 2013 from 6:00 o'clock PM until 8:00 o'clock PM to consider RIPTA's route modifications. She noted that there was information provided in flyers and on the RIPTA website.

**\*24. Workshop re Commercial Recycling**

- a. Presentation by Crystal Noiseux from RI Resource Recovery

Council Chairman Parella noted that the Town's goal in this matter is to look for opportunities in recycling. She noted that the cost of tipping fees increase dramatically when the Town exceeds its allotment for material sent to the Central Landfill. She introduced Ms. Noiseux from Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation.

Ms. Noiseux reviewed her power point presentation.

Council Chairman Parella stated that the Town would like to increase its portion of recycling with Ms. Noiseux explaining that the Town has the second highest percentage of landfill waste and is the 13<sup>th</sup> lowest in what is recycled.

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A discussion ensued regarding tipping fee avoidance. It was noted that the rubbish tipped within the cap costs \$32 per ton and the over the cap rubbish tips at \$54 per ton. It was also noted that recyclables tip for either \$0 or the Town receives a rebate on the amount derived from the recycled materials.

A discussion ensued regarding potential policy changes, including consideration of "no bin/no barrel." Ms. Noiseux noted that the report has information about the increase in recycling found as a result of policy changes in some communities.

Council Chairman Parella asked to know if the larger recycling bins (those requiring a special truck to dump them) can be utilized in areas with narrow streets. She explained that some streets in Bristol are quite narrow and that it may be difficult to use the larger bins overall.

Ms. Noiseux explained that the larger bins are used in Boston and Philadelphia with Council Chairman Parella asking to know if these are used exclusively.

Ms. Noiseux stated that she would provide this information.

Council Chairman Parella asked for an update on the "commercial" recycling program with Public Works Director Galuska responding that there are 26 businesses currently enrolled and that there are others who wish to expand the program. He noted that most of the participants are restaurants/bars and that the recycling is primarily bottles and cardboard. Public Works Director Galuska agreed to provide a list of those who participate.

Council Chairman Parella stated that she would like to see a "short term education committee" established who can survey businesses and help them to get involved. She also noted that the effort must match the DPW capacity and then a "concrete plan" should be established.

Councilman Calouro stated that the participating businesses appear to be doing their recycling willingly.

Andrew Noronha informed the Council that he works at Shaw's Supermarket and that the business "recycles everything." He noted that the store has a "commingle area" and that

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everything is recycled from this area including plastic bags, bottles, etc.

Shannon Rozea, of 19 Sunnyside Avenue, suggested that a recycling program should be expanded in the schools. She noted that she founded the "Green Team" and that there is a master plan for Guiteras. She noted that this plan includes "environmental literacy."

Council Chairman Parella asked to know if there are similar programs in the other schools with Ms. Rozea stating that she was uncertain if there was any other program.

Council Chairman Parella and Councilman Sweeney agreed that the information provided by Ms. Rozea was valuable to know.

Council Chairman Parella asked to know how much material is recycled at Guiteras with Mr. Rozea responding that she is working with George Simmons to get a recycling center in place. She noted that currently only milk cartons are recycled and that a center is needed to receive the other materials.

Council Chairman Parella asked to know the size of Ms. Rozea's committee with Ms. Rozea responding that the committee consists of five to ten members and that she is trying to put together a student group.

Councilman Stuart noted that it would be important to get residents "on board" with the recycling program. He suggested that the Town might have a recycling mascot with a catchy name.

Council Chairman Parella agreed that action steps were needed for an educational campaign including marketing and design. She noted that some marketing and design professionals may be available to offer their talents on a volunteer basis.

Stan Dimock, of 341 Thames Street, noted that RIRRC has a "phenomenal website" including a "recylclopedia."

E. Keith Maloney, of 60 Van Wickle Drive, stated that he supports increasing recycling and that the effort should be a "no brainer." He added that any number of organizations should be willing to lend a hand with the effort; including

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the Conservation Commission, Harbor Commission and Save Bristol Harbor.

Mr. Maloney informed the Council that he spoke with Rachael Z. Miller of the Rozalia Project for a Clean Ocean. He explained that the Project utilizes a 60 foot yacht designed to clean the ocean floor and that she will be attending the annual meeting of Save Bristol Harbor in order to address the membership.

Mr. Maloney stated that he will bring the Project to the local elementary schools through the use of underwater robots (ROVs). He noted that there will be an opportunity to see waste and refuse under water near the shoreline.

Mr. Maloney also noted that Save Bristol Harbor will participate in the Mosaico Sense of Pride program with Ms. Miller.

David E. Barboza noted that a person is pilfering cardboard from that which is left to be picked up by the Town's recycling trucks. He noted that the person is doing this for profit at the expense of the Town.

He also questioned the Town's ability to use larger recycling equipment on narrow streets.

Council Chairman Parella noted that the discussion concerning larger recycling equipment is solely "food for thought" at this time and that the only concrete goal is to increase recycling rates.

Town Administrator Teixeira noted that he has had conversations with School Department managers Pauline Silva and George Simmons and also with Roger Williams University concerning recycling cooperative efforts.

Mr. Maloney stated that recycling is the right thing to do and that he understands that the success of recycling has a direct impact on the fees paid by the Town. He suggested that the Town should "target" its tipping fees.

It was suggested that the Town should challenge the public and have a working group to spearhead a "campaign" with promotional materials. Council Chairman Parella suggested that Save Bristol Harbor might sponsor this working group and initiate the help of more volunteers and that it not be

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an "official" Town committee since this may slow the progress due to the bureaucratic requirements.

Council Chairman Parella suggested that the Council should be informed about the Town's current capacity to accept more recyclables.

Ethan Tucker, of 34 Thames Street, reminded the Council that he provided information regarding an "energy and environmental" committee from the City of Newport and that representatives of this committee also made a presentation to the Council in the fall. He noted that the committee expressed its willingness to help Bristol do the same.

Council Chairman Parella stated that the Town may wish to do this as a long term project but for now prefers to have the Save Bristol Harbor committee act independently as a short-term solution. She asked Mr. Tucker to provide his information for the benefit of the new Councilors. Mr. Tucker agreed to do this.

**\*AMEND ITEM**

5. Recycling in General

Council Chairman Parella suggested that the Council may wish to consider long term recycling goals at its meeting to be held on March 6. She added that Mr. Tucker should provide additional information regarding his suggestion at that time.

*No other specific action was taken regarding this agenda item.*

\*36. Workshop re plastic bag ban

- a. Presentation by Channing Jones, Environment RI
- b. (Town Solicitor Ursillo re) Town of Barrington Ordinance "Reusable Checkout Bag Initiative"

*No specific action was taken concerning this agenda item.*

Council Chairman Parella asked that the various power point presentations should be made available to the public via the

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Town's website. The Clerk agreed to provide same to the Webmaster for posting.

Councilman Sweeney introduced the topic and explained that plastic bags are not biodegradable but rather break down into small bits which end up in the food chain. He introduced Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones reviewed a detailed power point presentation.

A discussion ensued regarding the presence of bacteria in reusable bags with Council Chairman Parella noting that reusable bags should be laundered regularly to prevent the bacteria.

Mr. Jones reported that 17 businesses signed a letter in support of the bag ban.

Councilman Stuart stated that there should be an effort to educate residents with literature, etc. He noted that there was some type of mail survey done in Barrington.

Mr. Jones stated that his group does not have the resources to do this and that he would rather see ordinances enacted by the towns.

Councilman Stuart stated that he was neither for nor against the proposal at this time and that he agrees that plastic is a problem. He added that there are environmental concerns about paper and cotton also, including carbon-dioxide emissions and acidity.

Mr. Jones stated that these facts are also important to consider. He noted that the carbon-dioxide relating to bags in general (paper and plastic) is insignificant as compared to automobiles and heating.

Council Chairman Parella noted that Mr. Jones' focus is on marine life.

Council Chairman Parella noted that the Barrington ordinance required enforcement by the police.

Councilman Calouro stated that he, too, is neither for nor against the proposal and that he spoke with some business owners who appear to be "split 50-50" on the matter. He added that he typically reuses plastic bags as a matter of

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practice. He suggested that there should be better efforts toward education instead of legislation.

A discussion ensued regarding litter found in the oceans.

Councilman Stuart stated that there is a bill in the legislature to consider plastic bags.

Council Chairman Parella asked to know if the so-called biodegradable plastics are legitimately so. She also asked to know the status of the proposed legislation mentioned by Councilman Stuart.

Mr. Jones stated that the bill does not appear to be seriously considered this year and that he believes that the towns should take the lead.

Councilman Stuart stated that he believes the best solution is to eliminate littering.

Council Chairman Parella asked to know where the recycled bags are utilized with Mr. Jones responding that these are converted into park equipment. He added that only 10% of the bags distributed are recycled.

Council Chairman Parella suggested that the effort should follow a course of encouraging recycling. She noted that State Law prescribes that large stores should provide a place to recycle the bags.

Mr. Jones noted that recycling efforts have not been successful.

Mr. Noronha agreed that education is lacking.

Michael Byrnes, of 244 Metacom Avenue, stated that he agrees with Mr. Jones that this is an important issue but that he also believes that legislation and law enforcement has more important things to consider. He added that he visits the shoreline often and notices many other things to be more prevalent including Styrofoam cups. He added that sewage overflows from Fall River appear to be more damaging to ocean wildlife than plastics.

Mr. Tucker stated that he believes that Bristol should take a lead in this issue and that it would not be prudent to wait for legislative action.

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Councilman Stuart suggested that the matter is a "larger issue" than Bristol and that it would be preferred to have the same rules for everyone especially considering that the Town might get other communities' bags "downstream."

Mr. Tucker noted that the Palmer River appears to have much litter within it flowing downstream. He suggested that the effort needs to begin somewhere.

Eugenia Marks, Senior Director of Policy for the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, stated that the Society documents marine debris by item and finds cigarette butts to be first, plastic caps second, and plastic bags third or fourth.

She noted that one of the problems associated with plastic bags is their flimsiness since they fly easily. She noted that whales can consume plastic bags and also that turtles mistake these for jellyfish.

Zach Zeilman, of the RI Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, informed the Council that Bristol deserves to be free of plastic marine debris.

Seamus Sullivan (no address given) reported that he led the citizen outreach campaign and that people signed hundreds of petitions.

Ms. Noiseux explained that all big-box stores must collect plastic bags and that she is not sure about the reported 10% recycling since there are no reports available. She noted that the ReStore recycling containers will accept other plastic bags such as those covering paper towels and dry cleaning bags.

She added that her agency opposed the bill in the legislature because it stops the ReStore program. She also added that the big problem with the plastic bags is that people allow them to be windblown.

Anthony Morettini, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, stated that he would like to be more involved in this issue and that he was still in learning mode.

Steven Katz, of 42 River Street, noted that the plastic bag issue was a valuable topic for discussion. He suggested a

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"balanced approach" and that he will join the Save Bristol Harbor committee as proposed by Council Chairman Parella.

Dave McLaughlin, of Newport, reported that banning bags is complicated and that education is important so as to allow people to connect with nature.

Mr. Maloney stated that Save Bristol Harbor provided a water bottle filling station at Mt. Hope High School which saved approximately 12,000 bottles.

Victoria Fonseca, of 227 Thames Street, asked Mr. Jones if the stores were asked to voluntarily curtail the plastic bags versus legislating the move.

Mr. Jones replied that there is a volunteer effort in Jamestown which appears to be "much like herding cats." He noted that "legislation makes things happen."

Mr. Byrnes suggested that the matter might be better resolved with education.

Councilman Sweeney noted that he was familiar with the Stop and Shop effort to encourage reusable bags with a "nickel campaign" where the store paid customers five cents each for using reusable bags.

Recreation Director Burke read a prepared "personal opinion" statement in support of a bag ban. He noted that the Town's 18 parks are often littered with plastic bags.

Councilman Sweeney asked to know if the Council might be willing to consider the draft ordinance for first reading with Councilman Stuart responding that he believes that the Town should be cautious regarding enacting an ordinance. He added that it might be more prudent to receive a better survey since the available data appears to be insufficient.

Councilman Calouro agreed with Councilman Stuart stating that he learned from the presentations. He questioned the statistics concerning the amount of plastic bags recycled (10%) and that this needs to be verified.

Councilman Calouro agreed with Mr. Byrnes that an educational approach may be preferred at this time and that he was unable to justify a vote on an ordinance at this time.

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Council Chairman Parella agreed that she would like to have the 10% claim of recycling plastic bags to be confirmed.

Erich Haslehurst, of 82 Church Street, noted that there was a report issued by Brown University concerning recycling of plastic bags.

Council Chairman Parella stated that the previously suggested Save Bristol Harbor committee and also the Conservation Commission will be examining the issue.

Council Chairman Parella thanked the various participants for their comments and also Mike Davis for filming this evening's meeting. She asked the Clerk to obtain copies of the various power point presentations and to make these available on the Town's website.

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Stuart, seconded by Councilman Calouro and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 10:26 o'clock PM.

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Louis P. Cirillo, CMC  
Council Clerk