



Memorials & Dedications

April 30, 2015 – 7:06 PM - **Minutes**

City Hall, 133 William Street, Councillor William Saltzman
Antechamber, Room 213, Municipal Building

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON MEMORIALS & DEDICATIONS

DATE: APRIL 30, 2015

TIME: 7:06 P.M.

PLACE: WILLIAM SALTZMAN ANTECHAMBER, ROOM 213, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS HENRY BOUSQUET, CHAIRMAN; KERRY WINTERSON, VICE-CHAIRMAN; BRIAN GOMES (7:32); STEVEN MARTINS; DANA REBEIRO (7:10)

ABSENT: NO ONE

ALSO PRESENT: COUNCILLORS NAOMI CARNEY; JOSEPH LOPES

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Councillor Bousquet called the meeting to order and took attendance. He informed the Committee that Councillor Gomes called and said he would be late, due to his attendance at another meeting.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Gomes, Saunders and Lopes, requesting, that the Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications meet with Jeff Costa, Chairman of Financing and Marketing, Deb Shrader, President and Committee members of the Fishermen's Tribute Fund, for the purposes of discussing the possibility of erecting a Fishermen's Memorial to be located at Monkey's Island on East Rodney French Boulevard, north of East Beach (Ref'd 03/22/12, 05/22/12 – tabled, letters, 09/24/12 – tabled, 11/26/12 – letter to the Mayor, 05/20/13 – Clerk of Comm. to meet with Deb Shrader and Sue Bragdon, 08/28/13 – tabled, 03/11/14 – tabled for 30 days) (1)

Councillor Bousquet read a letter from DPI Commissioner Ron Labelle, into the record and informed the Committee that he would not be here this evening. He further stated in his letter that he had submitted some information to the Committee for review and to contact him directly with any questions. Councillor Bousquet asked Councillor Lopes for a synopsis of the information.

Councillor Lopes advised that the information that was sent out by Commissioner Labelle's Office contained a letter to the homeowners, a copy of the revised design including a 12 foot riser with dimensions, and FEMA maps, which were copied for the record.

Fishermen's Tribute Fund President, Deb Shrader informed the Committee that the sculpture for the monument will be arriving within the next couple of months and still has no "home".

Representative of the Mayor, Christina Connelly explained that the project has been designed and the Chapter 91 Permit is current for the approved design. She explained that the Administration tried to get funding on the State level but the design wasn't feasible, due to restrictions caused by what the City charges for parking, which disqualified the City for the grant for park funding.

Deb Shrader commented on the design of the monument explaining that she wants the design monument to be visible but that it doesn't have to be on a 12 foot riser for that to happen. She further explained to the Committee for the last three years she has been advocating the site for the monument at Monkey's Island to the people. She also said that out of the private funding the Fishermen's Tribute fund has raised about \$120,000 and felt that if they insisted on using this new design that Commissioner Labelle submitted, which wasn't the originally agreed upon concept for this monument, that the City should incur some of the cost.

Fishermen's Tribute Fund, Chairman of Site and Design, Derek Frates explained that they were not happy about the new design but accepted it because at least it's some progress towards the erection of the monument although the funding for such a large project would be difficult to raise; if not impossible without aid. He also informed the Committee that the Finance and Marketing contact for the Fishermen's Tribute Fund is now Sandra Silveirinha, replacing Jeff Costa who hasn't held that position for some time. Councillor Bousquet asked Ms. Shrader for an updated listing of the members to be submitted to the Clerk. She said that she would forward them to the Committee as soon as possible.

Deb Shrader also spoke about the importance of this monument. She explained that when Fishermen go out on long trips away from their families, sometimes having a really rough trip, this monument should be the first thing they will see leaving and the first thing they will see coming in from their long trip. She informed that she was offered space at Seamen's Bethel and the Whaling Museum to store the sculpture until a more permanent home could be located. Ms. Shrader stated that she would like to keep it crated until it's ready to be placed as part of the monument; explaining that taking it out of the crate causes weatherization and possible damage to the sculpture each time its uncrated, re-crated or moved. She also explains, that they have been trying to raise awareness and funding for the project, through magazine articles and outreach, but every time the timeline for the project changes, they look like fools. It's troubling because it undermines the Tribute Fund's credibility to others they may need funding from because it appears they don't follow through with the actual plans. She goes on to explain the main purpose of this monument is to honor lost fishermen and have a place for their loved ones to go to mourn and remember their fallen family members. She stated that she realizes that there will be constituent complaints about the view, or even having it at this location, but what people need to realize is that the Fishing Industry is the base of what this whole City's culture is based on. She feels a little more respect in that reality would be nice.

Fishermen Tribute members collectively expressed that the main problem was that there weren't any solid plans. They had been given the site, design and funding information and now many of the plans have changed and they are not sure how to move forward with this and it's very frustrating.

Councillor Lopes explained that Ms. Connelly had already stated that this monument wouldn't be erected in this Fiscal Year, due to budgeting constraints. The Finance Committee chose not to fund this because they were told there were no monies in the construction fund to approve this. He also stated that at the time the original motion was put forward that the original design didn't have all the aesthetics the new design now has and the City just can't afford that.

Ms. Connelly spoke about the design and said that it wasn't only the aesthetics of the monument to consider but that it's also functional. She also stated that problems could occur during storms by toppling the monument and that it would be better protected if it was higher up; also, that she was told by the engineer that the monument could actually topple under certain weather issues, which was the reasoning behind the new design. Councillor Lopes rebutted and said that there has been a tombstone on that pier since Dr. John O'Toole was around and despite bad weather, has not "flinched".

Councillor Bousquet stated that the design had to be revisited and that there would have to be input from all on what the dimensions should be so that everyone can be satisfied.

Ms. Shrader informed the Committee that the Mayor had suggested doing a public poll on the issue for a general consensus on what everyone wanted in order to allow the public to weigh in on the process.

Councillor Bousquet suggested that the Fishermen's Tribute Fund members reach out to their community and do a type of survey, or charete to invite people who are interested in this monument.

Councillor Lopes stated that the design should come from the members of the Fishermen's Tribute Fund Committee, and not the City; as it stands now it was put in the City's hands and three years later all there is to show for it is a faulty design and no progress being made. He stated the size of the monument didn't have to be substantial, that the "Friendly Son's of St. Patrick's" monument, is comparably smaller and can be seen at ease from a great distance.

Councillor Rebeiro stated she could not understand why the Fishermen's Tribute Fund Board members weren't given more of a say in the design process, since this monument was sought out by them, for the Fishermen and their families. She then suggested contracting a company that can do more than one conceptual design that they could all discuss and agree upon before looking for budget approval for this project.

Ms. Shrader explained that the members didn't have much say in the process at all that it was taken on by the City's Infrastructure Department. She talked more about the different ways to raise funding for the project. A lot of Companies and Investors don't want to fund something that is ultimately owned by the City, that what they're looking for is pretty much a privately owned park/monument. She asked that if anyone in the body knew of any other funding that may possibly be available that they please reach out to her because as it stands there is very little private funding for this. She also mentioned that educationally they might be able to secure some grant funding if the monument in and of itself can be utilized for educational purposes such as, individual plaques with descriptions on them about the monument and the Fishing Industry.

Councillor Bousquet noted that from the information the Committee has received from the Mitchell Administration, the Fishermen's Tribute Fund members and the City Council that Monkey's Island is the designated spot chosen for this monument, to which all agreed it was. The only debate now is how to get it done in the least amount of time and the concept of the design.

Fishermen Tribute Fund Marketing and Finance Director, Derek Frates, stated that the current design cost is estimated at about \$250,000 and although the City will be paying some of the cost, the members of the Tribute Fund will still be responsible for the rest. The membership agreed that taking off a lot of the embellished details of the revised design would cut the cost of the monument dramatically.

Councillor Bousquet said that this monument would not be able to be a part of this Fiscal Year's budget. The City's finances cannot take on this type of expense, due to the snow removal charges incurred over this past winter.

Ms. Shrader stated that the Fishermen still bring in a lot of product and are the cornerstone of this economy and that she doesn't want to get peoples hopes up for a monument at Monkey's Island and then not have it there because the Council voted against it. She wants all of the details ironed out before approaching people for funding; otherwise it makes them look discredited and also stops them from securing federal/state grant funding, if available.

Councillor Gomes apologized for being late and explained that he was attending a meeting as it sometimes goes in this business. He reiterated an earlier statement by the body that he and several other Councillors worked very hard to secure Monkey's Island as a site for this monument and that it was no easy task. He spoke about the riser and the height saying that 12 feet, when you're standing in front of it, is a lot different as you step back or what it is from a property line or house. He stated that he hasn't heard any

complaints from the constituency about the riser and that this part of the design appears to be the main hurdle. In his opinion, Monkey's Island is the most suitable site for this monument.

Councillor Bousquet reiterated that the biggest hurdle this issue is facing, at this time, is location because in a couple of months this statue will be here with nowhere to go. It's the most eminent problem outside of the money for infrastructure this project is facing.

Ms. Shrader then stated that she had spoken to Ron Labelle about storing it until it was ready to be placed due to possible damage that may take place when re-crating, uncrating or moving it. He didn't feel it was a good idea to keep moving it around to which she agreed and added that there are also problems associated with weathering if left out.

Councillor Martins stated he recently spoke to former Councillor John Saunders and he apologizes for not being present due to a prior commitment, but agrees with his former colleagues that the design should remain the way it was originally sought for this project.

On motion, by Councillor Rebeiro and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: That the Committee sends a letter to the Fishermen's Tribute Fund in support of the placement of the monument, in its original design at Monkey's Island. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion, by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Martins, the Committee VOTED: That the Committee sends a letter to the State and Federal Delegation, requesting their support for the placement of the monument at Monkey's Island. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion, by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Winterson, the Committee VOTED: To table this item until the Committee's next meeting on May 27, 2015. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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A motion was made by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Gomes, to follow the Chairman's recommendation to take "No Further Action" on items two (2) through seven (7). This motion passed on a voice vote. They are as follows:

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Saunders, Gonsalves, Alves, Martins, Dehner, Duarte, Gomes, and Lopes, requesting to rename a portion of Shawmut Avenue, from Nash Road to the New Bedford Regional Airport to ARNOLD B. CAMARA AVENUE, in memory of Mr. Camara for his contribution to the community. (Ref'd 7/18/10, 5/20/13 – tabled; clerk to look into how many parcels would be affected by this name change, 07/30/14 – tabled, 9/15/14 – Letters) (2)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Morad requesting, on behalf of Normand Cabral, Commander-Howland Chapter Veterans Association, that the Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications consider dedicating the electrical building located at Clasky Common Park in memory of the late Louis S. Whitlow, Jr., who for many years worked tirelessly and with great pride on the annual holiday decorations display at Clasky Common Park. (Ref'd 11/22/11, 05/22/12 – Letters, 03/11/14 – Remain in Committee, 07/30/14 – Letters, 9/15/14 – Letters) (3)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Lopes, Gonsalves and Bousquet, requesting, that the Special Committee on Memorials & Dedications look into erecting at least six Peace Poles across New Bedford, with one Peace Pole being erected in each ward across the City; and further, that said Committee seek input from community groups and local religious organizations on placement of said poles. (Ref'd 08/16/12, 03/11/14 - letters) (4)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Lopes and Council President Martins, requesting, that the Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications look into establishing a Sister City Relationship with Johannesburg, South Africa; and further requesting that when this matter is heard in Committee that this Councillor be invited to said meeting. (Ref'd 08/16/12, 03/11/14 – letters, tabled) (5)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Alves and Coelho requesting, that the City Council designate an appropriate memorial to recognize the commitment and leadership efforts of the late James (Jim) Simmons in cleaning up and saving the Acushnet River for future generations, it is because of his efforts and leadership the local environmental organization “Hands Across the River” took on the challenge to fight the National Environmental Protection Agency to insist and require them to clean up the Acushnet River and to locate the dredged PCB’s to a location away from New Bedford; and further, that the City Council consider designation of the overpass at the location of the historic march across the Acushnet River (former Fairhaven Bridge location near the Route 195 on-ramp) and that the Committee on Memorials and Dedications work with the City Department of Public Infrastructure, the State Department of Public Works and Hands Across the River to establish such a memorial. (Ref'd 01/23/14) (6)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Gomes, requesting that the Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications and the Board of Park Commissioners name softball field three at Buttonwood Park after the Late Captain Jack Peterson, WBSM News and Sports personality, in recognition of his over fifty years of broadcasting in the area and in recognition of his being an adopted son of the City. (Ref'd 8/21/14) (7)

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Councillor Gomes made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Rebeiro.

This meeting adjourned @ 7:50 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Committees