



Committee on Soccer Fields

December 15, 2015 – 6:40 PM – **Minutes**
Charles S. Ashley Public Meeting Room, #120

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON SOCCER FIELDS

DATE: DECEMBER 15, 2015

TIME: 6:40 P.M.

PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS DAVID ALVES, CHAIRMAN; NAOMI CARNEY; STEVEN MARTINS

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS BRIAN GOMES, VICE CHAIRMAN; JOSEPH LOPES

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Councillor Alves called the Committee on Soccer Fields Meeting to order and took attendance. Communications from Councillors Gomes and Lopes were read into the record explaining the absence from the meeting and were received and placed on file by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Carney.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Alves and Martins, that in light of the fact that the City has put former Elco Dress site out to bid and no qualified bidders responded in time at either RFP posting, and in consideration of the recorded and documented need for additional soccer fields, requesting that the Special Committee on Soccer Fields look to work with the Administration, the Department of Public Infrastructure and Department of Public Facilities to develop the barren area into adult and youth soccer fields to encourage and benefit a large number of the local youth and community groups with their athletic programs, and to address the growing need for soccer fields in the City (Ref'd 3/27/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Carney. (1)

Ms. Michele Paul, Director of Environmental Stewardship addressed the Committee. She stated that the Elco Dress site has received a "clean bill of health" and is usable for various uses, including recreational. However, the traffic flow in that area is somewhat prohibitive and therefore it makes sense to combine that parcel with the Payne Cutler property. They are looking to do some more work in that area thanks to a recent \$100,000 grant received from MassDevelopment. She indicated that this is a priority site for the Mass DEP. When asked about what type of use she foresees this location being a fit for, Mr. Paul stated that she can certainly see the appeal of using it as recreational/open space for the community, however, she also recognized the City's need to create more commercial, taxable space for development and employment opportunities. She feels that in the short term, recreation use would be good as a 'space saver' while the city awaits SouthCoast rail to come in, at which time the area could fulfill its true potential as commercial land. She continued to explain that her office and others continue to reach out to the public to ensure they are aware of what is happening and also to hear their ideas and concerns regarding this property.

Mary Rapoza, Director of Parks, Recreation and Beaches, also spoke and she stated that groups including Great Neighborhoods and ground Work are meeting with neighborhoods regularly regarding this property and the whole concept of adding recreational space in the area.

Councillor Martins thanked Ms. Rapoza for her advocacy of creating more soccer fields in the City and asked what the fees are for groups to utilize existing soccer fields through her department. Ms. Rapoza responded that her department is currently doing a thorough study of what other communities charge for such use and will then make a presentation on what they feel the fees should be set at. Currently, groups with 70% New Bedford residents as members pay a one-time fee of \$100. She also explained that maintenance of these fields is a critical issue and they remove one soccer field each year out of the 'rotation' of use so that it can be rehabbed. She stated that Parks & Recreation is responsible for total of six (6) soccer fields, but the School department has additional fields under their care and jurisdiction.

On motion by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To take "No Further Action" on this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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On motion by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To take "No Further Action" on items two (2) through six (6) at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote. They are as follows:

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, City Council President David Alves, requesting that the Committee on Appointments and Briefings meet with the representatives of the Administration and Park Department to discuss the development of one adult and one youth soccer field on the land under Route 195, West of Route 18, with access from the Cedar Grove Street Railroad underpass; in the light of the increasing demand and limited access to soccer fields, this land area, once planned and developed, would provide a valuable resource to the community and take advantage of an area that is available and will not present a noise problem to neighborhood residents. (Ref'd 11/8/07, 11/10/09-remain in Committee, 6/10/10-refer to Committee on Soccer, 11/27/12-tabled) (2)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Alves, Saunders, Council President Martins, Councillors Gomes, Lopes, Oliveira, Coelho, Lawrence and Gonsalves requesting, that the Special Committee Soccer Fields, meet with Representatives of the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School, along with the Superintendent Enos and Athletic Department, Club Recordacoes, Board of Park Commissioners and City Solicitor Markey, to discuss by what authority the Park Board had by transferring the field on Morton Avenue, which was under an agreement between the City Council and the federal government in exchange for the original field that Club Recordacoes used on Sawyer Street, and said field was assigned to Club Recordacoes by the City Council with a long-term lease.(Ref'd 10/11/12, 11/27/12- Committee draft a letter with the help of Ron Labelle and send it to Ms. Mary Jo Perry, MA Department of Transportation, District 5 Supervisor) (3)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Related Motion, Councillor Saunders, requesting that the Special Committee on Soccer Fields address the maintenance issues at Riverside Park Soccer Field.(Ref'd 11/8/12, 11/27/12-Commitee contact the School Department to determine if they perhaps have the necessary equipment to do this type of project) (4)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Alves, requesting that the City Council's Special Committee on Soccer Fields meet with DPI Commissioner Ronald Labelle, to outline and discuss the status of his request to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation in regard to the City's use of the land between Route 18 and Purchase Street (with an access through the opening under the railroad tracks at Cedar Grove Street) for the development of additional soccer fields to address the growing need for such fields in the City of New Bedford.(Ref'd 3/237/13) (5)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Alves, requesting , that the Special Committee on Soccer Fields ask Department of Public Infrastructure Commissioner Ron Labelle and City Solicitor John Markey, to look into who owns the recreational area (that

once housed swing sets and now has an abandoned basketball court, at the northwest corner of Washburn Street and Belleville Avenue, to determine if there is potential for the development of an additional Soccer Field (youth or adult size) to address the need for more fields in the City of New Bedford. (Ref'd 4/11/13) (6)

Councillor Martins thanked Councillor Alves for his service as Chairman of the Committee on Soccer Fields prior to the adjournment of the meeting.

Councillor Martins made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Carney.

This meeting adjourned @ 7:02 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Committees