



Committee on Public Safety & Neighborhoods

April 18, 2107– 7:05 PM - **Minutes**

Casimir Pulaski Elementary School - 1097 Braley Road, New Bedford, MA

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & NEIGHBORHOODS
DATE: APRIL 18, 2017
TIME: 7:05 P.M.
PLACE: CASIMIR PULASKI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – 1097 BRALEY ROAD, NEW BEDFORD, MA

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS DEBORA COELHO, CHAIRPERSON; BRIAN GOMES, VICE-CHAIRMAN; IAN ABREU; NAOMI CARNEY; JOSEPH LOPES; STEVEN MARTINS; LINDA MORAD; JAMES OLIVEIRA; DANA REBEIRO; KERRY WINTERSON

ABSENT: NO ONE

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Councillor Coelho called the Public Safety Committee Meeting to order and took attendance; everyone was present.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Gomes & Oliveira, requesting that the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods meet with Pulaski School Parents and School Staff in conjunction with the Far North End Neighborhood Association, to discuss the ongoing traffic and public safety issues at Pulaski school and that the Administration look into funding for two (2) traffic guards during drop off and pickup times at said school further requesting, that this Committee Meeting be held at the Pulaski School to get Parents and School staff input (To be Referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods.) (Ref'd 3/23/17) and a COMMUNICATION, Councillor Gomes, submitting an email from Lisa Tavares, concerned parent of a student at Pulaski School, regarding the traffic issues at the school (To be Referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods.) were received and placed on file by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Lopes. (1, 1a)

Councillor Gomes asked Mrs. Lisa Tavares of 7 Jessica Lane, New Bedford to provide some parent solutions to a long standing traffic and parking issue at Pulaski, which jeopardize the safety of its students daily.

Mrs. Tavares provided the Committee with a handout, which was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Carney.

Mrs. Tavares read the list to the Committee which made recommendations both short term and long term that would deal with the traffic issues and student safety as it relates to Pulaski School. Items such as redirecting traffic, early student admission, stopping trash pickup during morning school times, opening the paper street that exists creating two points of ingress and egress, putting up property signage and having those with authority directing traffic at the start of and end of the school day.

Councillor Rebeiro asked how the school was dealing with this issue. Alyssa Rego, the new Principal, was present and explained that 8 to 8:40 in the morning was contracted planning time for teachers so she could not utilize teachers to monitor traffic and unfortunately her staff has been cut.

Dr. Finnerty, Vice-Chair of the School Committee was present and expressed his support and concern for the traffic issues, they have been longstanding and difficult to deal with; however, there are no more children at the school than there was ten years ago, but traffic has increased.

Councillor Carney asked how can we come up with a solution? Andrew O'Leary, Business Agent for New Bedford Public Schools was present and stated that as quick fixes they can add early entry to the school and increase staffing to accommodate drop off. Getting kids into school earlier for breakfast or activities in the gym can happen; as far as the proper traffic signage that can be done as well, but will take time.

Councillor Martins asked for a timeline, he was told adding early time to enter school within two weeks, the signage 30 days. Councillor Gomes said he would like to see this happen faster.

The trash pickup taking place during drop-off times was discussed and Councillor Morad stated it was originally agreed with ABC that no trash pickup would take place during school drop off hours. If this had changed, it should not have and she will reach out to ABC to discuss it.

Many of the Councillors expressed their frustration that the traffic coordinator for the school system, who lives in Plymouth, was not present and it shows a lack of involvement and compassion towards the city and its children.

Councillor Oliveira asked that Manny Silva of DPI Engineering address the Committee. Mr. Silva informed the Committee that Engineering has looked at the issues and came up with several ideas which need to be discussed, that include moving teacher parking to the rear of the school, different drop off times for students and busses. The best solution is adding another entrance point to the school; as it stands it has no other entry way, but to do this would cost a considerable amount.

Councillor Gomes asked Mr. O'Leary about crossing guards and he was told there was a program in place, part time job, but not many takers.

Lt. Jeanine Pettiford of the New Bedford Police Department was present and told the Committee that the simple solution would be to assign an Officer, neighborhood Police Officer to be there to direct traffic and also said the school should have an SRO.

Officer Charlie Perry of the New Bedford Police Department was present and stated that the solution is simple, have an Officer there and return the SRO.

Carol Strupczewski, a neighbor was present and expressed her frustration about the traffic issues and that it has been going on forever. She provided the Committee with a letter sent to the Standard-Times reiterating her frustration. A motion was made to receive and place on file her letter by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Carney.

Oscar Tavares of County Street, New Bedford, drives kids to and from school. He told the Committee that the traffic is unbearable and they need more surveillance cameras in the area as well as a better traffic pattern. This would solve the congestion.

Leo Choquette of 21 Agnes Street, spoke and said the answer is to open up the paper street that exists between the school and Acushnet Avenue; this would alleviate the congestion as well.

Josh Amaral, School Committee Member spoke and was encouraged by Lt. Pettiford being able to assign an Officer to direct traffic that his will help to correct the issue.

Naomi Auger of Braley Road was present and told the Committee they should open the paper street and do away with the park in that area as it is simply a place for drug dealers to hang out.

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Martins, the Committee VOTED: To forward the list provided by Mrs. Lisa Tavares to the School Committee, DPI and the City Council, from the Committee explaining that the attached are possible short and long term solutions to the traffic congestion and student safety issues as they relate to Pulaski School. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To table the item at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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

This meeting adjourned @ 8:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees