

REPORT OF THE HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

APRIL 16, 2003

A meeting of the Human Affairs Committee was held Wednesday, April 16, 2003, at 7:30 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Chairman Lori Cardin presided.

Members of the Committee present: Alderman Marc W. Plamondon, Vice Chair
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner (arriving @ 7:48 pm)
Alderman-at-Large David W. Deane

Members of the Committee absent: Alderman Stephen C. Lamos

Also in Attendance: Paul Newman, Manager, Urban Programs Department
Kathy Hersh, Division Director, Community Development
Nick Caggiano, Superintendent, Parks Maintenance

Chair Cardin

For the record once again, Alderman Tollner should be joining us any minute and Alderman Lamos is away on business this evening.

We had anticipated a piece of legislation, R-03-174, to come in from Finance. That has not been referred to this committee at this time. I would like to schedule another meeting of the Human Affairs Committee on April 29th to take up the resolution that we thought might be forwarded to us from the Finance Committee – R-03-174. If anyone is interested in the funding for the arts that was supposed to be in committee tonight, we will have a meeting on April 29th to discuss that.

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-03-176

Endorsers: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner
Alderman Marc W. Plamondon
Alderman Lori Cardin
Alderman-at-Large David W. Deane
Alderman Stephen C. Lamos
Alderman-at-Large Fred Britton
Alderman Kevin E. Gage
Alderman-at-Large David Rootovich
Alderman Kevin McAfee

**AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO APPLY FOR THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BLOCK GRANT AND HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS GRANT, FISCAL
YEAR 2004**

Chair Cardin

If I could ask Paul and anyone from Urban Programs to join us.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN DEANE TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Deane

There was one change that I wanted to make out of the Non-housing/non-profit/capital – Nashua Association for the Elderly building expansion/renovation multi-year - \$1.5 million request -- \$45,000 that was introduced – I want to take that \$45,000 and add it to the Hunt Building air conditioning one-time \$70,000 request. I wanted to add that to the \$14,900 for a total of \$59,900 on that line. The reason that \$45,000 – that was a multi-year (5 year), the reason we are taking that out is we have another couple of funding mechanisms in place to deal with the project over on Temple Street for the Nashua Senior Activity Center.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN DEANE TO AMEND BY ADDING \$45,000 TO HUNT BUILDING AIR CONDITIONING ONE TIME INCREASING THE \$14,900 TO \$59,900

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Plamondon

If I might through you Madam Chair to the maker of the motion, the alternative funding sources, which it sounds like there is more than one. I am not aware of them. Can you talk about those in more detail or at least in generality as to the feasibility of success and if the funding would equal the \$45,000.

Alderman Deane

One of the funding mechanisms is the \$1.5 million bond that has 11 sponsors, which would be a city share. Currently we are looking to the federal government for another additional \$500,000, which would be through Southern New Hampshire Services, and there is another part of the equation that we are working on that Kathy Hersh wants to come up and discuss. It is a work in progress. We haven't finalized details and we have been meeting – we have had two meetings on this and our last meeting where we are going to get together with the Senior Activity Center isn't going to be until Monday so I kind of wanted to let Kathy do a little explaining of what will transpire at that meeting.

Kathy Hersh

As I think the Board is very well aware we have been meeting with the Senior Center and looking at other options for their site with respect to possibly teaming up with a private developer and we have gone through a really looked at that option. Southern New Hampshire Services has come forward and has expressed an interest in doing elderly housing on that site in conjunction with the Senior Center. The last couple of meetings that we have had we have done some brainstorming with the architect, taking a look at the site, and determined what would or would not work if you combined them or if you did a phased approach or if you left the

senior center the way it is and added onto it or if you incorporated an entire new senior center into the building – into the elderly housing component of it and how that all might work. The meeting that we have scheduled for Monday is to present the one conclusion that we have come to with respect to combining the two, and at that meeting, which we don't currently have, but will have at that meeting, we will have some cost estimates and funding sources and things like that.

We need to understand too if the city is going to be a partner in this at all and how that works – whether or not the city would have to own it and how that might work. All of that will be discussed on Monday at that meeting.

We do anticipate that the two combined there will be at least cost neutral if not some cost savings as was the first brush that the architect had said. At this point, we don't have the exact costs. We are actually rather excited about it. I think pretty much everybody around the table is seeing this as a better plan in a lot of ways that it provides resources for the city that we are trying to provide.

Chair Cardin

It sounds like a win/win to me. I don't know how you can go wrong when you have some affordable housing put in the mix. That is great.

Alderman Plamondon

In wrapping up, I just wanted to have some information for the record because those watching the senior center expansion is such a large blip on the city's radar that I didn't want the public to say oh now they are taking away money from it. That is why it is nice that Direct or Hersh and Alderman Deane can fill in the blanks so the public is aware.

Alderman Deane

I looked at this, and after we had the meeting where this was added, it is a nice gesture, but this has been going on too long. The building is in disrepair, the lot – something has to be done over there, and it is time that we get together – we are going to get at least 42 units of elderly housing of it, which we desperately need. There is a waiting list of probably 180-200 people in the city now waiting to get into elderly housing. It would be foolish on our part not to get the 42 units in there. I think the dealings that I have had with some of their Board of Directors they agree. I told them, I said these are the very people that we service. If we can get 42 units in there for them to live it is a plus for everyone; it is a plus for the city. Donna Lee Lozeau has been a tremendous amount of help. That is what she does, and if you look at her projects that she has done they have all been successful. Why wouldn't this one be? Having her on board I think is an asset. It is great.

Chair Cardin

I agree Alderman Deane. If you do look at the projects that Southern New Hampshire Services has done here in the city there are some pretty tremendous projects. I think this is a great project. What better use – a senior center with housing for seniors is great.

Kathy Hersh

There are two other parts to this that are actually very exciting as well. The city has received an EPA supplemental grant, and part of that grant is to look at asbestos sites so we are able to look at – to characterize the asbestos on that site with that grant so that is part of the city's investment into this so that is part of our effort into it, and then the other part that we have been talking about and we are going to make sure is on that plan is a riverfront trail along the top of that embankment. If you think about it just what we had talked about a few minutes ago with the promenade along the riverfront by Brad Hill's property that goes east and then it crosses the river – there is a railroad bridge with a pedestrian component to it and it comes back on the other side – what we would like to do is continue that loop right behind the senior center and eventually connect it to the library and back to Main Street. That would be a wonderful asset for seniors as well.

Alderman Deane

I think also would be an excellent area for the Park & Recreation Superintendent, Nick Caggiano, to show his tree planting expertise. With all the money that he has to purchase trees with I am sure he can throw a few in there as well.

Paul Newman

Just for the record – Alderman Deane's motion to take \$45,000 that would apply to the future years as well.

Alderman Deane

Absolutely.

Chair Cardin

I have a question about the amendment for the FY 2000.

Paul Newman

The draft language?

Chair Cardin

Is that – do we need to do that as a separate amendment from this?

Paul Newman

I was suggestion that you could include in this resolution simply as another paragraph and that would accomplish what you had in mind. It doesn't shift funding around at all it just changes the description of previously approved projects.

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION BY ALDERMAN DEANE TO AMEND THE DESCRIPTION OF ROUSSELL GARDINER FIELDS IN FY 2000 R-99-184 AND HAINES STREET FIELDS IN FY 2001 R-00-71 BY DELETING THE EXISTING WORDING “RECONSTRUCTION OF FIELDS” AND INSERTING “PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF PLAY EQUIPMENT IN THE VICINITY OF ROUSSELL GARDINER HAINES STREET FIELDS”

ON THE QUESTION

Chair Cardin

I would like to just explain why I asked for this amendment. You know back when Roger Boyer was fighting for money to reconstruct the fields he had come to this committee several times looking for Community Development Block Grant funding, and Roger has since passed away. We continue as you all know to do massive reconstruction in the fields down there. One of his hopes was that we could use the \$19,000 for a concession stand because there was a two-story concession stand there when this whole project began. Apparently the report from the EPA says that we are not able to reconstruct that type of building on that site. What we were hoping we could do is use the \$19,000 for the playground equipment and hopefully find some money in the Public Works or Park Department that was slated for playground equipment to buy a portable concession stand for the east Little League.

Paul Newman

Just to expand upon that a bit, back when these funds were approved these were really the only funds that were known to be available for the reconstruction of the fields and since that time of course the fields – the hazards there were mitigated and that was all done as part of a separate contract with some funds from another source so it is not as though the intent of these funds is being changed it is just that the work was accomplished through other means that weren't anticipated when this was appropriated. Now it is available to be used for something else at that same spot such as the play stuff.

Alderman Deane

When I had gotten together with Roger I think we had used \$6,000 or \$7,000 to purchase sawd with.

Paul Newman

That is correct. They have used some of it absolutely.

Alderman Deane

I think the initial request was \$25,000 I believe.

Paul Newman

That became a big, major reconstruction.

Alderman Deane

We did what we could with what we had.

Chair Cardin

That is right. Roger worked really hard to get those fields back up to par. He was really into it down there. I will tell you my kids played baseball down there for many years and Roger was always down there always trying to make things better and good for the kids. He leaves quite a legacy.

MOTION CARRIED

Chair Cardin

Alderman Tollner has joined us. Just to bring you up to speed a little bit. We have just voted to remove the \$45,000 from the Nashua Association for the Elderly for this year and for future years and reallocate that to Hunt Building air conditioning. We haven't really changed any bottom line we have just moved that money from one place to another.

Alderman Tollner

I did have an opportunity to speak with Alderman Deane on my way to City Hall tonight from Massachusetts so I am comfortable with that.

Chair Cardin

We also amended to delete some wording from the FY 2000 and FY 2001 block grant that was actually for reconstruction of fields down on Haines Street to use that money now for play equipment. I just explained that my whole purpose for doing that was that the EPA came in and said they couldn't build a new concession stand down there. What they were trying to do was get a portable concession stand that they could possibly use there and store away for the winter. That amendment passed so that is where we are at this point.

Alderman Tollner

Thank you.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN PLAMONDON TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE AS AMENDED

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Tollner

Again, I apologize for getting here late. Other than that we've pretty much proven what we discussed at the previous meeting correct?

Chair Cardin

Correct.

Alderman Tollner

Thank you very much.

Chair Cardin

Is there any other discussion? The vote is to recommend final passage on R-03-176 as amended.

MOTION CARRIED

Alderman Deane

What happened to this process? I remember the years I applied for this money this place would be full of people and this would be amendments that were made seem so smooth.

Chair Cardin

We make good decisions Alderman Deane that is what it is. We have good groups come before us. They have done their homework, they have done good presentations, and we ask the right questions.

Alderman Tollner

I do think they are more organized than they have been in the past. Some of the entities have also combined their services together.

Chair Cardin

One of the things we did recently was ask the groups that had the multi-year commitments to come in ahead so we didn't listen to all that this evening. That was done at a previous meeting so we may have smoothed the process a little bit plus we are good at it now Alderman Deane.

Alderman Plamondon

As I said in prior meetings the concern I have was monies coming out of the Nashua Heritage Rail Trail and going to Sullivan Park, but with the \$16,000 I have now will get me by probably at least the summer and then any major projects wouldn't happen until next year. Right now looking at three kiosks to be built by the Boy Scouts – that will run about \$10,000, which will leave about \$6,000. I am working with several organizations, which will need monies for plaques so for example one section of 5 Boy Scout troops adopted and it is named after Max Silver. I am working with St. Louis, the PAL and the P5 kids, the Boys & Girls Club, Independent Order of Odd Fellows and a couple of other organizations that I am still working on, but I can at least go public on those. Each section once the resolutions pass money would be needed for plaques and such and then other things like trees and benches. There are several boy scouts that have ideas for Eagle projects so potentially I may need to ask for some contingency money, but there isn't much. If I did ask for anything it would be hopefully small for this year. I just wanted to let the committee know because I had expressed my concerns earlier on it.

Chair Cardin

Thank you Alderman Plamondon.

R-03-177

Endorser: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter
Alderman Marc W. Plamondon

RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$4,000 RECEIVED FROM THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION, BUREAU OF TRAILS INTO SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT #352-6513 "MINE FALLS PARK BOARDWALK GRANT"

MOTION BY ALDERMAN DEANE TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Deane

Could we have the park Superintendent come up and explain what these dollars are going to be used for?

Nick Caggiano

Madam Chair, Alderman Deane; the grant was applied for over two years ago, and is part of the master plan that just got finished for Mine Falls Park. This grant was applied for by members of the Mine Falls Advisory Committee – one person, Ralph Angers, was the main person behind this grant, and I can comment on his volunteerism and hard work with the committee. This money is going to be used to put a boardwalk behind the soccer fields that will allow you to cross a wet area and keep the trail open. It will eventually lead to the boardwalk that we are building by the cover with the educational pots. This money is pretty much slated to be used with construction this upcoming summer into the fall period.

Alderman Deane

Is this going to be part of one of their trail days?

Nick Caggiano

No. This work is beyond volunteers. This is work that a contractor is going to install. They use special Hellenic piers to cross the wetlands so they didn't use concrete footings and it is about a 70-foot span of timbers.

Alderman Deane

What is the total cost of the entire project?

Nick Caggiano

This project or the entire project?

Alderman Deane

This project.

Nick Caggiano

This project is going to be roughly estimated at about \$14,000.

Alderman Deane

The other \$10,000 is coming from the \$400,000 grant we got?

Nick Caggiano

Correct.

Alderman Deane

Thanks Nick. Will there be a ribbon cutting when it is open?

Nick Caggiano

Undoubtedly and I will make sure you are invited

Alderman Deane

Thank you.

Chair Cardin

Is there any other discussion on R-03-177?

MOTION CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES – None

DISCUSSION

Alderman Plamondon

I kind of touched on the Nashua Heritage Rail Trail and a request for CDBG money. Some other projects that are coming up is there is an address we are taking over this summer for back taxes – 42 Pine Street. I have been working with several of our social organizations and Mr. Kull is here representing one of the groups – New Hampshire Advocacy Group. I was walking around the building last evening speaking to some of the neighbors, and that building needs a ton of work. I haven't even gone inside yet. I don't know if you would want to invite Mr. Kull up to discuss what his organization does, but some of what they do is they go in and rehab buildings. Some of my plans for this building would be during the warm months meeting space for like Keystone Hall, Rape and Assault, the New Hampshire Advocacy Group – and give meeting spaces. During the winter months my hope was that we could convert at least a couple of the rooms into overflow shelters beds working in conjunction with the Nashua Soup Kitchen

and the Men's & Women's Shelter. It is a key area for that. I can just see that next year we may need some money to help restore this building.

While I was out in the neighborhood a lot of the adults and the kids had expressed additional needs for the Pine Street Skateboard Park – they are looking for a small half pike. I was pleased speaking with the kids. They have kept the park quite clean considering that some of the barrels disappeared and they were reallocated to some of the apartment buildings. The kids are still trying to keep it pretty clean. They are pretty proud of it.

I have another concern with the Palm Street Tot Lot. It is an abomination and I really hope that somehow we add it to the budget. I believe it was in the Capital Improvements, but I would like to see something done there. That is a CDBG approved area. Thank you.

Alderman Deane

There is a line item in the Park Department budget called park rehab. It has around \$237,000 that I think might be slated for that this year. There is a possibility that we have a few dollars in there to take care of that.

Forth two Pine Street I have some questions on. Normally if the city goes and takes a building with a tax process we have to put that up and we can only sell it for what is owed on the back taxes. I know we had a piece of land down on Canal Street, which was the same way. I believe it goes through a bid process. Now if something was going to be done to this – if an organization – I think it is a bid process that comes in if I remember correctly through I believe it was Infrastructure – that piece of property over on Canal Street where we had the three different bids or four different bids come in – we can only sell it up to the amount that is owed on back taxes. If these organizations want to come in and bid on the building and purchase the building with the thought of putting some sort of community service into it and then come in and apply for funds to help bring the property up to code and do the repair that is a thought, but I don't think the city wants to get into the business of owning real estate. I don't think we own much real estate except for one piece on Court Street and we probably should have never bought that right.

Alderman Plamondon

Just to reply to that – actually when we take over a property the first thing is the city will see if we have a need for the property while we retain ownership. In a situation like this what I am hoping to do is have an umbrella organization come forward with a plan and help manage the structure in which case if the city accepts it we could sell the property for a \$1 and transfer title to it. The ultimate goal is for an umbrella of several organizations to run and maintain it and it will be multi-purpose. It is a small house with no yard. There is one parking spot and that is it. Around the sides of the structure it is basically about 2 feet wide on all three sides of the various buildings. I know I have been watching the tax rolls for 8 years in the Tree Streets because we need parks and we need parking. Nothing comes up. The only thing that has come up in 8 years is the land where we put the Pine Street Skateboard Park and then this one structure.

Dave Kull, President, Sole Purpose Property -Board of Directors for Nashua Advocacy Group and Special Olympics for City of Nashua.

Marc is correct in that we have been doing some investigation **tape inaudible**, Harbor Homes, Peter Kelleher, and Nashua Advocacy Group. We just applied for CDBG grant with Department of Mental Health and we are looking for some funding from the peer support agency there. Like Marc says we would like to get a community program up and running. A lot of it is to be able to have resources and network for people who have mental health, substance abuse, and a combination of other things so that they can find resources available for them so that they don't have to be such a burden on the impact of the social structure of the city itself so that we can get people back mainstream and get them everything that they may possible need as well as peer support for the people who are having ongoing problems. There is a lot in this. It is not just dealing with one population. It is dealing with lower end populations that sometimes need assistance. Hopefully we can get some of the funding and be able to put something together because we don't want to see the City of Nashua take the whole burden of everything as well. We are working on that part and that is why we want to do a walk around and then see what possibility is available for that piece of property as well because it is ideally located. I just wanted to make sure – that is why I came here tonight to update Marc on some of that as well so that he is more informed of that because I have been trying to get in touch with him but you guys are a hard crew to get a hold of sometimes because of your schedule. That is about it I just wanted to discuss that.

Chair Cardin

Thank you.

Alderman Plamondon

I will add again this structure is in real bad shape. We actually could have taken it some time ago, but we have let it sit just to see if past owners or relatives would come forward and pay the back taxes and as it has been sitting it has gone into more and more disrepair. What caught my eye when I drove by last night there is a cat in the window upstairs. I got out and was talking to the neighbors and I will say the neighbors are real anxious to see something done with that building. They said they are constantly watching it and making sure that people aren't breaking in and so on and so forth. In some areas there is probably 3 feet of trash. Hopefully we can turn this eyesore into something of benefit to the city and its residents. Thank you.

Chair Cardin

Thank you Alderman Plamondon.

Alderman Deane

We will have to get an update from Treasurer Fredette. This is a blemish on his record I think.

Chair Cardin

Actually that goes to Infrastructure so you might see it there. It probably won't come to this committee Alderman Deane.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN DEANE TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Alderman Stephen C. Lamos
Committee Clerk