

**Minutes of the Montpelier City Council Special Meeting
February 12, 2014
Montpelier City Hall Council Chambers**

In attendance: Mayor John Hollar (presiding), City Councilors Thierry Guerlain, Jessica Edgerly Walsh, Alan Weiss, Tom Golonka, Anne Watson and City Manager Bill Fraser. Councilor Andy Hooper was absent. City Clerk John Odum acted as Secretary of the meeting.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. He indicated that Councilor Hooper was ill, and would not be attending.

- 14-046. The City Clerk noted that a concern about a potential conflict of interest had been brought to his attention in regards to a candidate for city office. He indicated he had reviewed the issue, and in the context of the council ethics policy, there were no unmanageable conflicts.
- 14-047. Councilor Weiss moved approval of the consent agenda, and was seconded by Councilor Guerlain. The Clerk recommended the addition of the phrase "Councilor Watson returned to her seat as" at the outset of item 14-034, to indicate when Councilor Watson returned to the meeting. The recommendation was added by Councilor Weiss as a friendly amendment with no objection. The motion carried unanimously at 6:33.
- 14-048. Dan Jones, Chair of the Energy Committee, led a power point presentation on the accomplishments of the Montpelier Energy Advisory Committee, to date, along with an outline of their new effort towards a multi-year project to foster a Net Zero Montpelier. He was joined at different points in the presentation by committee members Johanna Miller, Dan Costin and Andrea Colnes of the Energy Action Network.
- When Mr. Costin reported on the "Solar City" RFP, Councilor Edgerly Walsh noted that her own company had not placed a bid, thereby not creating a potential conflict of interest that would necessitate that she recuse herself.
- Mr. Jones entertained a handful of technical questions from councilors, including a clarification on the term "net zero" requested by the Mayor and a question about the nature of partnerships moving forward from Councilor Edgerly Walsh.
- Page Guertin asked about the committee's thoughts on small-scale wind.
- Mr. Jones and Ms. Miller engaged in a brief discussion with the council about how to proceed.
- Councilor Weiss moved the Council receive the energy report. Councilor Watson seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 7:10.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh moved that the council support the committee's goal of a net zero Montpelier by 2030. Councilor Watson seconded. The Mayor briefly spoke supportively of the project, before calling for the yeas and nays. The motion carried unanimously at 7:12.

14-049. The council opened discussion on the two, 3-year terms on the Conservation Commission currently held by Roy Schiff and Ben Eastwood that both expire on February 13th. Two Alternate seats remain vacant as well. Staff advertised and received e-mails from the current members, both seeking reappointment, as well as Jim Murphy (Hebert Road) who would like to be considered for one of the 3-year terms.

Jim Murphy addressed the council, reviewing his background and interest in serving, briefly answering a request for elaboration on his views from Councilor Edgerly Walsh. He was followed by sitting Commissioner Ben Eastwood who reviewed his time on the Commission and discussed his interest in continuing to participate, and his willingness to become an alternate.

14-050. The Mayor invited Andrew Stein to the front to discuss his interest in being appointed to the vacancy on the Energy Committee. Councilor Edgerly Walsh moved the appointment of Andrew Stein to the Energy Committee, and was seconded by Councilor Guerlain. The motion carried unanimously at 7:20.

14-049. Councilor Guerlain moved the council go into executive session to discuss the matter of appointments to the Conservation Commission. Councilor Edgerly Walsh seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 7:21.

Councilor Guerlain moved the council return to open session. Councilor Watson seconded and the motion carried unanimously at 7:24.

Councilor Golonka moved that the council appoint Jim Murphy and Roy Schiff to the Conservation Commission, and appoint Ben Eastwood as an alternate. Councilor Watson seconded. The motion carried 4-0 at 7:25 (Councilor Edgerly Walsh was not present at that moment).

14-051. Councilor Edgerly Walsh returned to her seat as Tom McArdle of the Public Works Department and Chris Williams with the Vermont Agency of Transportation addressed the council on the "Scoping Report" prepared by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) concerning the condition of the Cummings Street Bridge and containing alternatives that were considered for repair or replacement. Mr. McArdle also reported on the recent public meeting on the matter. The views and preferred approach of the Public Works Department (including creating a temporary bridge while the bridge is being replaced) were presented and discussed. Councilor Edgerly Walsh asked for clarification on the timeframe, while Councilor Watson asked for details on the scope of

the proposed replacement. Both then offered support for the replacement proposal, despite the greater cost as compared to the other options.

Councilor Guerlain moved the council accept the scoping report and direct that, of the alternatives available, the city proceed with the complete replacement option. Councilor Weiss seconded.

Linda Sutchell addressed the council, expressing her concerns at the condition of the bridge, advocating the full replacement option.

Councilor Guerlain asked about the short-term safety of the bridge. Councilor Weiss followed up with questions on the weight limit, while Councilor Watson asked about the aesthetic considerations and options of the proposed replacement.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh offered a friendly amendment that Public Works staff inspect the bridge annually, prior to the replacement. Mayor Hollar expressed the view that the proposed amendment was an inappropriate level of direction to city staff. Mr. McArdle reviewed Public Works procedures regarding the bridge. Councilor Edgerly Walsh withdrew the amendment.

The Mayor called for the vote, and the motion carried unanimously at 7:46.

Councilor Guerlain asked Mr. Williams about the condition of the Granite Street Bridge and the sensation of “bouncing” when crossing it. Mr. Williams explained that the design allowed for the flexibility (sometimes perceived as bouncing). Mr. McArdle went on to describe the challenges presented by the bridge’s decking, in response to follow-up questions from Councilor Guerlain.

Jed Guertin rose asking for reassurance that the degree of bounce/flex on the bridge was within normal parameters.

14-052. Councilor Watson asked about parking restrictions on Barre Street. Mr. McArdle suggested it was for snow removal, but that he would check.

14-053. Mayor Hollar reported positively on his tour of the new district heat plant and suggested councilors take a tour as well. Councilor Golonka asked about the current cost overruns on the state plant.

Councilor Weiss noted that the original plan for the new state heating plant was to include opportunities for children to tour for educational purposes, and that those aspects of the plan had been dropped.

14-054. The City Clerk reported that copies of the proposed city charter changes, as well as the PSA charter, were available at the Kellogg Hubbard Library. He further reported on the election resources available on the web, briefly noted his plans for weekend voting

hours, touched on recent conflicts regarding parking bags, and noted the February 18 due date for taxes.

Mayor commented on dog license change and parklets.

14-055. City Manager Fraser reported on the process of identifying zoning consultants, as well as the progress on the former-Carr Lot development process.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh moved that the council enter executive session to discuss the Sanborn/Berlin Pond lawsuit, and to include the City manager and Assistant City Manager. Councilor Guerlain seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 8:12. There was a brief recess before the executive session discussions began at 8:17.

At 8:25 PM, Councilor Guerlain moved that the council return to open session and was seconded by Councilor Golonka seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilor Guerlain moved that the City Council authorize VLCT PACIF to settle the Sanborn suit with the provision that the cost to the City will not exceed \$500. Councilor Edgerly Walsh seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

At 8:26 PM Councilor Guerlain moved that the council enter executive session to discuss the Walker Motors lawsuit, labor negotiations with the DPW and Police Unions and the City Manager's evaluation, and to include the City Manager and Assistant City Manager. Councilor Watson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

At 8:40 PM, Assistant City Manager Baker left the meeting for the discussion of the City Manager's review.

At 8:55 PM, the City Manager left the meeting. The Council continued to discuss the Manager's review.

Councilor Guerlain moved the council return to open session and adjourn. Councilor Watson seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 10:30PM.