

**Minutes of the Montpelier City Council Special Meeting
February 19, 2014
Montpelier City Hall Council Chambers**

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

The meeting was called to order by the Mayor at 6:30 PM.

- 14-056. Mayor Hollar took a moment to present outgoing Councilor Weiss the key to the city and a framed proclamation honoring his years of service.
- 14-057. Councilor Weiss moved approval of the consent agenda, and was seconded by Councilor Hooper. The motion carried unanimously at 6:33 PM.
- 14-058. The Mayor opened the second official public hearing for proposed city charter amendments at 6:45PM. The City Manager introduced the hearing.
- Charter Committee Chair Nancy Sherman rose to express her dissatisfaction with additional changes made to the city charter package by the council beyond what the committee had recommended. In response to questioning by the mayor, she indicated it was the specific addition relating to parklets that drew her objection. The mayor took a moment to explain the circumstances that, in the council's view, necessitated the addition.
- Page Guertin rose to question the change in the language of the dog licensing component to the city charter.
- Steve Frey rose in support of the parklet component of the proposed city charter change.
- The mayor closed the public hearing on the city charter proposal and opened the public hearing on the public safety authority charter at 6:43. The City Manager again introduced the proposal. The mayor closed the public hearing at 6:45 PM.
- 14-059. Ward Joyce addressed the council on the public parklet proposal he was developing in collaboration with Vermont Technical College students, offering details through a power point presentation. He asked for support for the proposal, including a request that the proposed parklet fees be waived, given the proposal's non-commercial nature.
- Councilor Weiss expressed concerns about the proposed timeframe, given the charter change needed.
- Councilor Edgerly Walsh asked about the construction, seasonal teardown, and storage of the proposed unit.

Councilor Golonka expressed concerns about the maintenance of a public parklet over the long term.

Phayvanh Luekhamhan of Montpelier Alive rose to respond to Councilor Edgerly Walsh's questions about the process implications of a public versus a private parklet.

While speaking positively of the idea, Councilor Guerlain expressed concerns about the full implications of approving public parklets. Mr. Joyce, Councilor Edgerly Walsh, and Mr. Frey responded to the concerns.

Councilor Watson asked about potential metrics of success or failure for what she considered a "pilot" public parklet.

Michael Sherman distributed a list of ten questions to the committee regarding city policy regarding parklets in general. The mayor suggested Mr. Sherman check in with Montpelier Alive personnel, as most of the questions he presented were answered in the original, council-approved parklet proposal. Ms. Luekhamhan added that the proposal was available online.

Councilor Weiss noted that a Rialto Bridge public parklet would likely be used primarily by the teenagers who congregate in that area already.

Councilor Golonka asked about the potential impact of the Rialto Bridge maintenance and repair schedule.

Councilor Guerlain responded to Councilor Weiss's concerns, speaking positively of the potential use of the proposed parklet by teenagers. He also noted that the parklet project was essentially a trial balloon, and that the whole initiative could be discontinued if it didn't work well.

Mr. Sherman countered Councilor Guerlain by suggesting that there were already adequate public spaces for young people – particularly the City Hall plaza.

Councilor Hooper asked Mr. Joyce about the other proposed designs not included in the power point presentation.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh moved that, should the city be allowed legally to build parklets, that the city forego the permit and application fees for the public parklet as proposed, and was seconded by Councilor Golonka, with a friendly amendment that moving forward be contingent on passage of the proposal through the Montpelier Alive process (amendment was accepted).

Councilor Guerlain asked about ownership of the proposed public parklet, and the city's related costs. He also asked about the review process (Ms. Luekhamhan responded, explaining the unique design review process going through Montpelier Alive and city departments).

The motion carried 5-1 at 7:25, with Councilor Weiss voting nay.

14-060. City Manager Fraser presented an update on the District Heat Project. Assistant City Manager Jessie Baker addressed to the council to offer details on the remaining work, in response to a question from Councilor Hooper.

Councilor Golonka asked about potential increases on the customer rates that could result from the state's cost overruns.

Councilor Guerlain asked about the paving schedule.

Bill Neuberger, project engineer, joined Ms. Baker to respond to Councilor Edgerly Walsh's questions about the state testing schedule.

Councilor Hooper asked paying for the \$18,000 cost overrun.

14-061. Councilor Guerlain reported that an ad hoc citizens committee had been meeting discussing the prospect of a Local Development Corporation (LDC) as an alternative to having economic development be a city function. He reviewed their topics of discussion and asked for the council's blessing to continue discussions (as opposed to a formal vote of support). Councilor Watson expressed some concern about possible duplication of efforts. Councilor Guerlain also reported on the recent spelling bee.

Councilor Weiss thanked the body for his last six years on the council, and for the gifts.

Councilor Golonka expressed support for the public service charter, and offered his thanks to Councilor Weiss for his service.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh thanked Councilor Weiss for his service.

14-062. The Mayor added his thanks to Councilor Weiss. He also praised the Vermont League of Cities and Towns recent event.

Page Guertin asked the City Manager about regulations regarding political signage.

The Mayor reported that the proposals for the Carr Lot development had been received. He noted the March 5 meeting of the Design Review Committee

14-063. The City Clerk thanked Councilor Weiss for his service and noted that his office would be open from 10:00AM until 1:30PM on Saturday, March 1st for the purpose of early voting. He indicated he would try to make coffee available.

14-064. City Manager Fraser also thanked Councilor Weiss for his service before reporting on snow removal efforts and notices, the Carr Lot process (noting the related upcoming public meeting), and the Annual Report.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh moved that the council enter executive session to discuss the Walker Motors lawsuit and include the City Manager and Assistant City Manager. Councilor Watson seconded and the motion carried unanimously at 8:02.

At 8:13, Councilor Hooper moved the Council return to open session, Councilor Guerlain seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilor Edgerly Welsh moved the Council accept the proposed settlement in the Walker Motors case and approve payment of \$25,000 toward the settlement. Councilor Weiss seconded. The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

At 8:14, Councilor Hooper moved the Council enter into executive session without the City Manager and Assistant City Manager to discuss the City Manager's review. Councilor Guerlain seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

At 9:05, Councilor Weiss moved the Council return to open session, and was seconded by Councilor Edgerly Walsh.

At 9:06 Councilor Weiss moved that the meeting be adjourned, and was seconded by Councilor Golonka. The motion carried unanimously.