

Minutes of the Montpelier City Council Meeting
June 12, 2013
Montpelier City Hall Council Chambers

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

Mayor Hollar called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

13-149. Councilor Weiss moved approval of the consent agenda. Councilor Edgerly Walsh seconded. Councilor Guerlain asked that c and d be pulled for discussion and the motion was so modified before passing unanimously at 6:33PM.

13-150. Fred Barnett, Director of Facility Operations at the National Life Group, addressed the Council to ask for a waiver of the City's Noise Ordinance for a week of paving projects they are hoping to schedule.

Councilors Golonka and Edgerly Walsh expressed concerns about the late hour that the work was planned, and whether it would be disruptive to neighbors. Councilor Watson asked if National Life would consider temporarily relocating families that were adversely impacted. Mr. Barnett indicated it could be discussed.

The Council went into more detailed discussion with Mr. Barnett about possible alternatives that would be less disruptive.

Paul Carnahan rose to observe that late night construction sounds would travel through much of the city. He spoke supportively of Councilor Watson's suggestion that National Life look at alternative parking arrangements (such as the high school parking lot, as the project will take place during summer vacation) including shuttles.

Councilor Alan Weiss moved that the Council approve the request from the National Life Group, for a waiver of the City's Noise Ordinance for a week of paving projects provided they notify neighbors and make any needed special accommodations. The motion was seconded by Councilor Andy Hooper.

Councilor Weiss spoke in support of his motion, citing the large number of cars parking daily, and suggesting that shuttles to and from alternative parking sites would be impractical.

After further discussion of the Council's desire to further consider the issue, Councilor Weiss withdrew the motion.

13-151. The Council considered appointments to the "Montpelier Downtown Improvement District" Committee. The Mayor suggested that the city staff assign different candidates for the different term lengths randomly, with the understanding that terms could be "traded." Councilor Golonka noted that a Council representative was called for in the

original discussions. To meet the terms of the ordinance and accommodate all interested parties, it would need to be a non-voting position.

Councilor Thierry Guerlain moved that Philip Zalinger (Zalinger, Cameron & Lambek), Jesse Jacobs (owner of several downtown properties), Karen Williams-Fox (Woodbury Mountain Toys), Kevin Ellis (Partner at the communications firm of KSE Partners, LLP), Steven Cook (Deputy Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Tourism & Marketing), Mary L. Collins (Summit School of Traditional Music and Culture), Claire Benedict (Bear Pond Books), Bob Watson (Capitol Grounds) and Jason Cheney (Trumbull - Nelson Construction Company, Inc.) and Kim Bent (Lost Nation Theater) be appointed to the Committee, along with Councilor Edgerly Walsh in a non-voting capacity. The motion was seconded by Councilor Anne Watson. The motion carried unanimously at 6:50.

- 13-152. Paul Carnahan, Gregg Gossens and Phayvanh Luekhamhan addressed the Council on behalf of Montpelier Alive to promote the parklet proposal.

Councilor Weiss congratulated Montpelier Alive for being recognized for the poetry event. He asked if the relevant city committees had been approached for input on parklets, citing the potential for conflicts.

The Council engaged in a discussion of possible permutations of, and variables related to, the parklet proposal. Councilor Golonka wanted to be certain to avoid losing revenue.

City Manager Fraser noted that the current parklet project would be distinct from the vendor ordinance, which prohibits seating and parking obstruction.

Councilor Weiss suggested that the previously proposed sidewalk seating ordinance should be considered prior to a parklet project, or in concert with it.

The City Clerk expressed the concerns within his office that the additional strain on the parking supply (or the perception of such a strain) could exacerbate tensions on the parking topic among the citizenry.

Councilor Guerlain asked about angle parking spaces and ADA compliance.

Councilor Thierry Guerlain moved that the Council approve the adoption of a pilot project for "parklets" for this summer and next, for up to 6 parking spaces, as described in the proposal by Montpelier Alive. The motion was seconded by Councilor Anne Watson.

Councilor Weiss unfavorably compared the relatively quick action by the Council to support this project to the decision to defer a final decision on the National Life proposal.

The motion carried unanimously at 7:15.

- 13-156. Lyn Munno (Park Commissioner), was joined by Sharon Asay and Elizabeth Grupp to discuss the dog waste issue in the park. Munno discussed the likely recommendations taking shape from committee discussions, and suggested that the discussion may be

expanded to include a discussion of dog waste throughout the city. Ms. Asay indicated she had heard public feedback indicating support for such an expanded discussion. Mayor Hollar spoke supportively of the idea.

Under questioning from Councilor Guerlain, the group established that there is no literal "leash law," but that dogs were required to be under control (including in Hubbard Park, although it was established by Councilor Hooper that differing treatment of dogs in the park had been an unwritten tradition).

Councilor Watson asked about the possibility of having owners dig holes for dog waste.

Councilor Guerlain asked how other communities funded dog waste remediation strategies, and the group responded with a variety of approaches that could be considered.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh suggested that the Council would like to hear a proposal for the city. Other councilors concurred.

- 13-154. The Mayor opened the public hearing at 7:49 to consider adopting the revised Water and Sewer Rate Resolution as recommended by the Water and Sewer Rate Committee, and to consider amendments to the City's Code of Ordinances, Chapter 3. Public Works, Article 3-IV, Sewer Department).

Councilor Edgerly Walsh suggested a technical tweak to the ordinance wording for presentation at the second hearing.

Sandy Gallup (Montpelier Finance Director) discussed the water/sewer rates, as well as the recommendation that the relevant ordinance be changed.

Councilor Jessica Edgerly Walsh moved the adoption of the revised Water and Sewer Rate Resolution as recommended by the Water and Sewer Rate Committee, seconded by Councilor Anne Watson. The motion carried unanimously at 7:48.

At 7:50, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

- 13-149(c),(d) After a brief discussion, Councilor Thierry Guerlain moved that the council approve items c and d of the consent agenda. Councilor Andy Hooper seconded. The motion passed unanimously at 7:52.

City Manager Fraser thanked Tim Heney and the Heney family for a favorable lease.

- 13-157. Councilor Edgerly Walsh expressed her appreciation at the middle school for engaging students in experience based learning.

Councilor Watson reported that she and some of her students are hosting an "ice cream on the bus day" Friday afternoon on the circulator bus. She also indicated that she had received questions about the smell of the utility polls on the bike path behind Green Mountain Power, and will be meeting with GMP representatives to discuss it.

Councilor Weiss announced the selection of 4 eligible students who would receive Harry Sheridan scholarships of \$4250 (per year for four years). He further asked about the city

council goals and the division of responsibilities to follow up with these goals between the council and staff - asking in particular how the council should proceed on those goals which are exclusively the responsibility of the council to follow up on. The Mayor indicated he is in discussions with the City Manager on how to create a process for follow-up.

Councilor Guerlain had the following concerns:

1. Asked for details on a letter appearing in the Bridge indicating pending public fishing access on Berlin Pond (Councilor Edgerly Walsh followed up with a request for a review of the legal status of the pond).

2. Asked about the number of bike racks to be placed in town. Assistant City Manager Jessie Baker clarified the location of the 6 locations recommended by the bike committee for additional bike racks, indicating that the grant provided for their placement and that should be placed in the coming weeks.

3. Asked for a report on the status of the fire box removal plan.

4. Asked about the difference between "status" reports and "agenda" reports from the City Manager on meeting agendas (City Manager Fraser indicated it was an archaic distinction).

5. Requested to add an agenda item regarding additional parking on East State Street for next meeting.

13-158. Mayor Hollar noted the large amount of policy work he had on his plate, as well as his participation in the Memorial Day Parade (he encouraged councilors to march in city parades).

13-159. The City Clerk noted that the new record keeping software system in his office was now live.

13-160. City Manager Fraser noted the addition of the portrait of former mayor Mary Hooper. He also noted that the preliminary Grand List had been filed.

Councilor Alan Weiss moved that the Council enter executive session (with the City Manager) to discuss negotiations on the Carr Lot, and was seconded by Councilor Thierry Guerlain. The motion carried unanimously at 8:01.

At 8:45 PM, Councilor Weiss moved that the Council return to open session and adjourn. Councilor Guerlain seconded the motion, which carried unanimously without discussion.