

PRESENT: Calouro, Sweeney, Parella, Stuart and Herreshoff  
(arrived at 7:34 o'clock PM)

ALSO PRESENT: Antonio A. Teixeira, Town Administrator

The Council met in special session on Thursday evening, April 14, 2016 in the Town Hal, Council Chambers beginning at 7:02 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Calouro presiding:

1. Interviews/Appointments
  - a. Auxiliary Harbormaster (terms to expire in January 2017)
    1. Patrick Guthlein, 15 Elmwood Drive - interest/appointment
    2. Joseph Simeone, 42 Roosevelt Drive - interest/appointment
    3. Steven J. Gravier, 1185 Tiogue Avenue, Coventry, RI - interest/appointment (withdrawn)

Patrick Guthlein

Councilwoman Parella nominated Mr. Guthlein for appointment.

There were no counter-nominations.

Parella/Sweeney - Voted unanimously to close nominations and to instruct the Clerk to cast one ballot in favor of Mr. Guthlein with term to expire in January 2017.

Prior to the vote taken Mr. Guthlein appeared before the Council.

Council Chairman Calouro asked to know why Mr. Guthlein would be of the opinion that he is a good fit for the position of Auxiliary Harbormaster and what he likes about the position.

Mr. Guthlien replied that he is a Junior at the University of Rhode Island studying accounting and has worked for the Harbormaster on a part-time basis in the past with a summer job.

He added that he will be interning at the Department of Youth and Families for the summer this year and that he would like to remain involved with Harbor Patrol duties and that he has the appropriate certifications.

He noted that part of his duties include keeping harbor visitors happy so that they will return for subsequent visits.

Council Chairman Calouro agreed that part of the position of Auxiliary Harbormaster is to welcome visitors. He added that the Town is planning additional boat slips to accommodate additional visiting boaters.

Councilman Sweeney agreed with Council Chairman Calouro and stated that it is necessary for Harbor Patrol personnel to assume the role as "diplomat;" offering assistance to visitors indicating local places to shop, eat, etc., and that these personnel must possess a good attitude.

Councilwoman Parella asked for confirmation that Mr. Guthlein will not be available this year as a "dock hand" since he is planning to intern at the DCYF.

Mr. Guthlein confirmed this to be the case.

Councilman Stuart observed that Mr. Guthlein appears to have the requisite experience and also appears to be familiar with the responsibilities of the position. He also observed that Mr. Guthlein has the proper credentials to be considered.

Harbormaster Marsili informed the Council that he recommends Mr. Guthlein for appointment and that he intends to utilize the dock hand staff as a "feeder program" for Auxiliary and Assistant Harbor Masters in the future.

*It is noted for the record that Mr. Simeone was not available for this evening's interview due to his school schedule.*

b. Tree Warden (term to expire in January 2017)

1. Steven L. Saracino, 174 Seaside Drive,  
Jamestown, RI - interest/appointment

Steven Saracino

Mr. Saracino appeared before the Council.

Council Chairman Calouro explained that Bristol is a Town which "believes" in its trees and that the trees are important to the citizens. He noted that he considers the position of Tree Warden to be very important and that good customer service is also of concern. He asked to know if Mr. Saracino might provide some information indicating why he believes the position to be a good "fit" for him.

Mr. Saracino noted that he studied forestry at the University of Rhode Island and that he has worked in the field since high school and that he possesses a "passion" for trees.

Mr. Saracino reported that he has been Tree Warden in the Town of Jamestown for nine (9) years and that during his tenure he has introduced new programs, fresh ideas, and has obtained grants.

Council Chairman Calouro asked for specific examples with Mr. Saracino responding that he obtained an America the Beautiful grant, accomplished a tree inventory, accomplished tree planting and obtained a grant for a sustainable tree nursery where tree seedlings are planted and larger trees are transplanted to public areas.

He noted that the nursery is protected with deer fencing and that there is also a shed nearby to hold tools and equipment. He also added that the project appears to be working nicely.

Council Chairman Calouro asked for Mr. Saracino to describe the "challenges" of being Tree warden and how he handles these challenges.

Mr. Saracino explained that the Tree Warden is also a "referee" and described some of the problems he encounters.

He noted that some persons are very passionate for different reasons and that this passion may lead to various types of complaints. He reported that Jamestown has an effective permit process which aids in the refereeing.

Councilwoman Parella noted that Mr. Saracino reports that he has full time employment in addition to his duties as Tree Warden in both Jamestown and Richmond. She questioned as to how he manages all of these.

Mr. Saraceno reported that he schedules his Tree Warden duties for evenings and weekends and that he has enough time to accomplish these.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know why Mr. Saraceno applied for the position with Mr. Saraceno responding that he heard of the vacancy and thought it might be a possibility for him.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know if Mr. Saraceno worked on the Hope Street rehabilitation project with Mr. Saraceno responding affirmatively.

Councilman Sweeney asked to know if Mr. Saraceno had done any evaluation of the Town trees with Mr. Saraceno responding that he had done so and that he is aware that some of the trees are in need of attention. He added that he may be able to bring some of the positive processes he learned in Jamestown to Bristol.

Council Chairman Calouro explained that the Town is certainly open to new ideas but that Mr. Saraceno should be cautious not to "reinvent the wheel."

Councilwoman Parella stated that she believes the idea to have a tree nursery to be a good one.

Mr. Saraceno suggested that the Council members may wish to visit the tree nursery. He explained that the nursery is located on Eldred Avenue at the Town Farm in Jamestown.

Councilman Stuart stated that Mr. Saracino's resume is extensive but that he does have some reservations about his ability to serve due to the demands of the position coupled with Mr. Saracino's already demanding schedule and varied responsibilities.

Councilman Stuart asked to know if Mr. Saraceno has written grants on his own with Mr. Saraceno responding that he has done this.

A discussion ensued regarding Mr. Saracino's work in Richmond.

Mr. Saraceno noted that he received only two calls in one year from Richmond.

Council Chairman Calouro stated that the Town would prefer to have a long-term relationship with the Tree Warden.

Town Administrator Teixeira reported that he believes that the Town can accommodate Mr. Saracino's schedule and that he spoke to Jamestown officials who were very complimentary about Mr. Saraceno. He added that the time and travel is of some concern and that he would like to have a conversation with Mr. Saraceno prior to recommending him for appointment to the Council.

- c. Planning Board - Auxiliary Member (to fill unexpired term to expire in July 2018)
  1. Brian W. Clark, 4 Evelyn Drive - interest/appointment

It is hereby noted for the record that Mr. Clark was unavailable for this evening's interview.

2. Presentation re Bristol Stormwater Management Enterprise Fund Feasibility Study

*It is hereby noted for the record that no action took place regarding this agenda item.*

Council Chairman Calouro explained that much study has been accomplished concerning the idea of a stormwater "utility" and that the purpose of this meeting is for the Council to hear what has been learned.

Russ Chateauneuf of the Horsley-Whitten Group and Rich Niles of AMEC addressed the Council.

Mr. Chateauneuf explained that Horsley-Whitten teamed with AMEC on this project. He also explained that the work began in September of last year and that there is a sub-committee of individuals participating.

Councilman Herreshoff arrives at this point in the meeting (7:34 o'clock PM).

Mr. Chateauneuf noted that there appears to be a need for the Town to complete more drainage projects and that the funds for these projects are currently derived from taxation. He added that the Town has an "enterprise fund" for wastewater treatment and that the funds for the wastewater expenses are derived through the enterprise fund. He also explained that there are some grant funds available for drainage improvement but that these funds are very limited.

Mr. Niles provided an explanation of the enterprise fund for drainage and also explained that this provides a different mechanism for establishment of a funding source for these types of improvements.

Referring to the power point presentation, Mr. Niles explained that the data provided is preliminary and that it is "food for thought" at this point.

It was noted that funds paid to a Stormwater utility is not like paying taxes since the rate payer is paying only for what is "used."

Council Chairman Calouro asked how this may be viewed differently by taxpayers who may argue that they should not pay for schools if they have no children using them.

Mr. Niles explained that Stormwater is considered more and more frequently as a utility and that it is fairer to charge those persons who have greater runoff. He explained that having a stormwater utility is an option and that there is no requirement to have one of these. He added that having a stormwater utility is a different way for the Town to collect revenue.

Councilwoman Parella stated that she understands the concept but expressed concern that the utility fees may represent "another thing added on" to the taxpayer. She asked to know if having revenue from the utility would eliminate the need to bond for drainage projects. She added that the Town is considering some significant drainage projects and that there are bond funds for these.

Mr. Niles explained that the stormwater utility provides funds for improvements projects and that the citizens will pay one way or the other. He noted that this would be a different rationale for approaching the cost and that those making payments would be paying their fair share.

Councilwoman Parella speculated that the highest rates would likely be clustered in certain areas.

Mr. Niles noted that there are many areas with historical flooding problems and that New England has an aging infrastructure. He also noted that adding a stormwater utility may bridge a funding gap for repairs to this infrastructure.

Councilman Sweeney asked to know how the Town would determine how much to charge.

Mr. Niles explained that the Town might look at a certain amount of square footage and create a unit rate based upon the overall program cost.

Councilman Stuart asked to know if the cost would be "carved out" of the current Town budget.

Councilman Herreshoff noted that the presentation appears to be thorough and thanked the presenters for their work. He suggested that there should be a differentiation between the operational and capital costs.

Councilman Herreshoff added that the progress on the Tanyard Brook improvements has been disappointing and that the retention pond discussed for the area nearby the State Street Reservoir was important to consider as the project progresses and that this design should include a workable dam so that the flow of excess water may be adequately managed.

Elizabeth Scott of the State Department of Environmental Management explained that the real advantage of the concept is to establish a dedicated revenue stream for stormwater improvements. She noted that funds would be available through the infrastructure "bank" and that this brings lower, more attractive, interest rates for borrowing. She noted that having the dedicated funds allows for a more orderly planning process since the Town can be assured availability of funds based upon revenue projections from the "utility" and that having the dedicated funds eases the grant-in-aid process when grants for hazard mitigation are found to be available rather than "fire-fighting."

Council Chairman Calouro suggested that the "new" fees represent the "800 lb. gorilla in the room" and asked to know how the Town might help residents understand these fees.

Ms. Scott noted that she was involved in a study undertaken in 2012 and that stormwater infiltrates the sewer system and overflows due to stormwater contaminates shellfish beds. She noted that there are also many deteriorated catch basins in need of attention and also that most residents readily acknowledge the existence of stormwater problems in the community.

She added that paying rates to an enterprise fund is generally accepted as more equitable versus taxation.

Council Chairman Calouro noted that the message to the community should be simple so that most people will "get it."

A Hope Street resident explained that the Town of Barrington has a fixed fee.

Councilwoman Parella suggested that there should be some correlation between the tax bill and use fees.

Council Chairman Calouro noted that any message to the public regarding this proposal must explain any impact to the individual tax/rate payer.

Mr. Niles explained that there will be winners and losers if the Town establishes a Stormwater utility.

Councilman Sweeney asked to know if there is an environmental impact.

Councilwoman Parella suggested that the Council might review some specific examples and that these should include photograph for easy reference.

Mr. Niles explained that it will be possible to provide a wide range of examples.

Council Chairman Calouro suggested that there should be an effort to avoid unnecessary worry on the part of the residents.

Anne Kellerman, a member of the committee, noted that many of the Stormwater problems are attributable to catch basins which are in poor condition.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know how many Towns in Rhode Island are considering a stormwater utility with Ms. Scott explaining that there are eleven (11) of these.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know if there are any in place in Rhode Island with Ms. Scott responding "not yet."

Mr. Chateauneuf noted that the group will return to the Council with a draft report. He noted the "key advantages" in that this type of utility as found on slide 1.

Councilwoman Parella noted the idea of having a "sunset provision."

Mr. Niles explained that "this is a process."

Councilman Stuart speculated that there would still be a need to bond for capital improvements.

Council Chairman Calouro thanked the steering committee and the presenters for their participation.

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Sweeney, second by Councilwoman Parella and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 8:47 o'clock PM.

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Louis P. Cirillo, CMC, Council Clerk

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Council Clerk