

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING - WEDNESDAY EVENING - JANUARY 10, 2018**

PRESENT: Calouro, Sweeney, Tyska, Parella (arrived at 6:16 o'clock PM) and Stuart

The Council met in special session on Wednesday evening, January 10, 2018 in the Town Hall Conference Room beginning at 6:04 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Calouro presiding:

1. Public Service Interviews/Appointments
  - a. Historic District Commission (full member, term to expire July 2018; and alternate member, term to expire July 2019)
    1. Sonney Furtado, 148 High Street - interest/appointment
    2. Benjamin Cantor-Stone, 218 State Street - interest/appointment
    4. Robbin Smolca, 353 Hope Street - interest/appointment (interviewed December 19, 2017)
    3. Gerald Walsh, 33 Byfield Street - interest/appointment (new applicant)

Manuel "Sonney" Furtado, Jr. - Historic District Commission

Mr. Furtado appeared before the Council and explained that he is very familiar with the Historic District neighborhood and that he would like for there to be a more long-term "stable" board since there has been much commissioner turnover in recent years. It was noted that Mr. Furtado served on the Commission in the past.

Council Chairman Calouro stated that the Council is interested that its commission members should exercise "level thinking" and that they should be open to becoming more "engaged" with their applicants.

Mr. Furtado noted that each case poses its own challenges and that decisions should be made on a case by case basis.

Council Chairman Calouro stated that he is concerned that the commission has been inconsistent in its allowance of "technical" materials.

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Mr. Furtado explained that he was on the Commission eight years ago and that he believes it to be a good idea for commissioners to meet with the Council on a regular basis to "go over" policies.

Councilman Sweeney asked to know if Mr. Furtado was suggesting that these meetings would help develop Historic District Commission guidelines with Mr. Furtado responding that he was thinking about new products and to find ways to remove some of the difficulties experienced by property owners.

Councilman Sweeney suggested that acceptable alternative products might be placed on a list and distributed by office staff.

Councilman Tyska asked to know if Mr. Furtado was asking to be considered for appointment because he missed serving on the Commission.

Mr. Furtado explained that he is willing to help on the Commission but would prefer to be appointed as alternate since he does not have time to be a full member.

Council Chairman Calouro noted that the Historic District Commission is an "opinion-based" board and that this can lead to inconsistencies.

Councilman Stuart asked to know if the Historic District Zone might be expanded with Mr. Furtado responding that he believes the zone to be sufficiently-sized for now.

Robbin Smolca - Historic District Commission

The Council welcomed back Mr. Smolca since Councilman Tyska did not have the opportunity to interview him previously.

Mr. Smolca informed the Council that he has been visiting Bristol for the past 15 years and that he has been a resident for one year. He noted that he is familiar with the guidelines established by the US Secretary of the Interior and that the Commission must apply these guidelines in their decision making. He noted that Commissioners' opinions must fall back to these established guidelines.

Councilwoman Parella arrived at this point in the meeting (6:16 o'clock PM).

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Mr. Smolca provided the Council a copy of a "proposal statement" outlining some of his ideas for the Historic District Commission.

Mr. Smolca suggested that the Rogers Free Library website might be utilized to provide Historic District Commission applicants with some technical information and resource options. He noted that the Library site would be advisable since it is more "commercial" rather than "governmental."

Mr. Smolca reported that he believes that using synthetic building products should be allowable but explained that he was unaware of the financial considerations.

Council Chairman Calouro noted that the Historic District Commission allows the use of synthetic building products in lesser places that are somewhat screened from view.

Councilman Tyska stated that Mr. Smolca's proposal is well-done. He asked to know if the size and scope of the historic district was suitable.

Mr. Smolca noted that the Town already recognizes a list of 60 properties outside of the established district and that these are under the jurisdiction of the Historic District Commission. He noted that it is important to include listed buildings lest that these might disappear from the historic landscape without the attention of the Historic District Commission.

Gerald Walsh - Historic District Commission

Council Chairman Calouro asked Mr. Walsh to explain why he was interested in serving on the Commission.

Mr. Walsh explained that he resides in the Historic District and that he has been an applicant before the Commission in the past. He stated that he believes that he would have benefitted from the receipt of more practical guidance and that he would endeavor to help applicants walk through the process. He noted that had he known up front the types of questions that the Commission would have asked, he would have prepared himself better before the hearing and that this would have likely expedited his project.

Mr. Walsh noted that he relied greatly upon his contractor and that the contractor was not well-versed in the concerns of the Historic District Commission. He stated that he assumes that

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many property owners are relying upon their contractors who may be good contractors but possibly unprepared to react to Historic District Commission concerns.

Mr. Walsh stated that he appreciates the appearance of the Historic District and that he has great respect for maintaining the integrity of the buildings with plaques and that these should be held to high standards.

Councilwoman Parella suggested that it would be advisable to provide more technical resources for property owners.

Councilman Stuart suggested that the Council should advise the Commission to do more monitoring in the field.

Mr. Walsh noted that his project was monitored and that the named monitor was very helpful during the construction.

Mr. Walsh informed the Council that he loves the Bristol downtown area and that he would not wish to live anywhere else. He added that he would be pleased to offer his time and expertise to help the Town and his neighbors.

Councilman Stuart asked to know if Mr. Walsh had any interest in serving on other boards with Mr. Walsh responding that he served on the Charter Review Commission in the past and also may be interested in other appointments.

Mr. Walsh noted that he is responsible for the property and project management at the Providence County Courthouse which is considered an historic building.

Council Chairman Calouro asked to know if Mr. Walsh would be capable in successfully influencing his fellow commissioners with Mr. Walsh responding that he is not headstrong and that he believes in working through a point of view, sharing his own view and articulating its benefits.

- b. Juvenile Hearing Board-Alternate (term to expire December 2020)
  1. Marjorie J. McBride, 3 Avenir Court - interest/reappointment (currently serving)
  2. Henry Cabral, 54 Sefton Drive - interest/appointment

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Marjorie McBride - Juvenile Hearing Board

Ms. McBride informed the Council that she has been an alternate member of the board for some time and that she enjoys participating since she loves adolescents. She noted that the job of the board is to help these youngsters see their mistakes and take responsibility for them. She added that the board also explains the ramifications for criminal activity and will typically determine a task suitable as a penalty for their infraction. She stated that hopefully the task would be a deterrent to a recurrence of the infraction.

Council Chairman Calouro asked to know if the task might include community service with Ms. McBride stating that it would be more likely that the board would keep track of the child's attendance at school since infractions seem to occur when students are absent from school.

Councilman Sweeney asked to know the "#1 crime" with Ms. McBride explaining that it used to be marijuana use but noted that the regulations concerning same have been recently relaxed.

Councilwoman Parella expressed concern that the number of cases appear to be school related and asked to know if Ms. McBride has a conflict of interest.

Ms. McBride explained that she has been on the board for several years and that she only had to recuse herself once. She noted that she prefers to remain an alternate to the board for this reason. Ms. McBride suggested that the Juvenile Hearing Board and the School Committee are "two different worlds" and that it is not her job as a School Committee Member to get involved in student discipline.

She also explained that she has not seen any student cases at the School Committee level for over four years and that these cases are rather referred to the school administrators.

Council Chairman Calouro asked to know if there were any ethical concerns since many of the cases appear to be school related.

Ms. McBride explained that she has been "cleared" by the State Ethics Commission.

Council Chairman Calouro asked to know if Ms. McBride must recuse herself if the perpetrator is a student and/or if the crime takes place on school grounds.

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Ms. McBride noted that most crimes do not take place on school grounds.

Councilwoman Parella stated that the two entities (Juvenile Hearing Board and School Committee) seem to be related since the board is using evidence of school attendance as punishment.

Council Chairman Calouro also expressed concern that there may be a conflict in the case of a Bristol Warren Regional School District student being brought before the board that includes School Committee members.

Ms. McBride noted that the person brought before the board is identified as an adolescent in trouble and not a "student." She explained that the Juvenile Hearing Board works to get these students out of trouble and on to a more positive path. She added that the Board sometimes works with Recreation Director Burke.

Council Chairman Calouro stated that he did not understand how Ms. McBride could serve independently on both the School Committee and the Juvenile Hearing Board with Ms. McBride responding that the School Committee deals with budgets, staff, curriculum, etc., and that the Committee does not deal with the minutiae of student problems and that she has never viewed her role on the Juvenile Hearing Board as having a conflict.

Council Chairman Calouro noted that the Council must still interview Mr. Cabral and announced that the interview will take place at a later date at the convenience of the parties.

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Sweeney, seconded by Councilman Stuart and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this special meeting to be adjourned at 6:58 o'clock PM.

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Louis P. Cirillo, CMC  
Council Clerk