
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

April 4, 2023 at 5:15 PM

Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Stewart, Trisciani, E. Sapienza, Cavanaugh, Heath

Messrs.: J. Belanger, S. Silsby

1. Summary of abatement requests submitted by Fred McNeill, Chief Engineer.

*On motion of **Alderman Trisciani**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to approve.*

2. Communication from Jonathan Hopkins, Central Fleet Services Director, requesting authorization to get bids and enter into contracts for vehicles being replaced in the FY24 MER.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman E. Sapienza**, it was voted to approve.*

3. Communication from Caleb Dobbins, Highway Chief Engineer, requesting approval of the following projects from the Mayor's FY24 CIP budget:
 - FY24 Roadway Program in the amount of \$2,500,000
 - Annual Street Reconstruction in the amount of \$400,000

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted to approve.*

4. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$2,041,945 for CIP 611523 2023 Healthy Homes Production Grant Program.

*On motion of **Alderman Trisciani**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to approve.*

5. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorizations providing for the acceptance and transfer of funds in the amount of \$78,868.59 for CIP 711423 Annual Street Reconstruction.

*On motion of **Alderman Trisciani**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted to approve.*

6. Communication from Kristen Clarke, Traffic Engineer, requesting a line item adjustment to the Budget Authorization for CIP 711118 Traffic Signal Corridor Upgrades.

*On motion of **Alderman E. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to approve.*

7. Communication from Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, regarding a request from Easter Seals to change the use of the building at 224 Spruce Street from three units of rental housing to a group home.

Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, stated the materials are in your packet. The proposal is to change the use from a three-family with apartments to a group home. That is how it is being categorized by Easter Seals. Under our zoning ordinance, it is going to fall under a congregate housing designation probably which is allowed in the zone. It would need to go through Planning approvals because it would be a change of use site plan. There may also be a need for a conditional use permit based on how many bedrooms there are and how they do the layout because it is one parking space per congregate bedroom. There will be some amount of process here but the exact amount won't be figured out until we get floor plans and things like that. There will be a process that the public will be involved in.

Chairman Stewart asked so by public process you mean the neighbors will have a chance to review and see what is happening and be able to weigh in and give their thoughts.

Mr. Belanger answered absolutely just as with any Planning Board application.

Chairman Stewart asked is there anyone from Easter Seals here who might be able to shed some light on what the plans are. Before that, I believe Alderman Cavanaugh has a question for Mr. Belanger.

Alderman Cavanaugh stated this kind of makes my hair stand up because of a couple of years ago and everything we went through. I am not trying to put Easter Seals in that group but there were congregate homes popping up with 20-30 people living there. We did a lot at the state level to change those rules and make sure any housing that is going to fall under that kind of criteria has to meet all of the city codes and fire codes. These things were popping up all over the place, especially in ward 2. I just want to make sure that this will be covered by all of that.

Mr. Belanger responded absolutely. This will have to meet all life safety codes.

Sue Silsby, Vice-President, Easter Seals, stated I have been at Easter Seals for 34 years and I am responsible for the operations of our developmental disabilities services. Currently, we have a six-bedroom program located on Jewett Street. It is a rental location and we are looking to relocate these six women into the 224 Spruce Street location. We plan on having three three-bedroom units so there would be a total of nine individuals living there; all female and all of whom have developmental disabilities and will have supportive services at the location.

Alderman Heath asked could you explain the staffing patterns that will be in place.

Ms. Silsby answered each individual has an individual plan but in general there is one staff member on overnight for each unit. On the second shift and weekends it is a 2:3 ratio. Typically, during the day like 9 AM-3 PM we have a 1:1 ratio and that is because most of the individuals are working and they need more individualized support to access employment. There would also be a house manager on-site as well and a nurse.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to approve.*

8. Communication from the Planning & Community Development Director requesting extension of CIP projects 611619 & 611819 through May 31, 2023.

*On motion of **Alderman Trisciani**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted to approve.*

9. Communication from the Planning & Community Development Director, requesting authorization to accept an InvestNH Municipal Per-Unit Grant in the amount of \$2 million.

***Alderman E. Sapienza** moved to approve. **Alderman Trisciani** duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman Heath asked can you explain what this will look like.

Mr. Belanger answered we will be receiving \$2 million from the InvestNH program. As I am sure you know, there is a limit at the state level of \$1 million but we were able to apply for a waiver and get \$2 million so we are very pleased with that. The way it is going to work is we are going to be receiving this money from the state and use it as a low interest loan. The terms have yet to be figured out but it will be a low interest loan for the three affordable housing projects that are going up on the corners of Merrimack and Chestnut Streets; 192 units altogether. We will be helping with some gap financing.

***Chairman Stewart** called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

10. Communication from Ryan Cashin, Fire Chief, requesting permission to apply for a FY24 EOC grant in the amount of \$2,250,000.
(Note: There is a City match of \$750,000 required if awarded this grant.)

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to approve.*

11. Communication from the Fire Chief requesting permission to apply for a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant in the amount of \$20,999.70.
(Note: There is a City match of \$2,333.30 required if awarded this grant.)

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to approve.*

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Clerk of Committee