

## COMMITTEE ON LANDS & BUILDINGS

April 19, 2022 at 5:30 PM

Chairman Long called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Long, Fajardo, Levasseur, T. Sapienza, Trisciani

Messrs.: M. Gomez, J. Nazaka, L. LaFreniere

1. Communication from Mark Gomez, Chief of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery, requesting authorization to negotiate an agreement with the Brigit A. Feeney Foundation for the design, construction and perpetual maintenance of a proposed garden at Livingston Park.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I saw the design in the packet. Is that the final design? Who has the final approval on the design? I just want to make sure that the city has the final approval.

Mark Gomez, Chief of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery, answered yes the city will have the final approval of the design. The Foundation has been very consistent throughout the whole conversation over the past few months that the city would have no obligations financially around the design or installation of the garden and no obligations financially around the long-term maintenance. We would also have the authority to approve or reject the design.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked and if it is not maintained properly by the Foundation do you have the ability to cancel this agreement.

Mr. Gomez replies yes. We will be working in tandem with the Solicitor's Office to make sure there is language in the agreement that allows us to do that.

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

2. Communication from Jodie Nazaka, Economic Development Director, requesting authorization to execute an MOU with Manchester Connects for the installation of a mural on the Arms Park stairs.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I have the same question. Who will have final approval of the design of the mural?

Jodie Nazaka, Economic Development Director, answered it would be in coordination with Manchester Connects and my office. We would be looking to follow the same procedure that Parks & Recreation did with Manchester Moves for the mural that they requested on the rail trail tunnel. I believe that was approved a few months ago. We would have that language in the MOU.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked so the city would have to approve any final design.

Ms. Nazaka replied the design that was included in your packet is an interpretation of how the design will look. If anyone is familiar with James Chase, he has that geometric style that he works with. He is working with Manchester Connects to play off the Millyard and all the innovation that is happening there. In particular, we are thinking about Ralph Baer and doing more of a pixelated design. Moving forward we will be working with the Heritage Commission and making a presentation to them as well to make sure the design is appropriate and agreed upon between the Heritage Commission, the city and Manchester Connects.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I would suggest that the city have final say on the design.

Ms. Nazaka replied absolutely and if you would like that to come forward to the BMA for approval that is something we can do.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I don't want to do it but I want to make sure the city is doing it.

Ms. Nazaka stated I am a member of Manchester Connects and the Manchester Connects Board will be working with my office to make sure that this is something the city would approve.

Chairman Long asked Alderman Sapienza are you looking for this committee to approve the final design.

Alderman T. Sapienza answered no.

Chairman Long stated okay I just wanted to make sure. So we want to make sure that city staff approves it.

Ms. Nazaka stated absolutely and I think the presentation included in the packet is a good direction that you can assume it will go in. James Chase has done other installations throughout the city including the doorway at the Makers Space over in the Gas Light District and the ramp going into the parking garage at the DoubleTree Hotel. There were also some planters that he worked on for Intown as well.

Alderman Levasseur asked so he won't be painting the stairs.

Ms. Nazaka answered yes it is painting the stairs. We have been coordinating with DPW and if this project moves forward there would be pressure washing done through them and the stairs would be primed and then painted by the muralist. Long-term maintenance would be coordinated through the muralist. For instance, if it was tagged with graffiti, we would notify the muralist and he would go down and fix it.

Alderman Levasseur asked so we don't know what the mural is going to look like ahead of time.

Ms. Nazaka replied yes we will.

Alderman Levasseur asked will this committee approve it before the Board approves it.

Ms. Nazaka responded that is up to you whether you want us to bring it forward.

Alderman Levasseur stated I would just like to table this until we see the mural. I think Intown came before us to have the painting done on Canal Street and those look like hell; the medians. I remember looking at that when the idea first came forward and it looked a lot better than it does in real life. Painting stairs makes me a little nervous. To have a distraction when you are walking up and down stairs...I just wish I could see it before; that's all.

Chairman Long stated we verified that city staff will approve the final design.

Alderman Levasseur asked what staff.

Ms. Nazaka stated in the packet there was a good example of the direction he would be going in. I know it isn't the exact design and he is currently working with Manchester Connects to iron that out with feedback from the Heritage Commission. I would say the preferred alternative would be for Economic Development staff to have the trust of the Board to approve the final design but I do understand if the Board wants to see it ahead of time.

Alderman Levasseur stated I just don't like to see us painting buildings that are brick and in the historic district. I was just in Lowell a week and a half ago and there are some beautiful buildings there with some nice paintings on them. Those are good for now but I don't know what they are going to be like in 50 years or if people will be questioning why we allowed that to happen to our buildings. What is really cool now may not be 25 years from now and I don't know how they would get that stuff off. I am not in support of painting buildings or any property. Maybe with some newer buildings but that is a historic district down there. I guess the Heritage Commission would have a say also?

Ms. Nazaka responded yes we would be presenting to them to get their involvement. I do understand your concerns about long-term maintenance and this being something that could be there for potentially a long period of time. The idea behind this kind of goes in hand with some of the improvements that happened in Arms Park in 2018 through Manchester Connects who received an AARP grant. It would be building off of that momentum and the idea is that that stretch of Arms Park gets over 50,000 pass-by vehicles a day. So when people are traveling up north or on their way to Canada, rather than planning a trip to Concord for lunch the idea is that this would drive them off the highway into Manchester. The visibility of the stairs is pretty key to that part of the city and right now, if you look in your packet, they are covered with graffiti. This would be an effort to not only clean them up but also prevent any future tagging in that area.

Chairman Long asked so this is just the stairs and the abutments correct.

Ms. Nazaka answered it is just the stairs and then the walls.

Chairman Long asked so it is not a building.

Ms. Nazaka responded no.

Chairman Long stated and in the MOU you are going to have final say. My only other thought would be with respect to stairs there has to be some sort of ADA requirements for people who have a hard time seeing, etc.

Ms. Nazaka stated we would be working closely with DPW to make sure that the stairs are slip resistant and that there were no hazards. As part of this project, Manchester Connects is proposing to repaint the railings that are a little rusted right now. The overall idea is to help activate the space and clean it up and hopefully make it a little bit more appealing for people to use the stairs whether to sit...understandably the stairs are not ADA compliant now and you cannot take a wheelchair down them and that won't change as part of this project.

Alderman Fajardo stated when I was looking at the pictures, it looked like there were two options for the stairs and the stairs plus the granite walls. In the packet it was marked the same so I wasn't sure if I was misunderstanding that.

Ms. Nazaka stated our initial discussions with Manchester Connects involved whether it should be just the stairs or the stairs and the granite walls around it. The granite walls seem to be the most prone to graffiti and because it is granite and extremely porous, DPW wasn't certain that they could get all of the graffiti off that is currently on there without having to just paint over it. If those granite boulders were going to be painted anyway, the muralist suggested for no extra cost to do those as well.

Alderman Fajardo asked would it cut off where the red line is.

Ms. Nazaka answered yes.

Chairman Long stated I like Option #2. I would like to thank Manchester Connects for bringing this forward.

Ms. Nazaka stated there are members of Manchester Connects present in the audience if there are any direct questions.

***Alderman T. Sapienza moved to approve with city staff having final approval of the mural design. Alderman Fajardo duly seconded the motion. Chairman Long called for a vote. The motion carried with Alderman Levasseur being duly recorded in opposition.***

Alderman Trisciani stated I would like to say thank you for including the Heritage Commission in the design discussion.

### **TABLED ITEMS**

3. Communication from Brenda Masewic Adams, Tax Collector, regarding an addendum to the P&S agreement for 521 Maple Street.  
(Note: Tabled on 3/15/2022)

*On motion of **Alderman T. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to remove this item from the table.*

Chairman Long stated we had tabled this because on paper the financial information didn't look very good. Alderman Fajardo and I did go and speak with the purchaser at another building she owns. I am comfortable with her finances. She is also looking for a \$20,000 reduction in the purchase price but I am not comfortable with that. I did ask her if one of the five units could be affordable housing and she said she wasn't sure if it fit into her plan so I would approve the sale at the original price.

Alderman Fajardo stated I want to support a local landlord here in Manchester who lives in Manchester so in that regard I definitely want to see this person be successful in this effort but I think we are also in a tough spot as a city financially in looking at funding staffing for many departments. I don't feel comfortable at this time supporting the \$20,000 reduction.

*On motion of **Alderman Fajardo**, duly seconded by **Alderman Levasseur**, it was voted to approve the P&S at the original purchase price of \$239,000.*

4. Communication from Donnalee Lozeau of Southern NH Services requesting approval of a collaborative project with the Granite State Children's Alliance to be housed in the Hallsville School building located at 275 Jewett Street, which would include giving them the building at no cost.  
(Note: Tabled on 3/15/2022.)

*On motion of **Alderman T. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to remove this item from the table.*

*On motion of **Alderman T. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Levasseur**, it was voted to receive and file.*

Chairman Long stated I think issuing a Request for Interest would allow everybody and anybody to submit something. A Request for Proposals would sort of box us into what the proposal is.

Alderman Trisciani asked how would we get that out to the community and what does that look like and who creates that.

Chairman Long answered it would be Planning, the Solicitor and...it is usually done by the Economic Development Office but Jodie has been busy. The Mayor made a great suggestion to just have her sit in on this so she can start learning the process so it would those three that would come out with the Request for Interest.

Alderman Trisciani asked and then we just put it out and anybody can come back to us with their thoughts on what they would like to do with the building and what they would like to pay for the building and whatever terms they want to put on their end.

Chairman Long replied exactly.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked should we just ask city staff to put that together so we can look at it and vote on it.

Chairman Long responded we could do that. Leon do you think you could have something for us to review by our next meeting?

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I would like to know what I am voting on and what exactly an RFI is.

Leon LaFreniere, Planning & Community Director, stated I would propose that if there is some question about what exactly the goal is at this juncture that staff put together a draft that could be brought back to the committee so you could let us know if there were any changes you wanted to see.

Chairman Long asked so we have to decide if we want to send it out as a lease or we want to send it out as a buy or if we want caveats with respect to no outside façade changes or if we want affordable housing units.

Alderman Trisciani asked we have to do that as part of an RFI. I thought the RFI kept us from putting those restrictions on it and would allow people to come to us with ideas. As far as façade changes, it is a historic property so anybody who is looking at it needs to understand that there are limits to changes to the façade anyway and it would have to go before the Heritage Commission at some point.

Mr. LaFreniere stated not necessarily because it is not in one of the historic districts that the Heritage Commission deals with.

Chairman Long asked Leon would it be easier for you if we just kept it open and have people just submit their ideas or would it help you if we gave you some parameters.

Mr. LaFreniere answered it is always helpful if we have some parameters to make sure that the work product we come up with reflects what the committee's interest is. That said, if you are looking to have a really broad view and put it out there and get some ideas, we can certainly put out a request that would be so structured and bring everything back to the committee. We wouldn't be in a position really to provide you any recommendations on what comes in if it is a broad request for interest or request for information.

Chairman Long asked so do we want to put some conditions on it.

Alderman T. Sapienza answered well it should be something with the least impact to the neighborhood.

Chairman Long asked meaning traffic.

Alderman T. Sapienza replied yes let's look at their plan and see.

Chairman Long stated okay so the least impact to the neighborhood as a parameter. Is that fair or do you need more detail?

Mr. LaFreniere answered I think we can put together a proposal that included language that reflected those concerns like impacts to the neighborhood and traffic and the City's desire to promote affordable housing opportunities. We could still leave it open but provide guidance as to what would be ranked as a higher concern.

Alderman Fajardo stated I think that is a good compromise in that it keeps it open to what the possibilities are that maybe none of us have thought of while also considering the feedback that we heard from the neighborhood.

Mr. LaFreniere stated if I could clarify one point regarding the Heritage Commission, if the applicant wanted to use public money for this then there would be a 106 review with the state and the Heritage Commission would be asked to look at that. So they are only involved if public money is involved.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked is the building on any historic property list.

Mr. LaFreniere replied I don't believe so.

Chairman Long stated so a month from now you will bring a draft forward for us to review.

*On motion of **Alderman Trisciani**, duly seconded by **Alderman Fajardo**, it was voted to direct the Planning & Community Development Department, Solicitor's Office and Economic Development Office to draft a Request for Interest for the Hallsville School building taking into consideration the concerns raised at the neighborhood meeting.*

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

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand".

Clerk of Committee