

Government Operations Committee

Minutes

August 3, 2015

Councilors Attending: Civiello, Plourde, Sprague, Durgin, Nealley, Graham, Faircloth

Staff Attending: Conlow, Farrar, Heitmann, Hamilton, Goodwin

Committee Chair Civiello called the meeting to order at 5:35

1. Consideration of elimination of the Urban Renewal Authority as a standing city Commission

City Solicitor Heitmann explained the function and history of the Authority, and reported that it had not been active nor met for many years. The first step in the process to dissolve the Authority will be to meet with them, and then take necessary actions for the Council to accept a conveyance from the Authority of whatever rights the Authority has in any property it ever conveyed, and then to abolish the Authority. It was moved by Councilor Plourde, seconded by Councilor Sprague, and voted to accept staff recommendation on the process outlined to abolish the Urban Renewal Authority.

2. Review of dates, times and locations for upcoming Neighborhood Listening Sessions.

City Manager Conlow outlined tentative dates (Thursday evenings -- Sept. 10 and 24, and Oct. 8 and 22), and locations (Doughty School, Cohen School, Downeast School, and Mary Snow School). She also outlined the format of the meetings and the meeting time, which will be 7:00pm to 9:00pm. She noted that she will plan to facilitate the meetings, they will be publicized in advance, and a number of key staff personnel will be attending. It was moved by Councilor Plourde, seconded by Councilor Sprague and voted to accept the City Manager's outline for the meetings as presented.

3. Request for Bangor Public Health and Community Services to be the provider for children attending Head Start without a provider.

Director Hamilton explained the request for Health and Community Services to provide blood lead and anemia screenings to children in Head Start or early head start who have levels above certain thresholds, and who do not have a medical provider. It is anticipated that this would be a fairly small number and would take a minimal amount of time. Director Hamilton indicated that the attached Memorandum of Understanding was required to establish the working procedures between her department and Penquis Child Development. It was moved by Councilor Sprague, seconded by Councilor Plourde and voted to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the parties.

4. Political Signs

City Solicitor Heitmann provided background information and a detailed explanation concerning what the law permits and does not permit with respect to the regulation of political signs. Signs located on

public rights of way can be regulated with respect to size, height, location, and safety with objective criteria. The discussion did not involve the placing or regulation of signs on private property. Signs cannot be completely banned on public rights of way as this would violate free speech protections. All Councilors spoke regarding their thoughts pertaining to political signs and several relayed concerns that had heard from the public. Heitmann indicated that more objective criteria would be easier to enforce and would be less likely to generate an appeal, while more subjective criteria would be more difficult to enforce and more likely to result in an appeal of any adopted ordinance. Councilors spent considerable time discussing and debating sign height and size, as well as various locations where signs created safety concerns including medians and traffic islands around the city. Councilors also discussed the use of esplanades for signs and whether sign should be permitted around the perimeters of parks, within the public rights of way. (Under the City's current Ordinance, signs are not allowed in City Parks). After further review and discussion, it was moved by Councilor Plourde and seconded by Councilor Nealley to table the item until a Councilor prepares a draft plan with specific regulating criteria and returns to the Committee. The vote was 3 in favor (Civiello, Plourde, Nealley) and 2 opposed (Durgin, Graham).

With no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10.