

Meeting Minutes Committee on Planning and Development

January 16, 2024

Page 1 of 3

Meeting Recording: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/lnr37PuGYQAv8yjCqjpvXSxffp1tPRr4M2-B5gDT8F-5MLcyVyXhC16Mk1L2xwrZ.4JFLWZ_o9952t00p

Members

Cllr. Heather Shand, Chair
Cllr. Connie Preston (At-Large) - present
Cllr. Mark Wright (At-Large) - present

Other Participants

Cllr. Jennie Donahue (Ward 2) Zoom
Council President Ed Cameron (At-Large)-
present

Agenda:

APPT00446 Elaine King Nickerson 16 Purchase St. Affordable Housing Trust 2/15/2026
APPT00448 Biff Bouse 6 Iona Ave. Historical Comm. Rep/CPC 2/15/2026
APPT00449 Thomas O'Brien 11 Moseley Ave. CPC rep/ Housing Authority 2/15/2027
APPT00450 Thomas O'Brien 11 Moseley Ave. Housing Authority 2/15/2029
APPT00453 Dennis Morel, Jr. 83 Bow Ridge Rd., Lynn Building Inspector 2/15/2027
APPT00461 Jeffrey Mattheson 12 Hart Rd. Electrical Inspector 2/15/2025

Meeting started at 6:00

APPT 446 – Elaine Nickerson, AHT

Ms. Nickerson spoke to her time in Westford as a member of their Affordable Housing Committee (2001-2007) and the Trust (2002-2006). Westford had Habitat for Humanity and 40B projects their committee supported building in town She took a leave from working on the Westford AHT to start her own consulting firm that focused on affordable housing, mainly in the post development of a project. She did this to avoid any conflict of interest. At this same time she had a cottage on Plum Island and came to Newburyport in the summertime for 25 years. She moved to Newburyport permanently and retired at the beginning of Covid from her consulting firm. She wants to use her experience on the AHT in Newburyport.

Public Comment: None

Cllr. Preston moved to approve the appointment. Cllr. Wright was the second.
Committee voted 3-0 to approve APPT0446 to the full council.

APPT 448 – Biff Bouse, Historic Commission representative on the CPC

Mr. Bouse is a native Nebraskan. Came to Newburyport in 2018. Went to Vassar and Harvard for urban planning and design. Was impressed with Newburyport's history in being able to stop urban renewal from destroying historic downtown. Loves the historic buildings and homes in the community. Stated standing in Newburyport's historic council chambers generates a "feeling of what a good city should be like." This is what got him interested in the history of the city. He started watching historic commission meetings. Stated being on the historic commission "at least made my mom feel good for doing something he went to school for". He has served as the vice chair of the historic commission and was happy to step up to be the commission's representative on the CPC.

Cllr. Preston follows Mr. Bouse's Instagram account on historical Newburyport and asked questions regarding his criticism of some of our zoning. Mr. Bouse stated his concerns for what "historic" means in the community, referencing some cases where homes that are 75 years old are being torn down to

Meeting Minutes Committee on Planning and Development

January 16, 2024

Page 2 of 3

build larger homes with more square footage, those smaller Cape-style homes are historic too. Appreciates 75 is a compromise whereas some buildings that are 50 would be considered historic in other communities.

Public Comment: none

Cllr. Preston moved to approve the appointment. Cllr. Wright was the second. Committee voted 3-0 to approve APPT448 to the full council.

APPT 449 & APPT. 450 – Tom O’Brien – Housing Authority (reappointment) and Housing Authority Rep. to the CPC (appointment)

Mr. O’Brien has been a member of the Housing Authority since 1995. Housing Authority consists of Kelleher Gardens and the Sullivan Building. He spoke to the great people he works with at the Housing Authority. Spoke to the improvements being made at Kelleher Gardens (siding improvements). Has enjoyed being a member and was happy to step up to be the representative to the CDC. Mr. O’Brien was a member of the city council for 22 years, water commission for 6 years (prior to being on council) and the water and sewer the last 2 years.

Cllr. Preston asked questions on the housing authority history.

Director Port spoke to the creation of the housing authority.

Council President Cameron spoke to the membership being 4 appointments from the city and one by the governor. The Housing authority is funded predominately through the federal government and some from the state. The city does not typically provide funding to the authority.

Cllr. Donahue asked questions regarding the upkeep of the Sullivan Building.

Public Comment

- Cllr Byron Lane thanked Mr. O’Brien for his years of service to the community.

Cllr. Preston moved to approve the appointment. Cllr. Wright was the second.

Committee voted 3-0 to approve, collectively, APPT449 & APPT450 to the full council.

APPT453 Denis Morel, Building Inspector

Mr. Morel has been the city’s building inspector for the last three years. Has enjoyed working with the people in the building department. He’s also enjoyed working with the folks on the commission on disabilities.

Public Comment

- Kristen Farrell – 28 Spotford Street Co-chair of the Commission on Disabilities, has been on the commission for 10 years. Stated Mr. Morel has been an excellent person to work with as building inspector and ADA coordinator, one of the most accessible members on the city’s staff. Stated his excellent communication skills are brought to his job every day. Brings his knowledge of ADA ad building codes to his job.
- Cllr. Jennie Donahue spoke on behalf of Mr. Morel stating he brings great ideas and enthusiasm when he works with the commission and enthusiastically supported his reappointment.

Meeting Minutes Committee on Planning and Development

January 16, 2024

Page 3 of 3

- Lisa Rowan, Former co-chair of the disabilities commission wrote an email (attached) also stating her support for his reappointment.

Cllr. Preston moved to approve the appointment. Cllr. Wright was the second.
Committee voted 3-0 to approve the appoint to the full council.

APPT 461 Jeff Matheson, City Electrician

Mr. Matheson spoke to his year as the city electrician. Spoke to the smooth transition between him and Mr. Zink. Reiterated with Mr. Morel stated where the building department is a great group of people to work with and hopes to continue the work, in support of the people of Newburyport.

Cllr. Preston moved to approve the appointment. Cllr. Wright was the second.
Committee voted 3-0 to approve the appoint to the full council.

Adjourned at 6:55