

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 27, 2014**

ATTENDANCE: Patricia Swain, Co-Chair; Council President Thomas McCarthy; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Co-Chair; Denese Taylor-Moye; Robert Halstead (6:15)

OTHER: Erin McDonough, Chief Administrative Office; Veronica Jones, Tax Collector

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 P.M. by Council Member Swain.

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 28, 2014

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 28, 2014 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

163-13 REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS

Veronica Jones came forward to discuss item 163-13. She stated that an organization had overpaid by paying their taxes twice instead of once for \$27,000 in January.

**** COMMITTEE MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 163-13 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** COMMITTEE MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

AN UPDATE FROM MS. ERIN MCDONOUGH, CAO'S OFFICE, REGARDING ALL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS AS IN, BY EACH, ALL NAMES, AFFILIATIONS, APPOINTED DATES, EXPIRATION DATES, WHO AND HOW MANY NEW APPOINTEES BEING CONSIDERED AND FOR WHICH AND WHAT IS NEEDED TO FILL ALL POSITIONS AND CLEAR ALL EXPIRATION DATES.

Ms. Erin McDonough came forward to present the update to the committee.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE PROVIDED REPORTS ON THE TERM EXPIRATION DATES FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION, COMMISSION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, ETHICS COMMISSION, BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS, COMMISSION ON HARBOR MANAGEMENT, BRIDGEPORT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION, COMMISSION ON PLANNING AND ZONING, AND THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS AS EXHIBITS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, AND 8 RESPECTIVELY.**

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**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. McDonough reviewed the Civil Service Commission terms for the Committee. She stated that a previous staff-member had left and that there was now a vacancy with a recommendation. The replacement cannot be a Democrat and must fulfill all other civil service requirements.

Ms. McDonough reviewed the Commission for People with Disabilities terms for the Committee. She stated that a staff member had resigned for health reasons and there was a recommendation for one of the vacancies and there were two left to fill. Two of the vacancies must be filled by Democrats.

Council Member Halstead arrived at 6:15 P.M.

Ms. McDonough reviewed the Ethics Commission terms for the Committee. She stated that a staff member had resigned leaving two vacancies and one of the replacements cannot be a Democrat.

Ms. McDonough reviewed the Board of Fire Commissioners terms for the Committee. She stated that there had been little to no change in the terms since its prior mention.

Ms. McDonough reviewed the Commission on Harbor Management terms for the Committee. She stated that there was one vacancy and the replacement cannot be a Democrat.

Ms. McDonough reviewed the Historic District Commission #1 terms for the Committee. She quickly reviewed the requirements in order to be eligible for the Commission for the Committee. She stated that there were recommendations for the open vacancies for the Commission and only one of them can be a Democrat and all had to be residents and property owners within the specific historic district. Council member Halstead asked for a better definition of what constituted the various historic districts, which Ms. McDonough provided. She said that William Minor is the current city staff member assigned to historic districts and was the one who provided the map defining the various districts. Ms. McDonough said that she would double-check the addresses of the recommended people to ensure that they met the qualifications.

Ms. McDonough reviewed the Commission on Planning and Zoning terms for the Committee. She stated that there had been recent changes in the members due to recent passings. There is currently a recommendation for the one alt vacancy and this vacancy cannot be filled by a Democrat.

Mr. Halstead stated the following for the record:

In my capacity as the City Council liaison to the Historic District Commissions, I attended two meetings of the Stratfield Historic Commission. The first meeting, a regular meeting, was held on August 5, 2014 and a special meeting was held on August 11, 2014.

Several matters have come to my attention as a result of these meetings, which I believe should be brought to your attention.

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As you know, the ordinance which created the Historic District, Section 2.98.020, and the applicable state statute, Section 7-147c(d), provide that each Historic District Commission shall have five regular members and three alternate members.

I have learned that the Stratfield Historic District currently has three regular members and one single alternate member. I learned at the meeting that this situation has existed for some time.

I believe that the two vacancies among the regular members and the two vacancies among the alternate members should be filled at the earliest opportunity.

According to the City of Bridgeport web-site, each of the three regular members of the Commission is a registered member of the Democratic Party. This is a violation of the "minority party representation" rule imposed by state law.

As we discussed on August 11, 2014, members of the Historic District Commission are appointed by the Mayor, subject to the approval of the City Council, according to Sec. 2.98.020(A)(1).

The City Attorney is aware of this situation and of the violation of state law. Two members of the City Attorneys' Office, including the Deputy City Attorney were present at the August 11 special meeting.

I believe that this situation could jeopardize, and put at risk, actions taken by the Historic District Commission, should and of these actions be challenged in a court of law. Therefore, I would ask you to bring this matter to the attention of Mayor Finch, as soon as possible, and to arrange for the appointment of two regular members (only one of whom can be a Democrat) and two alternate members.

As we also discussed, there are no written directives or guidelines concerning the proper role of a Council Liaison, when interaction with the Board of Commission in question. Therefore, I will continue to monitor, observe, and evaluate the Historic District Commission, and will endeavor to keep you fully advised.

Thank-you for giving me the opportunity to serve as the City Council Liaison to the Historic District Commission. It is a Commission on which I once served and maintain a keen interest.

Please advise.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOTIONED TO HAVE COUNCIL MEMBER HALLSTEAD'S LETTER ADDED INTO THE RECORD AS ITEM 9-10.27.14.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. McDonough reviewed the Civil Service Commission terms for the Committee and the vacancy within.

She also reviewed the status of several other committees and commissions in which there had been little to no chances with the terms or members.

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Council President McCarthy gave a glowing recommendation to a person he felt was highly qualified for the tasks. He also asked Ms. McDonough to e-mail the Council Members a list of the various terms, vacancies, and requirements.

ADJOURNMENT

****COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOTIONED TO ADJOURN.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Ian A. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services