

Economic & Community Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 4, 2022

Chairwoman Harris called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll call:

Present: Durkee, Paz, Stanley, Harris

Absent: LaCava.

Chris Gamble, 34 Francis Street, Waltham, was recognized as recording the meeting.

Councillor Durkee moved approval of the meeting minutes from 3/21/22. The motion was adopted by a voice vote and the minutes were approved.

Resolution Concerning All Public Meetings of the Waltham City Council: Councillor Durkee made a motion to take the matter off of the table. The motion was approved by a voice vote. Councillor Durkee made a motion to hear from all off Committee members. The motion was approved by a voice vote. Maria Sheehan, Director of WCAC, 400 Main Street, Waltham, MA introduced herself. Councillor Durkee spoke on the matter. He gave an update of the last few meetings relating to this matter. Ms. Sheehan stated that WCAC is wanting to help make all meetings abled to be viewed by residents. She made reference to a package that had been previously supplied to Councillors Harris and Lacava. Copies were given to other committee members during the meeting. Councillor Paz asked several questions regarding the proposal. Ms. Sheehan provided answers. Councillor Durkee moved approval of the Resolution. The motion was approved by a voice vote.

Providing Public Wi-Fi in Waltham Resolution (5/18/2020): Councillor Paz made a motion to take the matter off the table. The motion was approved by a voice vote. Councillor Paz spoke on the Resolution. Councillor Paz requested that Mayor McCarthy invest in the City's Broadband/Wi-Fi capacities through local, state, federal or other grants in the following priority zones: Moody Street/High Street to Pine Street, Nipper Maher Park, Thompson Playground, Gilmore Playground, McDonald Playground, McKenna playground, Jack Koutoujian Playground, Waltham High School Parking Lot and the Carter Street Train Station. Councillor Durkee asked if the recommendation could include other areas of Waltham. Councillor Paz agreed to the amendment and made a motion to approve the request. The request was approved by a voice vote. Councillor Paz made a motion to table the matter. The motion was approved by a voice vote and the matter was tabled.

Tenants, Homeowners and Landlords Resolution: Councillor Durkee made a motion to take the matter off the table. The motion was approved by a voice vote. Councillor Durkee made a motion to hear from all off Committee members. The motion was approved by a voice vote. Councillor Durkee spoke on the matter. Director of Housing, Robert Waters, 501 Lexington Street, Waltham, MA introduced himself and handed out a communication to the Committee. Mr. Waters explained how the Housing Department works with different programs as well as the court system to assist residents who are in the process of being evicted. Councillor Paz asked about the process of applying for state or federal funding through the Housing Department as well as data on home owners that have faulted on mortgages. President McMenimen questioned the demographics on the charts provided to the Committee. Councillor Paz

made a request for additional information from Mr. Waters concerning homeowners falling behind on mortgages or being foreclosed. The motion was approved by a voice vote. Off –Committee member, Councillor LeBlanc asked about Luxury units within the city. Councillor Paz made a request that was approved by a voice vote to have Mr. Waters provide information on how many rentals have been turned into Luxury units over the last decade. The request was approved by a voice vote. Members from WATCH CDC attending the meeting introduced themselves. Executive Director, Daria Gere, 26 Hillcrest Road, Waltham, MA and Community Organizer, Genoveva Tavera, 158 Marguerite Avenue, Waltham, MA. Daria gave a description of WATCH CDC and what services they provide. They help more than 1200 residents with rental assistance and get access to basic needs and other resources. Councillors Paz and Durkee asked questions to Ms. Tavera. Ms. Tavera offered suggestions of how the City Council can help WATCH CDC and about how disinformation among renters is a major cause of eviction. Councillor Paz made a request to have WATCH CDC provide at least 5 illustrative cases of (Anonymous) families who were at risk of eviction and experienced misinformation or lack of information or were inconvenienced. The request was approved on a voice vote. Councillor Durkee made a motion to table the matter. The motion was approved by a voice vote and the Resolution was tabled.

With no further matters Councillor Durkee moved to adjourn. The motion was approved by a voice vote. Chairwoman Harris declared the meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Magliarditi, Clerk of the Committee
4/12/2022