

Waltham City Council
Minutes of the Special Meeting of
July 17, 2017

President LeBlanc called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
The Clerk Pro Tem called the roll of the City Council.

Call of the Roll:

Present: Councillors Brasco, Darcy, Fowler, Giordano, LeBlanc, D, LeBlanc, R., Logan, Marchese, McLaughlin, O'Brien, Romard, Waddick, Vidal,
Absent: McMenimen, Rourke

The Clerk Pro Tem recited the Council Prayer followed by President LeBlanc leading all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councillor Giordano asked for a moment of silence for all our military that have served; past and present.

President LeBlanc read the call of the Special Meeting.

Councillor Logan moved to suspend the rules to hear from Diana Young the Chair of the Community Preservation Committee. The motion was adopted. Councillor Logan asked questions about what limitations there were to changing designation of some of the land purchased with Community Preservation funding. Chair Young indicated that it would be preferable to make any changes within the Fernald property itself as some of the property was purchased with general fund revenue and a transfer within the property would be the least complex way to address the transfer. Chair young indicated a swap of land outside the Fernald property could require state approval.

Councillor Waddick and President Leblanc asked clarifying questions about a land swap and what the implications are.

Councillor Giordano asked if the Community Preservation land could be bought out with City funding. Chair Young indicated that this would be the first time in state history that this would happen and could be met with resistance at the state level.

Councillor Brasco expressed frustration with the restrictions on Community Preservation land. Councillor Basco moved to request that the Mayor and City Solicitor investigate the process for purchasing back the Community Preservation Act portion of the Fernald land using General Fund Revenue. Councillor Logan asked that a friendly amendment be added to have the Law Department to investigate any Article 97 issues and if a map or any other delineation of the CPA portion of the land was filed with the registry of deeds. The friendly amendment was accepted. Councillor Darcy requested a roll call: Councillors, Brasco, Fowler, Giordano, LeBlanc, D, LeBlanc, R., Logan, Marchese, McLaughlin O'Brien, Romard, Waddick, Vidal, voted in favor. Councillor Darcy voted no. Councillors McMenimen and Rourke were absent.

Councillors Brasco and Fowler both spoke about the time constraints and the need to build a New High School and expressed a desire to move forward as soon as possible.

Councillor Logan moved to request that the Waltham School Committee provide the Waltham City Council with the exact metes and bounds and the description of the portion of the Fernald property that they identify as required for the construction of the Waltham High School complex. The request was approved.

Councillor Logan moved to request that the city perform certain environmental assessments as part of the siting process. The request was approved.

Councillor Logan moved to request that the Mayor reach out to the Congressional delegation representing Waltham in order to facilitate the use of the Veteran's Field property for the construction of a new Waltham High School. The request was approved.

Councillor McLaughlin moved to suspend the rules to hear from the Mayor. The motion was approved.

Councillor McLaughlin asked the Mayor if we have heard back from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The Mayor indicated that the City had not heard back. Councillor McLaughlin asked the Mayor if any headway had been made in siting the New High School at the Fernald. The Mayor went over the various options for locations including work that the Mayor had done to identify a location. This included using some portions of the property as a shared use with both the Reaction and School Departments using the land. The Mayor also went over the limitations of the Veteran's Field site and the need to attain state and Federal approval to do anything on the site. The Mayor indicated that it is important for her and the School Committee to know what other City uses the City Council has for the site. The Mayor also indicated that the Fernald was a very problematic site because of environmental, historical and Community Preservation Act limitations.

Councillor Logan said that he thought the resolution sent to the School Committee regarding the use of Fernald was sufficient for them to move forward in identifying a site. The Mayor indicated that that may be sufficient for the Massachusetts School Building Authority but that City has to make a decision on where the school will go. The Mayor mentioned a number of other uses for the site proposed by the City Council. Councillor Logan indicated that the High School would be his first priority for the site. The Mayor indicated that she would need to replicate any land that she moved from Community Preservation to a school use and that that replication may conflict with other uses that the City may want to have at the site. The Mayor also pointed out the challenges with replicating the Veteran's fields and that replication would be required if a High School were built on the site.

Councillor Romard said the School should be the first priority. Councillor Romard asked the Mayor if the 25 acres needs to be contiguous could it be some land at the current high school site. Mayor said that under the no net use policy it can't already be designated for open space.

Councillor Brasco asked if the Fernald is for fields could the Police Station be moved to Leary Field. The Mayor said that Leary Field would need to be replicated somewhere else. The Mayor indicated she would have to do a title search and other activities as well. Councillor Brasco indicated that with all of these hurdles building at the current site may be a better option.

Councillor Randall LeBlanc asked if the Veteran's Field entrance could be used to access the site. The mayor said it could be used. Mayor said she needs to have a neighborhood meeting with the people that live near Veteran's Fields.

Councillor O'Brien asked the Council President if the City Council could vote to transfer care custody and control of the Fernald in one meeting. He was informed that the Council could do this. Councillor O'Brien said he would vote in favor of a transfer of 75 acres if the metes and bounds are available. If they are not he would support transferring the entire site to the School Department.

Councillor Fowler said that he would support 75 acres of the Fernald for the High School.

Councillor Darcy expressed concern that Trapelo Road could not accommodate the traffic that is being proposed without a community meeting. The Mayor agreed that there are many problems with this site and that the environmental concerns at the Waverly Oaks end of the site won't allow children to enter and exit there. Councillor Darcy asked the Mayor to call a neighborhood meeting. Councillor Darcy expressed concern that the wetland restoration area will be replaced by fields. Councillor Darcy asked that the wetlands report be provide to the School Committee before they make a recommendation for the High School location.

Councillor Brasco thanked the Mayor for her dedicated service to the residents of Waltham.

Councillor McLaughlin moved to discharge the Wetlands Restoration resolution from the Fernald Use Committee. Councillor Darcy moved to amend the be it resolved clause by striking it and inserting the following "that the City of Waltham, restore illegally filled wetlands at the Fernald site to restore flood storage detention for the purposes of the public good and safety." Roll call : Councillors, Darcy LeBlanc, R., Logan, , O'Brien, Fowler, McLaughlin, Romard, Marchese, Waddick, Giordano, LeBlanc, D. Vidal, Brasco voted in favor. Councillors McMenimen and Rourke were absent.

Councillor McLaughlin moved to discharge the resolution regarding the Western Greenway from the Fernald Use Committee. The motion was approved. Councillor McLaughlin moved approval of the resolution. Roll call: Councillors, Brasco, Darcy, Fowler, Giordano, LeBlanc, R., LeBlanc, D, Logan, ,O'Brien, Marchese, McLaughlin, Romard, Waddick, Vidal, voted in favor.. Councillors McMenimen and Rourke were absent.

Councillor McLaughlin moved to adjourn. The motion was approved. The City Council adjourned at 8:57 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph W. Vizard
Assistant City Clerk