

Regular Meeting

These minutes are for the regular meeting of the Beacon City Council, held in the Municipal Center at One Municipal Plaza on April 3, 2017. Please note that the video recording of this meeting is available at <http://vimeo.com/channels/40154>.

Council Members Present:

Lee Kyriacou, At Large
George Mansfield, At Large
Peggy Ross, Ward One
Omar Harper, Ward Two
Pamela Wetherbee, Ward Three
Ali Muhammad, Ward Four
Randy Casale, Mayor

Council Members Absent/Excused:**Also Present:**

Anthony Ruggiero, City Administrator
Edward Phillips, City Attorney

A moment of silence was observed for those who work to protect human rights

First Opportunity for Public Comments: Each speaker may have one opportunity to speak up to three minutes on any subject matter other than those which are the topic of a public hearing tonight.

Speakers:

Theresa Kraft: Opposes the Edgewater project. What is the impact of this project on City services in relation to the increase in tax base. The overdevelopment of Beacon must stop.

Diane Spiak Pisanelli: Read statements on behalf of immigrant business owners. Social media has become a battleground. Believes that politicians are using the Sanctuary City issue for their benefit.

Christine Galbo: Asked that the Sanctuary City resolution be removed from the agenda. Recalls a time when the Beacon Police Department was directed to abide by the policies of the Department of Justice. Read the Police Department's statement. Council should consider their motivation for this resolution. Advised that she is an advocate for immigration reform.

Joe Galbo: Read stories of police officers who were killed in the line of duty by undocumented immigrants. Requests that the City officials to get back to work on the needs of the City of Beacon.

Mike Justice: Feels that it is unfortunate that we are back here again discussing this issue. Reminded that the president has advised that federal funds will be withheld from sanctuary cities. Feels that the council is spending too much time on this issue. If council feels that they need to pass a resolution declaring Beacon a welcoming and inclusive city, they should do it. We have been that way for decades.

Andrea Bacon: Would like to see how this unfolds in other cities. This issue should be discussed further and brought to a popular vote.

Justin Riccobono: Has a petition with 500 signatures against the Sanctuary City resolution. Thinks that the welcoming and inclusive resolution is appropriate and would like that version brought back.

Nicole Wooten: Supports the Sanctuary City resolution. Would like to speak for those who were afraid to come to the meeting. Relayed a story of a 72 year-old immigrant who has tried for 20 years to become a documented citizen but it never worked out. Employers did not follow through with the sponsorship and took advantage of them. Believes that making Beacon a sanctuary city means that the

Mayor and City Council care about its residents. Another undocumented resident who is 12 years old asked for help from the mayor so that his family can stay together. Also thanked the mayor for watering the flowers on Main Street.

Jason Hughes: Read testimony from a child who is worried about their family. Thinks the word “sanctuary” needs to be included in the resolution.

Julie Winterbottom: Read testimony from a 7 year old child who is worried about his parents. Read testimony from a 17 year old who is worried that their parents will be taken away. Added that to most of us this resolution is just a piece of paper, but to them it would mean the end of sleepless nights.

Andrew Gaza: (refer to the video)

Antonia Maeck: Continued with reading the testimony of residents. One resident is worried about being out in the open for fear of being hunted down. The Sanctuary City resolution will assure their children that they will never have to go back.

Athena Torri: Read a statement in Spanish first and then in English from a resident who has lived here since 2010 who lives in fear. The author loves living in Beacon and has a 7 year old daughter.

- **Public Hearing No. 1: Alternate Grievance Day**

Mayor Casale explained the intent of the local law.

Speakers:

There were no speakers.

Motion to close: Council Member Muhammad, second by Council Member Harper
7-0

- **Public Hearing No. 2: Public Trail Regulations**

City Administrator explained the intent of the local law

Speakers:

There were no speakers

Motion to close: Council Member Ross, second by Council Member Mansfield
7-0

- **Public Hearing No. 3: Affordable Workforce Housing**

City Administrator explained the changes to the local law.

Speakers:

Theresa Kraft: Suggests that the city step back and require developers to follow rules and favors an emergency building moratorium. Mentioned the burden on city services dense development will have on the City.

Taylor Palmer: The development committee is committed to providing workforce housing units. Believes that there are existing units in the City of Beacon that can be used for workforce affordable housing. Also, does not feel that there should be a cap on density. Will provide written comments to the City Council.

April Farley: Advised that April is Fair Housing Month and gave the history of it. Believes that the location of the Edgewater project is overloading Ward 1. Thinks that it is important to develop the city evenly. The local law should lower the income levels. There are a lot of residents who are struggling to pay their rents. Who is going to be filling these apartments? Beacon should be a place with affordable housing so everyone can live in peace.

Tom _____: Does not believe that this plan can work for the developers.

Zach Lewis: Is a developer here and in Brooklyn. Believes that the AMI levels make this plan impossible for the developers. This is a disincentive towards development. When you run the numbers it is impossible to make a profit. This is why the 249 Main Street project has been paused.

Rodney Weber: Did not have much time to digest the new version of the local law. Outlined scenarios based on this criteria. Not sure who would be able to pay for these or who would lend money to the buyer. Asked that Council consider the taxes on a \$1 million unit versus a \$200K unit. Shared a story of a town where he lived that hindered development and the result was skyrocketing taxes.

Motion to adjourn the public hearing to April 17 by Council Member Muhammad, second by Council Member Wetherbee

7-0

The public hearing was adjourned to April 17, 2017.

Council Member Ross asked if we could separate the rental numbers from the sale number in the local law.

Mayor Casale added that we can discuss alternatives at the next workshop on April 10.

Council Member Reports:

Ali Muhammad: Advised that the Terrance Wright Memorial Basketball League is starting again. Gave the details of the league. Is hoping to start a women's league as well. Gave information about the next Unity in the Community event. Advised that while the council is working on the Sanctuary City issue, they are also working on other city business as well.

Omar Harper: Had no comments.

Lee Kyriacou: Showed a vintage photo of the building that he once owned and then became the Hop. Gave the history of the organization OUAM. Believes that signs are important and that change needs to start with civility and respect.

George Mansfield: Feels that council listens to all sides of the issue and hopes that they can come together with a compromise that is agreeable to all residents.

Pam Wetherbee: Thanked the public works department for clearing the snow from Memorial Park. Gave details about the upcoming Easter Egg Hunt.

Peggy Ross: Passed on her comments. Thanked everyone for coming.

Mayor Casale: Thanked everyone for coming. Read his letter regarding the funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. Shared details of the Easter Egg Hunt. Gave thanks to the Alps for their contribution to the event. Read the proclamation on Public Service.

Resolutions, Ordinances and Local Laws:

- 1. Resolution Adopting a Local Law Concerning Tax Assessment Grievance Day in the City of Beacon.**

- Motion by Council Member Muhammad, second by Council Member Mansfield
7-0
2. **Resolution Adopting a Local Law Amending the Code of the City of Beacon by the Creation of Chapter 170 entitled Public Trail Regulations**
 - Motion by Council Member Wetherbee, second by Council Member Ross
7-0
 3. **Resolution Adopting a Negative Declaration on the City of Beacon Comprehensive Plan and Amendments to the City Zoning Code and Zoning Map Under the State Environmental Quality Review Act**
 - Motion by Council Member Muhammad, second Council Member Wetherbee
7-0
 4. **Resolution Adopting the City of Beacon Comprehensive Plan**
 - Motion by Council Member Ross, second by Council Member Kyriacou
7-0
 5. **Resolution Adopting the Local Law to Enact the Zoning Amendments to the City's Zoning Code and Zoning Map**
 - Motion by Council Member Muhammad, second by Council Member Mansfield
7-0
 6. **Resolution to Schedule a Public Hearing for April 17 to Receive Comments Concerning the 2017 Capital Plan**
 - Motion by Council Member Wetherbee, second by Council Member Harper
7-0
 7. **Resolution to Declare the City of Beacon a Welcoming, Safe and Inclusive City of Beacon**

A detailed discussion of the resolution ensued. The Mayor asked Ed Philips to explain the language that was added. Council Member Mansfield asked if we could suspend the rules and allow for the rest of the public comment on the subject before the council's vote. 6-1 with Council Member Muhammad voting no on the change to the rules. Comments continued here:

Tina Bernstein: Advised that she is disappointed that the City Council is afraid of the word "sanctuary". Wished that they could be stronger.

Arthur Cammins: Asked the council about how they wish to be remembered. Does not want us to be afraid of the words "sanctuary, welcoming and inclusive". Would like the resolution to mean something.

Deborah Davidovits: Advised that her father, an 81 year old chemistry teacher, was a holocaust survivor. Grew up hearing stories of people who helped protect her father. Felt proud that the city in which she lives will be passing a resolution that we are a welcoming and inclusive city. Encourages council to vote yes.

David Jensen: President Trump has begun an unprecedented crack down on deportation. Mentioned details from an article from the Guardian newspaper (UK newspaper). Believes that this issue is a paper tiger. Encourages council to adopt the current inclusive city resolution because it outlines everything that the City can hope to do. The important issue is solidarity – standing together as a group not solidarity with the few activists.

Dennis Pavelock: The City of Beacon is unique. Gave a few instances of things that make Beacon unique. Thinks the Tioronda Bridge should have a wooden deck and should be a one-lane bridge. Asked about the use of drones by the fire department.

Ava Bynurn: Read testimony from an undocumented resident who spent 18 years trying to become a resident and was unsuccessful due to unscrupulous employers and the immigration system. This person has been living, working, shopping and paying taxes here for years. Most undocumented people pay taxes and do not take anything from the government in terms of welfare and social services. Does not understand the purpose of the new language. Would like Beacon to be known as a City that values the work, livelihood and humanity of all of our residents. This new resolution is not a win. It will not save you politically and will not help its residents.

Madeline Enriques: Read a statement from an undocumented resident first in Spanish and then in English. Moved here to escape a violent country, has three children who are happy in our schools. She does not take any government assistance. Would like Beacon to be a Sanctuary City so that she and her family do not have to be scared.

Lisa Marie Martinez: Has been speaking about this issue for 7 years. If we weren't safe in 2010 how can we feel safe now? Feels that the City is pitting business owners against children. This resolution is not good enough.

Mike DiPompo: Believes that we are talking about criminals.

Wendy Brown: Read instances where illegal detainees committed crimes.

Susan Beacon: Thanked everyone for working on this issue and hopes that the resolution will be adopted.

April Farley: Gave details on Autism Awareness. Grateful for the Beacon community. Witnessed an accident where the person refused medical attention and where the police were very kind and supportive. Added that Lt. Alarcon coaches basketball and would welcome volunteers to help.

Jodi McCredo: Gave information about the Human Relations Commission.

Anthony Amata: Tries to help people in recovery. Grandfather fought in WWI. Donates to organizations for people he does not even know. We should fight together for a better world. This separation weakens us. We were all immigrants once. We should work to change things together.

Cindy Trimble: Wonders about what would happen if we lost federal funding. Does not envy the council with this decision. Believes that there is strength between your duty and your heart.

Noreen _____: Her volunteer work at Beacon Reads on Saturdays enables her to speak with many Beacon residents. Beacon is a caring and respectful city – that is what brings people here. Not only from her perspective, it is not only morally correct for the council to adopt the safe and inclusive city resolution, it is the smart thing to do.

Mayor Casale returned to the Safe and Inclusive City resolution discussion. Council discussed the title of the resolution. Council Member Mansfield asked to be reminded about why council is afraid of the word “sanctuary”. More discussion. Council agreed that it is best to include the word “safe” to the title of the resolution. Council Member Kyriacou expressed that he would like to choose a word that unites the community rather than divides it. Discussion of the meaning of the word “sanctuary” ensued. Council agreed to title the resolution a Safe, Welcoming and Inclusive Community.

- Motion to adopt revised resolution: Motion by Council Member Kyriacou, second by Council Member Harper
7-0

Ed Phillips said that he was confident that the current resolution will not create any problems with the federal government.

Second Opportunity for Public Comments: **see earlier.** Each speaker may have one opportunity to speak for up to three minutes on any subject matter on which the Council can take action.

Adjournment:

- Motion by Council Member Wetherbee, second by Council Member Kyriacou
7-0

Next Workshop: April 10, 2017

Next Meeting: April 17, 2017

final