



Legislative & Rules Committee – Board of Representatives

Phil Berns, Chair

Sean Boeger, Vice-Chair

Special Meeting and Public Hearing Minutes

Date: Monday, November 3, 2025
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: *This meeting was held remotely.*

The Legislative & Rules Committee met as indicated above. Present were Chair Berns, Vice Chair Boeger, and Committee member Reps. Blank, Cottrell, Fedeli, Matheny, Sherwood, and Vandervoort.

Absent/excused were Rep. Pierre-Louis.

Also present were:

- Ex-officio Reps. Camporeale, Goldberg, Mays, Morson, Pollack, Stella, Walson, Weinberg and Williams.
- City attorney Dana Lee
- Melanie Hollas, Chair, Parks & Recreation Commission; Annie Hornish, Connecticut Director of State Affairs, Humane World for Animals
- Members of the public.

Chair Berns called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and opened the first public hearing for Item No. 1 (LR31.100) at 7:04 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. LR31.100	ORDINANCE for 2nd public hearing and final adoption; Requiring a Citywide Transition to Electric Landscaping Equipment in the City of Stamford 04/08/25 – Submitted by Rep. Camporeale, de la Cruz, Weinberg and Berns 04/29/25 – Recommitted to Steering 8-0-0 05/27/25 – Recommitted to Steering 8-0-0 06/24/25 – Recommitted to Steering 7-0-0 07/29/25 – Recommitted to Steering 6-0-2 08/26/2025 – Proposed amendment 1 approved by Committee 6-1-0 08/26/2025 – Proposed amendment 2 approved by Committee 6-1-0 08/26/2025 – Proposed amendment 3 approved by Committee 7-0-0 08/26/2025 – Proposed amendment 4 approved by Committee 6-1-0 08/26/2025 – Approved as amended for public hearing by Committee 5-1-0 09/02/2025 – Approved for publication 28-6-0 09/30/2025 – Motion to divide the question approved by committee 8-0-0 09/30/2025 – Motion to Amend 211-4(2) months failed by Committee 2-5-1 09/30/2025 – Motion to Amend 211-4(3)(a) and (b) failed by Committee 2-6-0 09/30/2025 – Public hearing held & Approved by Committee 7-1-0 10/06/2025 – Motion to Amend 211-4(2)a months and 211-9 approved by roll call vote 17-14-1 10/06/2025 – Approved for 2nd public hearing as amended by unanimous voice vote 11/03/2025 – 2nd Public Hearing held 11/03/2025 – Motion to amend 211-4(2)a and 211-9 back to previous draft language approved by committee 4-3-0 11/03/2025 – Motion to approve as amended approved by committee 4-3-0	APPROVED AS AMENDED 4-3-0

The committee received testimony from Kieran Edmondson (written and read into the record), Gabriel Chapman, Fern Galperin, Mike Papa, Melanie Hollas, Sue Halpern, Jack Egan, Jeanne Wafu, Amy Ziffer, Vincent Giordano, Dave Adams and Laura Cahn. Most speakers supported the ordinance in the more restricted version presented at the first public hearing and expressed disappointment that the Board had appeared to move backwards on the matter, a few expressed a desire to halt this ordinance in its entirety. The public hearing was closed at 7:42 p.m.

A motion to approve was made (Cottrell) and seconded (multiple), and then Rep Vandervoort made a motion to amend the item back to the version from the first public hearing (removing April and May from Section 211-4(a) Seasonal Exception and changing the effective date back to three (3) years from two (2) years in Section 211-9) and was seconded by Rep Boeger. Discussion, entirely in favor, ensued regarding, among other things, the public's support of the original "three year/nine month" version of this item from the first public hearing. The motion to amend passed via roll call vote of 4-3-0 (Chair Berns, Vice Chair Boeger and Reps. Cottrell and Vandervoort approved, Reps. Fedeli, Matheny and Sherwood against. Rep. Blank was not yet present to vote)

The motion to approve as amended passed via roll call vote of 4-3-0 (Chair Berns, Vice Chair Boeger and Reps. Cottrell and Vandervoort approved, Reps. Fedeli, Matheny and Sherwood against. Rep. Blank was not yet present to vote)

2. LR31.109 **REVIEW**; of the Board of Representatives Invocation Policy to ensure **REPORT MADE** it aligns with First Amendment protections.

10/08/2025 – Submitted by Reps. Stella, Campbell, Curtis, de la Cruz, Figueroa, Graham, Kuczynski, Matheny, Moore, Pavia, Sherwood, Strain, Tomas, Roqueta

11/03/2025 – Report Made

Attorney Lee advised the committee he had prepared a three-and-a-half page memo he prepared regarding Item No 2 (LR31.109). He stated he prepared a legal memo outlining some guidance and a legal background on the United States and Connecticut Supreme Court's opinions on opening meetings with an invocation. Additionally, stated that historically Board invocations had been done in a very respectful and thoughtful tone, and that everyone has understood invokees are exercising their rights per the First Amendment and within these constitutional boundaries they can express their opinions. Past practice and history with the Board of Representatives has been very diverse and inclusive with their range of invited speakers, including rabbis, imams, Native American elders, ministers, and others, and that such diversity is actually necessary to stay within constitutional restrictions. The goal of the legal memo was not to change Board traditions but to be informative and provide clear guidance. There are certain expectations with respect to if an invocation is going to be of a religious nature that it not be proselytizing in nature. Attorney Lee sent a copy of the to all Board members.

Discussion ensued. A motion to recommit failed to get a second as member considered to guidance provided and further discussion was unnecessary and the Chair Berns deemed the report made.

Chair Berns adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Berns, Chair

This meeting is available on [video](#).