



## ***Operations Committee - Board of Representatives***

Jonathan Jacobson, Chair

John Zelinsky, Jr., Vice Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Tuesday, June 29, 2021  
**Time:** 6:30pm  
**Place:** This meeting was held remotely

The Operations Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Jacobson, Vice Chair Zelinsky and Committee Member Reps. Adams, Coleman, Curtis, Lee, Mahoney, Sherwood and Watkins. Also present were Reps. de la Cruz, Fedeli, McMullen, Morson, and Nabel; Mayor David Martin; Michael Pollard and Robin Stein, Mayor's Office; Bharat Gami, Building Dept.; Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief; Lou Casolo, Engineering Dept.; Kevin Murray, Parks & Facilities Dept.; Kathy Emmett and Dana Lee, Law Dept.; Vincent Piselli, Mill River Collaborative; and 11 members of the public.

Chair Jacobson called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
11. O30.093	REVIEW; Potential Outcomes for Old Police Building Post Demolition. 06/08/21 – Submitted by Rep. Jacobson	<b>Report Made</b>

Chair Jacobson explained it is up to the BOR as to what comes next after the demolition and there was discussion.

- The options could be brought up at Steering, the Operations Committee, and/or the full Board. With multiple options for the property, there are two styles of voting: A knockout round, which is to keep going until there is a majority vote for one option, or Robert's Rules style of voting on one idea.
- This could be done as a resolution, which would be making a declaration to the public on the BOR's recommendation via a resolution to the Mayor's Office.
- The Committee can publicly discuss what is the best option for the property, but the full Board should also be able to discuss the options.
- The demolition is expected to be finished in December.
- Chair Jacobson will work with President Quinones to create a resolution to put on the next Steering Agenda.
- A resolution could have influence but is not necessarily binding with a newly elected Board and possible changes in Administration in November.

---

<sup>1</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:01:20 Part 1

A motion to conduct two public hearings on the potential outcome for the property post-demolition was made, seconded and failed by a vote of 4-5-0 (Reps. Zelinsky, Adams, Coleman, and Curtis in favor; Reps. Jacobson, Lee, Mahoney, Sherwood, and Watkins opposed).

22. [O30.065](#) REVIEW; West Main Street Bridge **Held 9-0-0**  
12/04/2019 – Submitted by Mayor Martin  
12/30/19 – Held in Committee 7-0-0  
01/28/20 – Report Made & Held by Committee 8-0-0  
02/26/20 – Held by Committee 5-0-0  
12/29/20 – Report Made & Held by Committee 6-0-0  
01/11/21 – Moved to Pending  
05/25/21 – Report Made & Held by Committee 9-0-0

Mayor Martin reviewed an updated presentation and there was discussion.

- The Administration believes the best option right now is to construct a temporary pre-fabricated pedestrian/ambulance bridge that can also accommodate utilities. The cost will be \$1.5M.
- There may be historic preservation issues with the old bridge since the bridge is on the historic registry.
- The City is now in the same position as it was in 2018 when this was brought to the BOR.
- Residents deserve this bridge to be built.
- The City is obligated to work with utilities companies. The Engineering Dept. is trying to minimize regulatory involvement.
- The process involves first the design work, then permitting. To get permits through, the Engineering Dept. usually hires a sub-contractor who is an expert on permitting.
- Mr. Casolo is working on the RFP but it has not yet been advertised.
- It is expected for this bridge to be built in 2022.

A motion to hold this item was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 9-0-0 (Reps. Jacobson, Zelinsky, Adams, Coleman, Curtis, Lee, Mahoney, Sherwood, and Watkins in favor).

A motion to take a 5-minute recess was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 9-0-0 (Reps. Jacobson, Zelinsky, Adams, Coleman, Curtis, Lee, Mahoney, Sherwood, and Watkins in favor).

A recess was taken from 9:03pm – 9:08pm. Chair Jacobson noted that no Committee business was discussed during the recess.

33. [O30.094](#) ORDINANCE for publication; Prohibiting the Use and Application of Non-Organic Pesticides, Fungicides, Insecticides, Herbicides, Rodenticides or Fertilizer on City-Owned Properties. **Held 9-0-0**  
06/07/21 – Submitted by Reps. Sherwood, Jacobson, Figueroa, Cottrell, Patterson, Saftic Pratt, Stella, Quinones, de la Cruz, Zelinsky and Mayor Martin

Rep. Sherwood gave background on the proposed ordinance and the intention for it. Mr. Murray and Mr. Piselli explained the current usage of the organics.

- This first came to the BOR in 2019.
- Of the 30 most common pesticides, the majority are toxic to humans, animals, birds and bees.
- The State has recognized this and these toxics pesticides are banned from being used on K-8 schools in Connecticut. Middletown expanded this to include K-12 schools.
- This ordinance would expand the ban to all City properties.
- Mr. Lee stated that this ordinance is comprehensive.
- Mr. Murray stated that organics are actively being used on two ballfields – one at Cummings Park and one at Cove Island. The fields are being used as normal with the organics.
- There are a total of 22 ballfields Mr. Murray would like to use organics on; this would cost approximately \$150K extra than what is being used now.
- Ms. Piselli explained how successful the organics have been at Mill River Park.
- It takes three to five years to establish the root systems, and see the difference. The organics create a soil ecosystem.
- The Committee will request a legal opinion as to the legality of the ordinance.

A motion to hold this item was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 9-0-0 (Reps. Jacobson, Zelinsky, Adams, Coleman, Curtis, Lee, Mahoney, Sherwood, and Watkins in favor).

44. [O30.069](#) REVIEW; South End Fire House; Installation of Police Substation and Duration of Substation at Location. **Report Made**  
03/04/20 – Submitted by Rep. Adams  
12/29/20 – Report Made & Held by Committee 6-0-0  
01/11/21 – Moved to Pending

Ms. Emmett explained this item and there was discussion.

- What was approved was an agreement that indicated the City *could* enter into a lease and the purchaser would agree. However it was within the Administration's authority to not enter into a lease for a police substation.

---

<sup>3</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:00:26 Part 2

<sup>4</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:26:45 Part 2

- The Public Safety Dept. and Police Dept. made it clear they did not want a substation so it was not included in the final sale.
- This was an extremely long process to get this property sold. The first RFP went out in 2002. There were a total of five RFPs. Several proposers backed out after deciding it was too expensive to renovate the property.
- The Firehouse is an historic building, and there is much interest in preservation. Before the contract of sale took place with BLT, the ceiling fell in, in addition to the building already deteriorating. BLT agreed to preserve the building.
- Should the sale have gone out to bid again once the substation was removed as a condition of the sale?
- Tax payers did not lose money on the absence of the substation but rather gained a building preservation.

55. O30.096	REVIEW; Current Enforcement of Code of Ordinances <a href="#">Chapter 155 – Lighting</a> Since Adoption in March 2020, Including Specifics on Reported Violations, Number of Citations and Fines, and Comparison of Violation Citations across Diverse Zoning Districts and Municipal Districts; Explanation of Current Method of Enforcement by Building Department, Including Interface with Fix-It; and Implications for Future Legislation Considered by Board of Representatives. 06/09/21 – Submitted by Reps. Nabel, Mahoney and Zelinsky	<b>Report Made</b>
-------------	---	--------------------

Rep. Nabel explained that this is on the agenda not only because there is a specific issue in her district that has not been resolved, but to question if the BOR expect an ordinance to be enforced?

- Mr. Gami stated he believes the intent of this ordinance is good but there are logistical challenges to enforce it. He was not involved in the development of this ordinance.
- There is no citation process within the Building Dept.
- By State law unannounced inspections are only allowed between 9am-5pm.
- A report from the Building Dept. would be helpful so the Committee can see specifics of the enforcement of violations.
- Complaints come from a variety of sources: the Citizen Service Center, the Mayor’s Office, forwarded from other departments, emails and calls. The property owner will be notified of a complaint. If no answer is received within eight days, an inspector will go out.
- Eight complaints have been received in the past year and seven have been resolved. There has been an uptick in complaints during the pandemic due to so many people being at home and seeing more of what is going on in their neighborhoods.

- This ordinance is unenforceable as written. There needs to be enforcement mechanisms when ordinances are passed.
- Mr. Lee stated the Law Dept. will modify the ordinance with a revision to the enforcement provision, and can have an updated version by next month. He will also involve Mr. Gami in the process.
- Rep. Nabel will write an email to the Law Dept. explaining what is needed regarding changes to this ordinance, and will review it with Chair Jacobson

Chair Jacobson adjourned the meeting at 10:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jonathan Jacobson, Chair

This meeting is on Video ([Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#))