



City of Westfield, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Natural Resources

DATE: November 4, 2021

TIME: 5:30 PM

LOCATION: Municipal Building, 59 Court Street, Westfield, MA

ROOM NO: 315

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Mello called the meeting to order at 5:30PM

2. **ATTENDANCE:**

Chair Mello called the roll.

Councilor Allie - Here

Councilor Morganelli - Here

Councilor Mello - Here

Chair Mello noted that Councilor Beltrandi was also in attendance.

**DUE TO TECHNICAL ISSUES WITH NETWORK ACCESS, A RECESS WAS CALLED at 5:31PM.
MEETING WAS CALLED BACK TO ORDER at 5:34PM**

[It was later discovered that the network at City Hall was reset at 5:30PM.]

3. **READING OF THE RECORD:**

Motion by: Councilor Allie to accept the minutes of the April 26, 2021 meeting of the Natural Resources Committee as submitted.

Second by: Councilor Morganelli.

Discussion: Chair Mello mentioned the minutes were summarized from the video.

Voice Vote: In Favor: 3 Opposed: 0

Motion Passed.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

There was none.

Motion by Councilor Morganelli to close Public Participation.

Second by Councilor Allie.

Voice Vote: In Favor: 3 Opposed: 0

Motion Passed.

5. **COMMUNICATIONS OF DEPARTMENTS OR CITY OFFICERS:**

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

Chair Mello gave updates on Items 6A, B, and C.

- A. Update on motion of Councilor Matthews-Kane and Morganelli regarding BAPAC (Origin: 1/7/21)

Chair Mello explained that since the NRC last met, she'd had the opportunity to discuss coordinated shared natural resource protection with Mayor LaChappelle of Easthampton, and that there may be avenues available at the local and state level to work together. Investigation of options continue.

Motion by Councilor Allie to keep Item 1A in Committee.

Second by Councilor Morganelli.

Voice Vote: In Favor: 3 Opposed: 0

Motion Passed. Item 6A to Remain in Committee.

- B. Update / Discussion on older Items from Items in Committee list (Items prior to 2021)

- i. Water Resources Protections District Zoning Ordinance update (Origin: 10/6/16)

Chair Mello noted that she was in contact with Planning and Law regarding this item, that the landscape surrounding PFAS was dynamic and changing, and that they were hoping to fashion a working draft in the coming weeks.

- ii. Questions submitted for NRC Review / Investigation (Origin: 2/2/17 & 1/8/18)

Chair Mello reported that since many of these questions were relevant to the Master Plan, and the ordinances NRC is working on, that this item is actively being worked through.

- iii. Review / amend ordinances regarding lateral sewer drain ownership and responsibility (Origin: 12/6/18)

Chair Mello mentioned that this was an item introduced by former Councilor Emmershly, and asked for NRC and Councilor Beltrandi's recollection of the issue. Councilor Beltrandi explained the practical issues regarding lateral and shared sewer lines and recommended checking with Law and former Councilor Emmershly, which Chair Mello volunteered to follow up on.

Motion by Councilor Allie to keep all Items of 6B.i, ii, and iii in Committee.

Second by Councilor Morganelli.

Voice Vote: In Favor: 3 Opposed: 0

Motion Passed. Items in 6B to Remain in Committee.

- C. Update on motion of Councilor Mello to review, and potentially amend, the ordinances relevant to the position of “Tree Warden” (Origin: 4/15/21)

Chair Mello updated NRC that while the personnel/stipend issue is being discussed between Law and other relevant Departments, the question of the ordinance’s utilization of the Natural Resources Division – in comparison to similar usage in other municipalities – is in discussion with both the Planning Board & Planner, and the Conservation Commission & Coordinator.

Motion by Councilor Morganelli to keep Item 6C Committee.

Second by Councilor Allie.

Voice Vote: In Favor: 3 Opposed: 0

Motion Passed. Item 6C to Remain in Committee.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Review letter from Westfield Taxpayers Association relative to water production and increase in billing (Origin: 6/17/21)

Jane Okscin, of the Westfield Taxpayers Association, was present to discuss her letter to the NRC regarding water billing and collections. She also provided updates on the study of the water bills that was conducted after numerous resident/ratepayer complaints. The conversation was ended because of the need for Councilors to attend the 6PM Licensing meeting. Mrs. Okscin agreed to return to continue the discussion.

Motion by Councilor Allie to add letter to the record and keep Item 7A in Committee.

Second by Councilor Morganelli.

Voice Vote: In Favor: 3 Opposed: 0

Motion Passed. Item 7A to Remain in Committee.

- B. Review "Local Regulation Regarding Sewer Availability and Septic Systems" (Origin: 8/19/21)

Chair Mello updated the NRC that the Law Dept is working on it and they will be receiving a memo when their research is complete.

Motion by Councilor Allie to keep Item 7B in Committee.

Second by Councilor Morganelli.

Voice Vote: In Favor: 3 Opposed: 0

Motion Passed. Item 7B to Remain in Committee.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn by Councilor Allie.

Second by Councilor Morganelli.
Voice Vote: In Favor: 3 Opposed: 0
Motion Passed.

This meeting was Adjourned at 6:04PM.

DOCUMENTS VOTED TO BE INCLUDE IN THE RECORD (SEE ATTACHED)
Okscin Water Letter_17June2021.pdf

END OF MEETING MINUTES

Natural Resources Committee

Consisting of three councilors whose duties and responsibilities shall include the investigation and report on all matters coming before the city council concerning the preservation and enhancement of all natural resources including, but not limited to, issues such as water, sewers and sewage treatment facilities, aquifer protection, and solid waste disposal. This committee shall work in conjunction with such member as appointed by the president to serve as liaison to the conservation commission. This committee shall have initial jurisdiction over the setting of sewer rates.

https://library.municode.com/ma/westfield/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_APXARUCO_ARTIORMEPR_S27STCOENCOQU