

City Council Minutes
Tuesday, January 8, 2013
7:00PM City Hall Auditorium

Call to Order 7:01PM

City Clerk Bonnijo Kitchin called to order the 1/8/2013 meeting.

Roll Call: Robert Gilday, James Kelcourse, Derek Kimball, Robert Lavoie, Donna McClure, Joseph McMilleon, Allen Neale, Christian Scorzoni, Anne Ferguson

Municipal Council Reorganization

Councilor Gilday nominated for President Anne Ferguson, Councilor Kimball second.

Councilor Kelcourse nominated for President Joseph McMilleon, Councilor McClure second.

Councilor Neale moved to close nominations, Councilor Kelcourse second

Voted – Unanimous

Roll Call Vote for President:

Anne Ferguson – 7 Yes (Gilday, Kimball, Lavoie, McClure, Neale, Scorzoni, Ferguson)

McMilleon – 2 Yes (Kelcourse, McMilleon)

President Ferguson called for nominations for Vice President.

Councilor Neale moved to nominate Councilor Gilday for Vice President, Councilor Lavoie second.
Councilor Kelcourse moved to nominate Councilor Kimball for Vice President, Councilor McMilleon second.

Councilor Neale moved to close nominations, Councilor Lavoie second.

Voted – Unanimous

Roll Call Vote for Vice President:

Robert Gilday – 9 Yes (Gilday, Kelcourse, Kimball, Lavoie, McClure, McMilleon, Neale, Scorzoni, Ferguson)

Kimball – No votes.

Pledge of Allegiance – Councilor Gilday

Act on minutes – November 13, 2012

Councilor Lavoie motioned to accept as submitted, Councilor McMilleon second.

Voted - Unanimous

Mayoral Appointments – None at this time.

Licenses & Permits

2013-002 Weekday Pool/Bowling - Riverwalk Lanes & Games, 11 High Street

2013-003 Sunday Pool/Bowling – Riverwalk Lanes & Games, 11 High Street

Steve Mooney appeared to represent Riverwalk Lanes & Games.

Councilor Neale motioned to accept 2013-002 and 2013-003 per the usual stipulations, Councilor Kelcourse second.

Voted – Unanimous

Late File

2013-006 Kitchen Local, 14 Cedar Street

Councilor Kelcourse motioned to accept late file 2013-006, Councilor Neale second

Voted - Unanimous

2013-006 General Business License – Kitchen Local, 14 Cedar Street

Lisa Sutton appeared to represent Kitchen Local. She stated it is a shared use commercial kitchen.

Councilor Kimball motioned to adopt 2013-006 per the usual stipulations, Councilor Gilday second.

Voted - Unanimous

Senator Kathleen O’Conner Ives attended the meeting to introduce herself to the community and the Council.

Correspondence

- a. President/Vice President Communications
- b. Communication from Elected Officials, Boards and Commissions
- c. Council Communications, Announcements and Committee Reports

Public Comment

Jane Snow, Fern Ave. – Ms. Snow passed information she obtained from the Assessors Office regarding home sales for 2012.

James Thivierge, 106 Friend Street – Mr. Thivierge stated he believes the budget hearings should be televised.

Mike Buetow, 10 Cabot Court – Mr. Buetow addressed the property tax assessment process. He believes it is flawed. Tax bills in his neighborhood rose at least \$1000.00 and the median increase among the City Council was \$150.00. He is collecting signatures on a petition calling for a 5% cut in spending.

Claude Gonthier, 112 Kimball Rd. – Mr. Gonthier wants the Finance Committee to request a 5% cut in the budget.

Council Response to Public Comment

Councilor Kelcourse responded to Mr. Buetow stating that he and the rest of the Council are going to do their very best to control spending and reduce the budget. Councilor McClure stated adding a million dollars a year to the budget is unsustainable. She does not believe it is the Council’s job to go through the budget line item by line item. She believes the idea of a 5% decrease across the board is reasonable. Councilor Kimball stated there is no conspiracy. The Assessor is not fixing the numbers on the Council’s values. Councilor Lavoie stated they need to grow the commercial/industrial base. If a proposed action does not contribute to that growth then it should be looked at very carefully.

Councilor Kelcourse motioned to take 2012-109 out of order, Councilor McMilleon second.
Voted - Unanimous

Public Hearings

2012-109 Order to Accept a grant in the amount of \$58,910 from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation Inc. – Mayor Kezer cont.

Summary: The Friends of Amesbury Council on Aging and the Council on Aging was awarded the Tufts grant to expand the Amesbury Caregivers Essential (ACE) program. The grant will allow the ACE program to expand its caregiver support services to both Amesbury residents and residents of the Northern Merrimac Valley, in collaboration with neighboring communities.

President Ferguson opened the public hearing.

Annmary Connor, Director of the Council on Aging gave a brief overview of the grant.

Councilor Neale gave the recommendation of the Finance Committee to accept as submitted.

President Ferguson closed the public hearing.

Councilor Gilday motioned to accept 2012-109 as submitted, Councilor McMilleon second.
Roll Call Vote – 9 Yes (Gilday, Kelcourse, Kimball, Lavoie, McClure, McMilleon, Neale, Scorzoni, Ferguson)

2012-091 Adopt the Stretch Energy Code in the City of Amesbury – Councilor Scorzoni, Council President Ferguson and Councilor Lavoie sponsor

Summary: The “stretch code” is an appendix to the Massachusetts building energy code that allows cities and towns to choose a streamlined, and more cost effective route to achieving approximately 20% better energy efficiency in new residential homes and for commercial buildings greater than 5,000 square feet. As of October 18th, 122 municipalities have adopted this code. This performance-based system encourages the use of “Energy Star” rated appliances and products to meet this requirement. Adoption of the “stretch code” by the City of Amesbury is also a prerequisite in order to receive the designation of a Green Community by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, enabling the city to compete for approximately \$10 million in annual grant funds from the state for energy efficiency and renewable activities.

President Ferguson read 2012-091 into the record.

Councilor Neale read the recommendation of the Finance Committee to approve as submitted.

Councilor Lavoie read the recommendation of the Ordinance Committee to approve as submitted.

President Ferguson opened and closed the public hearing as there were no comments from the public.

Councilor McMilleon motioned to approve 2012-091, Councilor Gilday second.

Councilor Kelcourse stated he is not in favor of this bill, he does not see the necessity of creating another law that already exists at the state level.

Councilor Scorzoni stated if the City meets all 5 criteria to become a Green Community we will get a check in the amount of \$155,000 and be able to compete for more. At the same time become more energy efficient and save more money.

Councilor Gilday is in favor of the Stretch Code bill so the city can be designated a Green Community.

Councilor Neale stated the funding for this program comes from National Grid that everybody pays into it is not money the state has set aside. He would like the city to have access to the approximately \$10 million in annual grant funds.

Councilor McClure is not in favor of this bill because she does not want to put another regulation that may put a burden on the homeowners who are already struggling.

Councilor Kimball was not in favor of this bill at first because he didn't think we needed another regulation. After talking to contractors he found they are already building to the Stretch Code and beyond. The utility funding will help offset some of the initial costs. He stated there is an option out clause if this code becomes too onerous.

Councilor McMilleon motioned to approve 2012-091, Councilor Gilday second.

Roll Call Vote – 7 Yes (Gilday, Kimball, Lavoie, McMilleon, Neale, Scorzoni, Ferguson, 2 No (Kelcourse, McClure)

2012-110 Request to Amend the Amesbury Zoning Map, Map 54, Lot 14 and 14A from Open Space to R8 – Mayor Kezer sponsor cont.

Summary: This ordinance seeks to change the zoning district for the Horace Mann property parcels (Map 54, Lots 14 and 14A) from Open Space Conservancy (OSC) to R-8, a residential zoning district. All properties abutting these parcels are residentially zoned and are in the R-District. This change will allow the property to be redeveloped.

President Ferguson stated this bill is continued in the Finance Committee waiting for the Planning Board recommendation.

Councilor McMilleon motioned to continue 2012-110 to the March 12th City Council meeting, Councilor Neale second.

Voted - Unanimous

Second Readings – None at this time.

First Readings

2013-004 Amend Official City seal by deleting "Town" replacing it with "City" – Mayor Kezer sponsor

Summary: This order would authorize the official city seal to be amended so that it states "City of Amesbury", rather than "Town of Amesbury". This change to the seal would be consistent with the City Charter revisions approved by the voters of Amesbury on November 8, 2011.

Councilor Kelcourse motioned to continue 2013-004 to the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting, Councilor McClure second. Voted - Unanimous

2012-005 To Amend the Amesbury Zoning Ordinance – Mayor Kezer sponsor

Summary: This ordinance seeks to amend Section V of the Amesbury's Zoning Ordinance to allow Veterinary Hospitals in the Office Park (OP) Zoning District. The Table of Use Regulations would be amended to allow this use in the OP Zoning District.

The Amesbury Animal Hospital, currently located at 230 Main Street, is looking to construct a new facility that will provide for expansion and a more efficient operation. Modern examination rooms and surgical suites are proposed. Amesbury Animal Hospital has signed a P&S Agreement for property located at 277 Elm Street owned by the True Homestead.

Councilor Gilday motioned to send 2012-005 to the Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board and schedule a Public Hearing at the February City Council meeting, Councilor Neale second.

President Ferguson scheduled a workshop for the City Council after the January 27th Finance Committee meeting to discuss committees and priorities.

Councilor McClure motioned to adjourn, Councilor Neale second.
Adjourn 8:40PM