

**REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 5, 2018**

Regular Meeting of the City Council was held in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall, on Monday evening, March 5, 2018.

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Scott J. Graves called the meeting to order at 7:30 o'clock p.m.

CALL OF THE ROLL

City Clerk Alan Agnelli called the Roll of Members. Nine (9) Councillors were present including President Scott Graves and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Edward Gravel, Karen Hardern, Christine Johnson, James Johnson, and Elizabeth Kazinskas. Councillors Ronald Cormier and James Walsh were absent.

OPENING PRAYER

President Graves led the Council in reciting the Opening Prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Graves led the Council in reciting the "Pledge of Allegiance".

OPEN MEETING RECORDING & PUBLIC RECORDS ANNOUNCEMENT

President Graves announced to the assembly that the Open Meeting Recording and Public Records Announcement is posted at the entrance to the Chamber, and that any person planning to record the meeting by any means should identify themselves.

READING & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

On a motion by Councillor Christine Johnson and seconded by Councillor Edward Gravel, it was voted viva voce, eight (8) yeas, President Scott Graves and Councillors Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Edward Gravel, Karen Hardern, Christine Johnson, James Johnson, and Elizabeth Kazinskas; one (1) abstention, Councillor James Boone^[1], to waive reading and to accept the Minutes of the February 20, 2018 Regular Meeting, as printed.

^[1] Councillor Boone abstained since he was not in attendance at the February 20, 2018 Regular Meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

#9897

President Graves opened the Public Hearing on *A Petition by Verizon New England, Inc. for permission to install one (1) solely-owned pole on the easterly side of Graham Street at a point approximately 97' southerly from the center line of Richmond Street.*

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The President thrice called for persons wishing to testify in favor of the Petition. There being none, the President called for persons wishing to testify in opposition to the Petition.

Denis Boucher, 65 Graham Street, questioned the actual location of the proposed pole, saying that it appeared from the plan that he received that the pole will be installed in his front yard. He added that the City should have removed the tree in front of his property.

President Graves called attention to the question, asking if a representative from Verizon was present and could address Mr. Boucher's concerns.

Paul Davis, representing Verizon New England, Inc., informed the Council that the site of the existing tree is the proposed location for the new pole. He said that the tree in front of Mr. Boucher's home "has been pruned as far as it will go," and that "there is a pole-to-tree guy" in the tree, which is the reason for the stub pole. The stub pole will take precedence, he added.

Mr. Boucher said that he would support installation of the new pole as long as it is in the location of the existing tree.

The President called twice for persons wishing to testify in opposition to the Petition.

There being none, the President declared the public hearing closed at 7:36 p.m.

PETITIONS, APPLICATIONS, ETC.**#9899**

On a motion by Councillor Christine Johnson and seconded by Councillor James Johnson, it was voted viva voce, nine (9) yeas, President Scott Graves and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Edward Gravel, Karen Hardern, Christine Johnson, James Johnson, and Elizabeth Kazinskas, to refer *An Ordinance to Amend the Code of the City of Gardner by Deleting and Repealing Chapter 675 Thereof, "Zoning," and Replacing it With a New Chapter 675, to be Entitled "Zoning."* to the Public Welfare Committee for study and report and to the Planning Board for review.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITTEE****#9897**

Councillor Nathan Boudreau, Chairman of the Public Service Committee, reported that the Committee did not have the opportunity to meet to study *A Petition by Verizon New England, Inc. for permission to install one (1) solely-owned pole on the easterly side of Graham Street at a point approximately 97' southerly from the center line of Richmond*

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Street. He requested that the Committee be granted more time. There being no objections, the Committee was granted more time.

PUBLIC WELFARE COMMITTEE**#9898**

Councillor Christine Johnson, Chairperson of the Public Welfare Committee, reported that the Committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday, March 15, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. to study *An Ordinance to Amend the Code of the City of Gardner, Chapter 675 Thereof, Entitled "Zoning," by Adding a Solar Photovoltaic Overlay District off Lovewell Street.* Councillor Johnson requested that the Committee be granted more time. There being no objections, the Committee was granted more time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS**#9898**

More time was granted to the Planning Board for Review and Recommendation of *An Ordinance to Amend the Code of the City of Gardner, Chapter 675 Thereof, Entitled "Zoning," by Adding a Solar Photovoltaic Overlay District off Lovewell Street.*

NEW BUSINESS

On a motion by Councillor Christine Johnson and seconded by Councillor Edward Gravel, it was voted viva voce, nine (9) yeas, President Scott Graves and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Edward Gravel, Karen Hardern, Christine Johnson, James Johnson, and Elizabeth Kazinskas, to consider New Business.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTARY**Monty Tech Regional School District Budget**

Councillor James Boone, a member of the Monty Tech Regional School District Committee, informed the Council that the Monty Tech School Budget Hearing has been postponed to Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. He extended to the Council an offer by the Monty Tech School District Administration to attend a Council and/or Public Welfare Committee meeting in order to formally present the Regional School District Budget.

NewVu LTA Program

Councillor James Boone informed the Council that he read an article in the newspaper announcing that the City is seeking grant funds to provide for more low income housing. He said that it is his opinion "that is the last thing that Gardner needs is to provide more low income housing." He said that Gardner is in the top 10 of all the cities in the State for low



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income housing, adding “Because of decisions that we’ve made in the past, I hope that we can rethink our future to make Gardner prosper again.”

Commenting on Councillor Boone’s remarks, Councillor Christine Johnson stated that grants for some of these homes require a certain percentage of low income housing, adding “And although that is fine in some parts, what we seem to be forgetting our veterans who are in need of homes.” She said that she is aware of one area in Gardner that was built for veterans homes and that the City should be seeking grants for homes for veterans, “to look at their needs.”

Gardner Rotary Club Auction

Councillor James Boone commended the Gardner Rotary Club members for a successful auction.

WGAW Radio Program

Councillor Edward Gravel informed the Council that he is passing along a message from Steve Wendell, WGAW Radio, inviting Councillors to appear on his Saturday Talk show.

Betty Spring Road Development

Councillor Edward Gravel informed the Council that he recently received an e-mail from a resident who is very concerned about a huge development proposed for off Betty Spring Road, noting his concern due to “the rural character of the area.” He said he favors “building up Gardner and bringing in residents,” but “we really need to start looking at some of the developments that we are bringing in,” noting that “Gardner has basically become a retirement community, where it’s a great place to retire, but we also have a school system with a lot of kids and a lot of young families that want to move here.” He concluded by saying, “So, we really have to appeal to the masses, not just to a single group.”

Police Chief Recognition

Councillor Nathan Boudreau informed the Council that he attended a presentation of an award from the Coast Guard Reserves to Police Chief Neil Erickson for his understanding of reserve servicemen and the effect that it has on their lives.

Upcoming Events

Council President Scott Graves reminded Councillors of upcoming events that they have been invited to participate, including the Monty Tech Budget Hearing; Gardner Square Two Annual Meeting; MMA Legislative Breakfast Meeting; and, the MMCA President’s Dinner for Councillors and Aldermen.

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Letter to Editor Commentary

Council President Scott Graves informed the Council that he read a Letter to the Editor where the writer attributed the situation to the generosity of the Mayor and City Council. He said that “it is not the generosity of the City Council or the Mayor, but the generosity of the taxpayers. Whenever anything good happens, it is due to the generosity of the taxpayers, as we are only charged with managing their money.”

Former City Councillor James J. Minns

Council President Scott Graves acknowledged the recent passing of former Ward 4 Councillor James J. Minns, who served for 22 years on the City Council. He said that Councillor Minns was a devoted City Councillor, a gentleman who served his community with grace and dignity, and that Councillor Minns “taught some of us how to be a Councillor.”

President Graves then entertained a motion that the City Council sends a Letter of Condolence to the Family of the late James J. Minns, as well as presenting his family with a plaque recognizing his 22 years of service on the City Council.

#9900

On a motion by Councillor Edward Gravel and seconded by Councillor Christine Johnson, it was voted viva voce, nine (9) yeas, President Scott Graves and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Edward Gravel, Karen Hardern, Christine Johnson, James Johnson, and Elizabeth Kazinskas, to send a ***Letter of Condolence*** to the Family of the late **James J. Minns** and Recognition for his 22 years of service on the City Council.

CLOSING PRAYER

President Graves led the Council in the Closing Prayer.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councillor Nathan Boudreau and seconded by Councillor Edward Gravel, it was voted viva voce, nine (9) yeas, President Scott Graves and Councillors Nathan Boudreau, James Boone, Craig Cormier, Edward Gravel, Karen Hardern, Christine Johnson, James Johnson, and Elizabeth Kazinskas, to adjourn at 7:51 o'clock p.m. in **Memory of the Late James J. Minns**.

Accepted by the City Council: *March 19, 2018*