

COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
as a Committee of the Whole
MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2019 AT 6:00 p.m.
COMMITTEE ROOM
WOBURN CITY HALL

Voting Members Present: Chair Joanne Campbell, Alderman Michael Concannon, Alderman Robert Ferullo, President Michael Anderson, Alderman Lindsay Higgins, Alderman Mark Gaffney Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen, and Alderman Edward Tedesco. Participating remotely: Alderman Richard Gately

Also present: Ward 3 Alderman-elect Jeffrey Dillon

* * * * *

Reading of previous meeting minutes: Motion made by Alderman Concannon and seconded by Alderman Ferullo to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 12, 2019; Roll call – Alderman Gately – aye; Alderman Gaffney – aye; Alderman Mercer-Bruen – aye; Alderman Tedesco – aye; Alderman Higgins – aye; Alderman Concannon – aye; Alderman Ferullo – aye; President Anderson – aye; Chairman Campbell – aye; all in favor, 9-0.

Order to take steps to fill vacancy on Woburn Traffic Commission: Chairman Campbell said Michael Maher withdrew his candidacy and there are two remaining candidates, Anthony Langone and Joseph Prizio. She said she has prepared three questions for each candidate. President Anderson announced the Personnel Committee is meeting as a committee of the whole and that Alderman Gately would be participating remotely and all votes will be taken by roll call. Chairman Campbell said the committee can forward the nomination no more than two candidates for consideration by the City Council. She said the committee can also pick one candidate. She announced Alderman-elect Dillon is present but will not be voting on a recommendation. Chairman Campbell introduced Mr. Langone and asked him why he wants to be on the Traffic Commission. Mr. Langone said traffic is something of a passion for him and he is looking for a way to give back to the city. He said he has new ideas about how to make traffic more efficient and he thinks the Traffic Commission will offer a forum for him to get those ideas out there. Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Langone what he thinks are the biggest traffic issues facing the city. Mr. Langone said the biggest problem is congestion. He said he is a legislative aide to Rep. Richard Haggerty and commutes to the Statehouse in Boston and it takes him 15 minutes to traverse Montvale Avenue. He said the timing of the signals is off. He said merging is a problem. He said there is not enough notification on the roads and not enough signage at merge points. He said it is something the commission can address. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said there are a lot of state roads in Woburn and said Mr. Langone can use his connections at the Statehouse to try to get laws changed. She said she thinks Mr. Langone will bring that to the table. Mr. Langone said he has been able to build relationships with personnel at MassDOT and the MBTA. He said he might be a good middle man between the Traffic Commission and those two agencies. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said Mr. Langone has been very helpful in aiding the effort to install a slip lane off Cedar Street to I-93. Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Langone what experience or expertise he would bring to the Traffic Commission. Mr. Langone replied relationship-building is probably

the key for him. He said he has heard from the community and can help identify problems. He said this is something he will bring to the commission. Chairman Campbell asked if any members of the committee had any further questions for Mr. Langone. There were no respondents. Chairman Campbell thanked Mr. Langone for his time. Chairman Campbell introduced Mr. Prizio and said she would be asking him the same three questions she asked of Mr. Langone. Chairman Campbell asked why Mr. Prizio wants to be on the Traffic Commission. Mr. Prizio said he has lived in Woburn for about 40 years and he wants to give back to the community. He said he has the time to serve on the commission. He said he does not have Mr. Langone's political connections but he does travel the streets every day and is familiar with the traffic problems in the city. He said the city is unique because it has three ramps to major highways. He said traffic in the city is a mess. He said you can't navigate the city without hitting a traffic jam. He said there is a plan on the table to change the traffic pattern in Woburn Center. Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Prizio what he considers to be the biggest traffic issues facing the city. Mr. Prizio said a solution would be to widen the streets but that is not going to happen. He said he hopes the widening of Montvale Avenue brings some relief but he is skeptical because the same thing was said of the Big Dig and there are still traffic problems in Boston. He said public transportation needs to be improved. He said there are not enough buses in Woburn. He said he does not have Mr. Langone's connections with the MBTA but he does know the city well. Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Prizio what experience or expertise he would bring to the commission. Mr. Prizio said he has an impeccable 40-year driving record. He said he thinks he's a good listener and he wants to help people out. Chairman Campbell asked if any other members of the committee have questions for Mr. Prizio. Alderman Mercer-Bruen asked if Mr. Prizio thinks construction in other communities like Burlington, Reading and Stoneham impact traffic in Woburn. Mr. Prizio responded that Woburn is often used as a cut-through from Route 128 to I-93 because Route 128 is often backed up. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said she does not often hear about how much traffic from Burlington impacts Woburn. She said it certainly seems like Mr. Prizio is familiar with Woburn's streets. Mr. Prizio said he is familiar with Ward 5 streets, particularly Washington Street. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said the Washington Street bridge is the weakest link and it should be widened, but that it is under the jurisdiction of MassDOT. Mr. Prizio said the bridge is not wide enough to accommodate traffic. He said it was poorly-thought out when it was built. Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to nominate a candidate to the Traffic Commission by Roll Call: Alderman Gately – Anthony Langone; Alderman Gaffney – Joseph Prizio; Alderman Mercer-Bruen – Anthony Langone; Alderman Tedesco – Anthony Langone; Alderman Higgins – Anthony Langone; Alderman Ferullo – Joseph Prizio; Alderman Concannon – Joseph Prizio; President Anderson – Anthony Langone; Chairman Campbell – Anthony Langone. Clerk announced there are six votes for Mr. Langone and three votes for Mr. Prizio. Chairman Campbell asked what the will of the committee is. Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen that the committee send Mr. Langone's nomination to the full City Council for confirmation; Roll Call: Alderman Gately – Yea; Alderman Gaffney – Nay; Alderman Mercer-Bruen – Yea; Alderman Tedesco – Yea; Alderman Higgins – Yea; Alderman Ferullo – Nay; Alderman Concannon – Nay; President Anderson – Yea; Chairman Campbell – Yea; approved, 6-3. Alderman Concannon said he is not opposed Mr. Langone's election to the Traffic Commission and he hopes his connections will help. He said he believes Mr. Langone can aid the commission whether he is on it or not. He said he knows Mr. Prizio and that they were neighbors. He said he knows Mr. Prizio to be reasonable and thoughtful. He said he is pleased there were two strong

candidates. He said he is happy when there are qualified people who are willing to step up to help the community. He said it is a shame the committee has to say no to one of them. Chairman Campbell said Mr. Langone's name will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration on Tuesday, December 17.

Motion made by Alderman Concannon and seconded by Alderman Ferullo to adjourn;
Roll call – Alderman Gately – aye; Alderman Gaffney – aye; Alderman Mercer-Bruen – aye; Alderman Tedesco – aye; Alderman Higgins – aye; Alderman Concannon – aye; Alderman Ferullo – aye; President Anderson – aye; Chairman Campbell – aye; all in favor, 9-0. Chairman Campbell adjourned the meeting at 6:16 p.m.