

Councillor Marks moved for approval as amended (Councillor Knight second)—passed.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

19-312 –

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING REPORT TUESDAY, JUNE 4 @ 6:00 P.M. IN ROOM 207, COUNCIL OFFICE MEDFORD CITY HALL

Attendees: John Falco, Council President; Breanna Lungo-Koehn, Council Vice President; Richard Caraviello, Councillor; Frederick Dello Russo, Councillor; Adam Knight, Councillor; Michael Marks, Councillor; George Scarpelli, Councillor; Mark Rumley, City Solicitor; Adam Hurtubise, City Clerk; Mark Rumley, City Solicitor; Jennifer Grogan, Head Clerk, City Clerk's Office; Nicole Morell; Divya Anand.

President Falco called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was live-streamed.

The purpose of the meeting was for the Committee of the Whole to discuss formation of a Medford Women's Commission. This was the result of the Council vote during the April 9 meeting at which the Council referred the paper to the Committee of the Whole. Councillor Knight's amendment to the paper was to create a Women's Commission by City Ordinance.

Vice President Lungo-Koehn summarized the prior Council action taken on the topic [see above paragraph].

Councillor Knight said that a City Ordinance is the way to go. He said it might also make sense to put the Commission under the purview of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Councillor Marks thanked Vice President Lungo-Koehn for initiating this work. He favors a Commission created by City Ordinance rather than an ad hoc Committee that can be disbanded.

Councillor Dello Russo said that the Somerville ordinance sounds almost hostile at some points. He mentioned Mayor Marilyn Porreca, the first female Mayor of Medford. He said that many leadership positions in City Government are held by women. He said he is wary of commissions that might divide people rather than being inclusive. He advocates having people exercise their collective voice together rather than separately. He wants any language establishing a Commission, by ordinance or otherwise, to be tempered and more open and accepting.

City Solicitor Rumley said that the movement to make all playing fields equal (rather by ordinance or an ad hoc committee), anything that increases the level of equality is a good thing, but the language needs to be examined.

Mr. Rumley said the Somerville Ordinance does not cover all intended categories (he cited the word "creed," in one place but not in another section of the Somerville ordinance).

Mr. Rumley also said that giving a Commission investigatory powers without investigatory muscle to go with it. He thinks subpoena power should be used very

sparingly, and that there should be cooperation with the police department and district attorney's office if investigation is necessary.

Mr. Rumley also said he fears that there is a litmus test required for membership on the commission. He asked whether personal political positions would disqualify membership, and he also wondered if some of those personal political positions might result in discrimination based on faith or belief.

Vice President Lungo-Koehn said the Council needs to discuss who is appointed, by whom, and how many.

Councillor Knight suggested a five-member commission, with Council advice and consent, and Medford residency required. He also suggested 8 people, one from each ward, with a residency requirement.

Councillor Knight requested that the City Solicitor draft some opinions for the Council. He also reminded the Council that the Somerville ordinance was drafted in 1988.

President Falco said that the main concern is getting the ordinance right.

Councillor Dello Russo recommended leaving the paper in committee.

Vice President Lungo-Koehn requested language from the City Solicitor. Mr. Rumley said he could get language to the Committee within the next couple of weeks.

President Falco suggested meeting on this in the third week of June.

Mr. Rumley said he'd be meeting with the Diversity Director during the drafting of any language.

Ms. Morell said that Somerville has had trouble keeping its commission staffed.

Councillor Knight amended his request to have the commission be 8 people, one from each ward, with residency, with the Diversity Director ex officio in the event of a tie.

Councillor Dello Russo (Councillor Scarpelli second) moved to keep the paper in committee until re-convened. He moved to report out the pertinent points of discussion that would be helpful for further consideration and for the City Solicitor as he drafts an ordinance—passed.

Councillor Scarpelli said that he would also suggest 8-ward-based members and one at large.

Ms. Morell said that it would be great if the City Solicitor consulted a woman in drafting the ordinance.

Ms. Anand said that the City needs to account for the disparate barriers that women face across cultures. She says that the voices of these women need to be heard from the very beginning.

Councillor Dello Russo moved adjourn at 6:44 p.m. (Vice President Lungo-Koehn second)—passed.

President Falco adjourned the meeting at 6:44 p.m.

[End of Committee of the Whole report.]

Councillor Dello Russo moved for a brief summary in lieu of reading the full report (Councillor Knight second)—passed.