

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

December 1, 2008

7:00 PM

Chairman O'Neil called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen O'Neil, Garrity, Osborne, Pinard, Murphy

Messrs.: L. LaFreniere, P. Goucher

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. Communication from Pamela H. Goucher, Interim Planning Director, and Leon L. LaFreniere, Building Commissioner, regarding the potential merger of the Planning and Community Development Department and the Building Department.

Mr. Leon LaFreniere, Building Commissioner, stated thank you for the opportunity to come before you here this evening with this proposal. We have actually had this matter under discussion for some time. I know you have all had a copy of the report and I certainly won't bore you with an in-depth reading of the report but in terms of some of the high points that are relevant to any discussion that will result, we did start this process as a result of Mayor Guinta's discussion relative to consolidation actually predating the time that the Board directed us to come back with a proposal. So it was not a new issue. We had talked in the most conceptual terms about what would be involved with such a merger and whether there could be benefits and what were the concerns and that sort of thing. That discussion, to be honest with, you framed the process that we undertook. Once the directive came down from the Board we had a fairly limited time to try to get as much information as possible and we wanted to make the report itself as comprehensive as we could so that the Board would have the information necessary to evaluate it. We held meetings with staff and other department heads and the Mayor. We did internal department surveys and reached out and did some targeting outreach efforts to developer interest in an effort to gain information and gather additional perspectives on what our customers, both internal and external, experience now with our current configuration and would want to experience in a consolidated format. That resulted in a task list. We felt that it was important to analyze each department's mission and goals to determine whether we were

compatible. We felt we needed to identify the potential benefits and what the potential negative consequences would be in such a consolidation proposal, what would be the potential savings and costs of the consolidation and then determine through that process what type of recommendations we would bring forward to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. In our review of the functions and responsibilities, we were able to determine that while we differ in specific applications, our goals and missions really are compatible and complementary in scope. Each department really focuses on the effort to promote a healthy economic base, safe and livable environments, ensuring an adequate supply of safe and affordable housing, as well as high quality of life. So with that understanding that each department's goals and missions were compatible in scope, we moved to the next step of trying to determine what the potential benefits would be. The strengths and weaknesses of each department, as we have noted in the report, really rest primarily in the dedication of our competent and capable workforce. We have a workforce that really has done yeoman's work in the last two years, especially in the face of declining resources and the challenges of increased demand for services. That said, the Planning Department in particular is in a period where they are facing some extremely difficult circumstances because of staff shortages. They are working at approximately 60% of their full complement and that severely hampers their ability to keep up with the demands for services and their ability to respond to long-range planning functions. Some of the principal benefits of a merger would be to afford the opportunity to integrate some of these complementary functions and provide some relief in those areas where current staff shortages are really pressing on the ability to respond to service demands. We feel that a merger could provide an improved customer experience, potential cost savings and a more coordinated approach to the work assignments of our staff. The customer experience could be improved through improving our communication processes. That would result from being one department and the ability to apply a more efficient utilization of staff resources in our administrative support functions, as well as some of our code enforcement efforts. The most significant savings would result of course in the salary line item. That is where most of the expenses for both departments currently rest. The potential for the savings realized by eliminating one department head where two currently exist would form the basis of the primary savings. It is also worth noting, I think, even though it is in the report, that one of the things that came out of our study was the recognition that a significant portion of the CIP budget, as well as the allocation of CIP staff, is really dedicated to programs that are oriented towards improving the quality of neighborhoods and housing stock in the City and one of the benefits of a consolidation would allow for an integration of our Certification of Compliance program and our Code Enforcement efforts in the housing code effort, along with the CIP resources that are available for those types of efforts that are currently underway. I think it is always beneficial if you can provide a carrot and stick approach as opposed to just a stick approach when it comes to enforcing

regulatory standards. If we can go in and provide an analysis of code deficiencies and at the same time potentially provide the ability to discover resources available to address those deficiencies then that may in fact enhance our ability to gain compliance. There were some concerns that were identified, some as a result of our internal staff survey. One of those was a potential loss of identity of our specific City safety and quality of life programs that currently are focused in each department. The fear of loss of focus on our individual mission and goals was also mentioned. Some of the outside developers that we reached out to indicated concerns about reductions in service capacity if there was a reduced staff complement as a result of the merger. The savings realized, as I have already noted, result primarily from the fact that one department head could function in what currently functions with two department heads. Additional savings can be realized through some internal reallocation of staff in the form of downgrading a Planning position that is currently vacant and filling that at a lower level internally and then upgrading another Planning position that would result in some better utilization of a couple of positions that are currently contributing at levels far above their current grade and in turn filling a vacancy that exists now at a top level Planning position at an entry level Planner position. There are also miscellaneous savings that we feel can be anticipated through the potential for elimination of some phone lines, elimination of redundant office equipment, lease expenses and those sorts of things. I don't see major cost savings there but it all adds up of course. Current staff complements for the two departments equals 34 people. The staff complement in the Planning Department is 12 with one grant funded position and the current staff complement in the Building Department is 20 with a grant funded position for a total of 21. We believe that we can take those 34 personnel and go down to 32 and provide the same level of service delivery that the two departments currently provide as long as we can do it in the format that we have outlined in our organizational structure. There is one thing I did want to point out because I know there has been a concern about our choosing a date of January 1 for implementation. The sole reason for doing that was only to pick a point in time where we could make calculations to demonstrate the scope of savings that could be realized should the consolidation take place. We don't anticipate that the consolidation would be in place for January 1. Whatever takes place from this point forward will be the prerogative of the Aldermen and their decision-making process as we move through. However, we needed to choose a date that could demonstrate the type of savings that could be realized. The savings that we have identified in the report, and we talked about \$44,000 or a little over \$44,000 for this current fiscal year, the actual return to the fund balance will certainly be far in excess of that because of the position vacancies that have occurred, especially in the Planning Department thorough the first half of FY09. This number was identified on the basis of a full complement being in place in each department and what would be the number necessary to support that full complement moving forward versus what would be necessary to support a full complement in a

consolidated department. So I can provide you with some additional financial information that we have with us that will show the actual scope of savings that we anticipate this year. The number, I think, of \$44,000 is relevant in so far as that is the apples to apples comparison if you will. That is the comparison between what a full staff complement in each department would be if that was in place on January 1 through the end of the fiscal year versus what a full staff complement would be for the consolidated department on January 1 through the end of the fiscal year. The savings, because we are actually eliminating positions, are continuing savings not one time savings and they would be in the vicinity of \$112,000 to \$125,000 moving forward. That figure is a little bit more difficult to nail down but the low end would be somewhere in the vicinity of \$112,000. We have identified a preliminary cost estimate for some building modifications that we feel would be necessary to effect the proposal and that totals up to about \$8,4000 and primarily deals with modifications to integrate the phone systems, integrate the computer servers, put a door between the two departments to integrate them that way and change the security system and relocate the electronic locks to try to make it function as a single department, some signage and miscellaneous expenses associated with that. Those figures we anticipate would be refined if the Board determines that it is appropriate to move forward with this consideration. In conclusion, after weighing the potential benefits, the concerns and the negative consequences, we feel that this proposal merits consideration by the Committee and potentially by the Board should the Committee feel that it should move forward. The primary benefits that we feel will result are improved service delivery and cost savings. We think that we can do this without creating any conflicts between the individual department responsibilities and in fact we think it can enhance some of our specific departmental functions and do this while maintaining services. In the executive summary I did a quick laundry list and I know you have all read it but primarily what a consolidation would do would be to bring together two departments whose mission statements are similar and compatible; further enhance the customer service that we currently provide through improved communication; improve efficiency of administrative support functions; streamline the site development and review process for applications for Planning and Zoning Boards; streamline the code enforcement efforts of the departments by placing housing standards, zoning compliance and site plan compliance under one supervisory unit; combine the Planning Department staff oversight and expenditure of CDBG, HOME, ESG, LHRDG, which is the lead paint program funds with our staff inspection and compliance services that currently exist within the Building Department; reduce and reorganize the staff complement and save the City salary and benefits; and realize some savings for our storage needs, which are at critical mass. I can tell you right now we are both busting at the seams, if you will, with regard to our archive storage options both within the City Hall complex and at the Rines Center and a quick aside, because of statutory requirements we don't have the ability to get rid of any of these records.

We have to keep them in perpetuity. So it is a big issue for us just finding a place to keep all of these files. Because of our separate statutory responsibilities as two departments we have to keep some duplicate files and this would afford the opportunity to consolidate some of those. Also we would achieve some miscellaneous savings over time in operating costs. Some of the programs that we would hope to implement should this move forward are not contained within the report but have been part of our analysis. As we move forward we would hope that with this organizational structure we would be able to implement a same day permitting program for certain classes of permits and also hold a regularly scheduled zoning clinic for developer and citizen interests who wanted to come in and utilize the process. We would be able to set up a timeframe and staff resources to provide guidance in that area. We would like to publish a user's guide to the development process within the City and also integrate, as I have already noted, the CIP resources and our enforcement efforts on some of our current neighborhood and housing efforts that are underway in each department. We are ready at this point to answer any questions. We do have...we weren't sure exactly how much information the Committee would want beyond this to move forward and rather than just bombard you with a bunch of things that aren't necessarily a cohesive part of our presentation I guess perhaps it would make sense to give us any questions you have and see if we have the information available to answer those.

Chairman O'Neil stated that would be my goal this evening, to answer as many questions as possible. If not, we could refer them to our next meeting, which potentially could be held in two weeks. With that, I will open it up to the Committee for questions.

Alderman Garrity asked what is the current salary grade for each department head right now?

Ms. Pamela Goucher, Interim Planning Director, responded the Planning Director is currently at a Grade 29 and the Building Regulations Director is at a Grade 26.

Mr. LaFreniere asked would you like the numbers?

Alderman Garrity answered no I just wanted the grade. In the proposed merger, what grade would the Director of Planning & Community Development be or does that have to go through HR first?

Mr. LaFreniere replied I would anticipate that it would have to go through HR. What our proposal would include would be to keep it at a Grade 29.

Alderman Garrity asked has the HR Director seen this plan at all?

Mr. LaFreniere answered we have met with the HR Director. However, until it is referred to HR she hasn't done a detailed analysis.

Alderman Garrity asked so that would remain a Grade 29? How about the two Deputy Directors? What is the proposal on the grades for those?

Ms. Goucher answered perhaps this would be a good time to hand out a chart that has that information on it.

Chairman O'Neil stated that would be good because one of the things I was going to ask for was you did provide current organizational charts as well as the potential new organizational chart but there were no grades associated with them.

Ms. Goucher stated we did put them on this one because as Leon mentioned we did go through some of the financials in order to be somewhat realistic in what any savings would be either for the rest of this year or next year. So we did put some grades on the chart that you are going to see that shows a slight bump and that is all dependent on whether or not HR believes that it is warranted. Just so you know, in our current organizational chart as Bob MacKenzie envisioned it when he developed it years ago, the Deputy Planning Director did not have direct oversight over the CIP staff so there is a little bit of a funny chart that was originally proposed back then. Obviously I am currently in that position and you would probably see that moving forward and that may or may not impact the grades there. At this point we are not suspecting that there is necessarily a specific grade but we felt that we had to put something in there for a potential increase so that we were more realistic. If we didn't include it, we would probably be criticized down the road that the savings weren't there so we put it in for now and we will let it play through.

Alderman Garrity stated Leon, you said earlier that one of the benefits would be same day permitting on certain permits.

Mr. LaFreniere responded yes, that is a program that we would like to implement and that would be for certain classes of permits.

Alderman Garrity asked what type of classes would those be?

Mr. LaFreniere answered those would be the types of permits that could be reviewed and approved in a short timeframe, so rather than have them stack up in a queue as currently can happen with all of the permit activity that comes in because they are just done in order, if we had a same day permitting program and you came in for a deck or an addition or kitchen remodel or something that was of

such scale and scope that we could do a rapid review to determine compliance, then we would be able to issue the permit immediately.

Alderman Garrity asked typically what is the turn around time for those types of permits now?

Mr. LaFreniere answered we try to get them out rapidly. Some are approved at time of application but we don't have a formalized process for that. If there isn't someone available because all of our review staff is out in the field or otherwise committed, that could take a couple of days or up to a couple of weeks for a commercial project.

Alderman Garrity stated I am thinking more on the residential side. Say somebody wants to put a fence up. How long does that take?

Mr. LaFreniere responded usually a couple of days.

Alderman Pinard asked Leon the set-up of your new office as I look at it here, you have \$3,000 for the physical changes and all of that but do you have a layout of this? I kind of question the security system for \$2,800. I managed a building many years ago and whenever I had to change anything in security and it was done at that time at Granite State Alarm...\$2,800 for two doors or three doors that you have in those two departments sounds to me like an awful lot of money. Do you have a layout and why is it costing that much?

Ms. Goucher answered we contacted Red Robidas who is the City's Security Manager and has worked with the security system at City Hall and in the schools. We asked him directly what he would suggest as an appropriate number to relocate the card access panels. Currently each of us has one on our back doors, if you will, into the departments and we were looking to relocate one so that it would be at the top of the stairs and the other one would be in the doorway not too far from the elevator. That essentially would create...the hallway between the two departments would not become part of the department and nobody could get in and through past the upper stairs without a pass much like you have one these backdoors here. That was the estimate. Quite frankly both Leon and I thought it was a little bit steep but off the top of his head that was the estimate that Red Robidas gave us for relocating the card access panels.

Alderman Pinard replied maybe Mr. Robidas can talk to the company that is going to do this because to me that seems like an awful lot of money for two or three doors. I'm sorry but I have worked with alarm systems so I have a little bit of knowledge.

Ms. Goucher responded I do think if the Board or this Committee did move this along we would look to get a little more refinement in these numbers. We also had Tim Clougherty come over and take a look at where we were considering putting a doorway to connect the areas and we talked to Information Systems and Susan Sayward who is focused on the phone systems and she could tell us...

Alderman Pinard interjected could you have a breakdown for us at our next meeting? I think it would help us all in making a decision as far as costs are concerned.

Ms. Goucher replied when you said you want more of a breakdown, what exactly are you looking for?

Chairman O'Neil stated more detail on the cost estimates is what he is looking for. Back-up information on how those were derived.

Ms. Goucher stated we can try to do that for you.

Alderman Osborne stated I know I have spoken with both of you on the phone and I guess you know where I am going here but anyway dealing with this, if you had a full complement and the same savings that you are looking at now of \$44,000 what would be the advantage if you had a full complement? What change would this make by combining the two departments? What is the big thing here? It is the same...in fact it is probably less leaving it the way it is if you had a full complement. If you had the people working for you right now you are all stretched out and you don't know if you are coming or going and to cross-train and all of this kind of thing when you can't even do what you are doing now, I don't know how you are going to do that. I can't see where the savings are going to be. Nothing is black and white to me here yet. No matter how much you wrote here it doesn't come to black and white to me. It is just \$44,000 and \$100,000 and that could disappear as well. So there is no big savings. The main thing for services is to get your full complement and not so much the other thing when you are all in the same room. I can't believe that one.

Ms. Goucher replied I guess I want to make just one comment. Both the Planning Department and Building Department are relatively small departments in the City. We don't have nearly the budget that Fire, Police and Highway have nor should we. However, what happens is typically in a budget year when there is an attempt overall to try to have a 3% cut or whatever it is and we recognize that this coming budget year is going to be a tough year and I think that it gets very difficult when we are put into a situation where we have to keep looking at ways to cut staff without cutting services. I think one of the things we were hoping is that if this Committee and the Board looked at what we were trying to do which was to see if

there was any possible way moving forward that we can improve customer service, not diminish it, and at the same time try to save some monies for the City, we were hoping that would be something that the Committee and Board would look on favorably. Quite frankly, if we move forward and keep having chunks taken from us it is a lot harder to keep delivering services. It was not that long ago that the Planning Department had a budget of over \$1 million and this year we had \$679,000 and it is very difficult for the small departments. That combined with what appears to be a concern that keeps being echoed over and over at different meetings is looking at ways to merge departments that have some synergy that make some sense. Really, a lot of it has been us listening to the comments that have been coming from the Board saying we need to look at whether or not it makes any sense to take some of these smaller departments and merge them. I don't know if that answers your question directly but it is one of our concerns.

Alderman Osborne stated I guess we are going around in circles but if you had the full complement wouldn't it be a lot easier as it stands today...if both departments had full complements? You aren't doing any more than that, just combining. You are just adding other expenses like alarms and whatever else. It is not a true black and white picture to me. I don't know about the rest of them. The \$44,000 is going to be a savings right now whether you merge or don't merge. The \$44,000 is still there as a savings so what does that amount to in tax dollars? It is going to be there whether you do or you don't so I don't know what you mean when you say you are trying to save money or bring the tax rate down for the taxpayers' because it is going to be there anyway.

Mr. LaFreniere replied if we merged and each department had a full complement that savings wouldn't be there. We have been responding to what we have been hearing from the Aldermen. In an ideal world, we spoke about having the additional administrative capacity of two department directors. I think it is a benefit to the City and I think a City this size warrants that type of administrative capacity. We have in our analysis and looking at what other similarly positioned communities were doing in New England tried to look at what is the model and are other cities trending towards combined departments or trending towards separate departments. We found there wasn't really a good trend that indicated anything except that in the larger cities with more resources you do have separate departments and more administrative capacity. Do I think that Manchester warrants that? Yes I do, but when it comes to responding to the economic times we are in, the messages that we received from the Aldermen and the efficiencies that we are being asked to generate, this was an opportunity that we felt existed to look at. This is something that could move in that direction should the Board deem it appropriate. The expenses are a number that needs to be refined but we didn't feel it would be responsible to say that there won't be any expenses. I think

in the grand scheme of things we are talking about a relatively small one time expense that will facilitate more significant savings going forward.

Alderman Osborne asked so within the first year that \$44,000 you can forget it let's say because it will be used for renovations and doors or alarms or whatever it might be so there are no savings this coming calendar year in a sense, right?

Mr. LaFreniere answered well, we are projecting something around \$8,000 for expenses.

Alderman Osborne stated I think the City should stay with different departments. That is my feeling. I have said this a million times but there is no need to go off into the woods here and take a chance on a \$44,000 savings because of somebody's salary that you saved that is there anyway. I think you should have a full complement. I am not trying to take anybody away for you or anything. I am just saying that combining where others seem to be going the other way...we are going the other way. I don't buy that. I just don't buy it.

Mr. LaFreniere responded you hit on the key - if we were at full complement. The problem is though moving forward the way we are is not sustainable. The Planning Department can't do any planning if they don't have the people. That is the key. If both departments are going to function at the level that I believe our citizens deserve then we need to have the complements.

Alderman Murphy stated frankly this is an idea that I have been on board with for a long time and it is one that I support less for the financial savings because it really doesn't pan out to be all that much at the end of the day if we are being honest about it, but more for the reasons that you articulate in your report and that is the improved customer support and really the ability to experience the synergy of the employees there that you are currently having difficulty obtaining. That is enough for me to fully support this proposal.

Alderman Garrity asked can you just explain the justification to me for the reason why there are two proposed Deputy Directors?

Mr. LaFreniere answered yes, and that really results from the fact that we have separate areas of responsibility. We have the Planning & Zoning section that deals with everything that the Planning Department currently administers, inclusive of CIP, long-range planning, growth management and site development. Then we have the building regulations component that deals with everything that the Building Department deals with. I can tell you having worked in this industry for as long as I have that there are not many people out there whose specialty areas overlap into both of those areas for one thing and frankly there is just a workload

there in administering those functions that warrants having those people there to administer the daily operations of the department. I am not new to this concept but it has been mentioned to me more than once that Bob MacKenzie was asked a similar question because he essentially created the position of Deputy Director and then had a separate function for CIP back a few years ago and he described how he had these people in there to handle the daily operations and his job was to take care of the Aldermen and that is what the Director's job would be here to administer the operations of the department and respond to the needs of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and provide for the oversight of all of these operations, but for the daily operations you would really need two different people to handle.

Alderman Garrity stated I know, Pam, that you had stated earlier that you had a proposal for an increase in a grade because of CIP but I am looking further down the chart and the existing charts don't have any grades on them. Are there any increases in any other grades in the merger?

Ms. Goucher responded it is not so much an increase in grades as we have a vacant Planner IV position right now. It was vacated at the end of June. What I wanted to do...

Chairman O'Neil interjected let me stop you right there. Is that on the new chart you handed out tonight?

Ms. Goucher replied no, the vacant position is not on the new chart. If you look at the existing Planning Department...

Chairman O'Neil interjected you know what may be helpful as one of our things going forward is to do a side-by-side...

Ms. Goucher interjected we have that. Does that take care of it?

Alderman Garrity stated yes, this is exactly what I am looking for.

Chairman O'Neil stated you know how the Aldermen think.

Ms. Goucher responded we were trying to be ready.

Alderman J. Roy stated I am going to go along the same line that Alderman Osborne did if I could to try to clear some things up in my mind. If both complements were full today or January 1, which is when this is proposed for number's sake, would there be a \$44,000 savings this year?

Ms. Goucher replied there would be more in the Planning Department because we have had vacancies for almost six months.

Alderman J. Roy responded for that six month period...okay so we have apples to apples. If it was full, would you have that \$44,000 savings?

Mr. LaFreniere stated no. There would be money returned because of previous vacancies.

Alderman J. Roy stated because of previous vacancies and our inappropriate way of making up severance.

Mr. LaFreniere stated that is part of it.

Alderman J. Roy stated we pay a severance package and then we leave the position vacant for several months so we can make the money back so it shows as a positive in the next year, which is kind of incorrect. So next year, a full year, we are taking \$110,000 savings if you merge. However, if you don't merge will you have \$110,000 savings?

Mr. LaFreniere replied no.

Alderman J. Roy stated so we have a savings in money. At the same time, if I read everything right here, we are going to have a reduction in the workforce because we have redundant services being performed by the two departments so you are going to be able to consolidate some positions?

Ms. Goucher responded I don't know that we have redundant services. I don't think that is the right phrase but in our view of how this would work there is a way to have people in both departments better utilized. For example, if you look at the chart...and I will give you a for instance because maybe that helps, we look at the Zoning Review Officer and you are looking at your chart and that doesn't exist as a position. It exists as a person in the Building Department today but that person has a variety of tasks. We see the ability to take the skills of that person and merge it with what we need to do in the general review of development plans that come into our office and better utilize the personnel. I don't think it is right to say redundant services but better use people so that we can manage to do with one less department head and that is what it really comes down to.

Alderman J. Roy stated better customer experience. I think in the new plan we are saying Customer Service Representatives. Will they be the individuals who do the scheduling for the inspectors? The reason I ask that is will the inspectors be able to spend more time in the field inspecting?

Mr. LaFreniere replied that is one of the benefits that we hope to realize as a result of consolidation. It hasn't been...we haven't worked out all of the details because there are some logistics involved with doing that but we do hope that...

Chairman O'Neil interjected let me stop you for a second. Alderman, can you ask your question one more time because I want to make sure I understand it.

Alderman J. Roy stated my question was they have the Customer Service Representatives on the new plan and would they be taking in the calls for inspections? As a plumber I call in for an inspection and I have to call in between 8 AM and 9 AM and I talk to the inspector. In this case, these individuals could be taking the calls and the inspectors could be in the field earlier doing more inspections. I am thinking this is better customer service and as a plumber I would certainly like to see that.

Mr. LaFreniere stated you are on track. We don't necessarily anticipate that the people who are listed as Customer Service Representatives would be doing that because of the interruption of their workflow but there is a position that we have identified as Community Development Support Specialist whose function would be to do the internal department's IT support and potential inspection scheduling, both for our code enforcement department on the certificate of compliance program inspections, as well as for our structural division construction inspectors as well as taking on some of the financial duties and responsibilities so that we can separate functions in accordance with the auditor's recommendation. That is something that we can't do as separate departments right now because we only have on person who is available to do that. If we have two people then we can separate some of those functions. So yes, the idea would be that right now an inspector who spends at least two hours or two and a half hours a day in the office doing inspection scheduling and paperwork reconciliation we can get better utilization of their resources by getting them out in the field for a good chunk of that time.

Alderman J. Roy stated so essentially we are increasing efficiency and also improving the customer experience.

Mr. LaFreniere responded yes, that is our goal.

Alderman J. Roy asked along the same lines, one day approval would be on the same idea wouldn't it? You would better utilize the individual so you can do a one day approval?

Mr. LaFreniere answered right, because if we have a merged review function that will afford the opportunity to potentially have an expedited review process. We have looked at some models that other communities have done and it really helps obviously to help all of your regulatory functions under a single umbrella to be able to issue the approval in an expedited fashion.

Alderman Osborne stated let's get back to the \$110,000 and the \$44,000. What you are trying to tell me now is this is not going to happen if you don't merge? These monies aren't going to happen? This is going to happen anyway whether you merge or you don't because those are salaries coming from Mr. MacKenzie and so on and so forth right?

Mr. LaFreniere responded well, the only way it is going to happen is if we maintain all of these vacancies.

Alderman Osborne replied this is with your full complement.

Mr. LaFreniere stated if it was full complement then there would not be the savings, no.

Alderman Osborne asked well where does that money go? I thought you said with the merge...you are putting in a full complement.

Mr. LaFreniere answered perhaps I am not understanding the question. I thought you were asking if there was no merger and we had full complement.

Alderman Osborne replied right.

Mr. LaFreniere stated then there would be no savings.

Alderman Osborne asked where would the \$44,000 go?

Mr. LaFreniere answered to the salary necessary to support the second Director.

Alderman Osborne asked so what you are saying is if you merge then you get the \$44,000?

Ms. Goucher stated if all of the positions were funded in both departments there is no savings except for what the Planning Department is going to return to the City for having had these vacancies since July 1.

Alderman Osborne asked does that include Mr. MacKenzie's position? Is that what you are trying to say?

Ms. Goucher answered the Planning Director's position has been vacant since March. The Planner IV position has been vacant since June 30. A Planner II position has been vacant for about six weeks. The grant funded position is still vacant. There is a Planner II...

Chairman O'Neil interjected let me stop you right there. Just to review, the Planning Director position has been vacant since March?

Ms. Goucher responded yes Mr. MacKenzie retired in March.

Chairman O'Neil asked and the Planner IV has been vacant since when?

Ms. Goucher answered the start of this fiscal year. He retired on June 30.

Chairman O'Neil asked and the Planner II?

Ms. Goucher answered I believe she transferred about five or six weeks ago. My staff is telling me October so sometime in October. I also have a part-time Administrative Assistant instead of a full-time Administrative Assistant.

Chairman O'Neil asked and that has been vacant since...

Ms. Goucher interjected Carolyn Michaud retired in January 2007 and we went without that position until the end of January of this year and it was only funded through this Board after it had been vacant for a long time and no permission had been granted to fill the position it was this Board that gave us \$10,000 to hire a part-time person.

Chairman O'Neil asked so currently there is a part-time person?

Ms. Goucher answered yes.

Chairman O'Neil stated Alderman Osborne, I didn't mean to cut you off but Pam, you have a Planner II grant funded position that is vacant. When did that...how long has that been vacant?

Ms. Goucher responded all of this fiscal year. We actually interviewed and offered the job to somebody who declined it based on the salary.

Chairman O'Neil asked if you had to guess, and I am not going to hold you to it, but how long...

Ms. Goucher interjected it was a limited term position and it was funded through the CIP process. It is a CIP funded position so we had it funded in the past...

Chairman O'Neil interjected it was a new position starting in FY09?

Ms. Goucher replied no. It was vacant since...we had someone in the position until, I want to say the spring of 2007.

Chairman O'Neil stated just for talking terms we will call it April 2007. Then there is another Planner II that is vacant.

Ms. Goucher answered correct and not funded this year.

Chairman O'Neil asked when did that become vacant?

Ms. Goucher answered it has been vacant for a few years but it has been on our complement, which is why on the chart I am trying to be careful to say that there are 12 positions plus a grant funded position.

Chairman O'Neil asked when you say...we are in FY09 so that too goes back as far as FY07 being vacant?

Ms. Goucher replied I believe so.

Chairman O'Neil asked can you confirm these vacancies for us?

Ms. Goucher answered yes.

Chairman O'Neil stated month and year is fine. I don't think we need specific dates but month and year would be helpful. Alderman Osborne please continue.

Alderman Osborne stated I just want to say this one thing again. If you had a full complement...let's bottom line this thing okay? You can give me all the figures you want but let's bottom line it. If both departments are at full complement can't you give the same services as if you were merged?

Ms. Goucher answered yes.

Alderman Osborne stated I can't comprehend that yet.

Ms. Goucher stated I don't think we are disagreeing that fully funded complements for both departments would be something that either one of us would have a problem with.

Alderman Osborne stated that is the way it should be right? It was that way once until things started to tweak a little bit right? So what I am trying to say again is... and I just asked the question, yes or no, can you give the same services and everything else if you had a full complement regardless of this \$44,000? It is not the end of the world here, this \$44,000, on the tax rate. Can you operate your two departments efficiently for the people out there if you had a full complement?

Ms. Goucher responded I think the short answer is yes we could.

Alderman Osborne stated thank you.

Alderman Garrity asked and if you were not to merge and all of your positions were filled what is your salary line item? Right now it is at \$898,958 without the merger. That does not include your vacant positions I would assume, correct?

Ms. Goucher answered I have that if you want to hold on a minute and let me find it. Alderman, we were funded for salaries at...

Alderman Garrity interjected I need your vacant positions too. What would your salary line item...you have a number down here on the...

Ms. Goucher interjected what are you looking at, Alderman?

Alderman Garrity stated I am looking at the proposed merger. The \$898,958 number which includes some vacant positions correct?

Ms. Goucher responded yes.

Alderman Garrity asked are there vacant positions in that number?

Mr. LaFreniere answered yes. Well currently vacant.

Alderman Garrity stated I want what your salary line item would be in the structure you are in now if all of your positions were filled.

Ms. Goucher stated I think it is \$679,367.

Mr. LaFreniere stated I don't think we are on the same page.

Alderman Garrity stated I want Building's and I want Planning's salary line items including the vacant positions.

Mr. LaFreniere responded including the vacant positions is on this sheet.

Alderman Garrity asked it is on this sheet currently?

Mr. LaFreniere answered yes because for the salary projections for the second half of fiscal year 09 with all of the funded positions in Planning filled it is the \$348,006. With all of the positions filled in the Building Department it is \$558,152.

Chairman O'Neil stated Leon, that can't be right. The Planning Director alone is almost \$100,000.

Mr. LaFreniere responded that is just for the second half of the year.

Chairman O'Neil stated I think what Alderman Garrity is looking for is if all positions were filled in both departments for the year what would be the number in Planning and what would be the number in Building.

Ms. Goucher stated the number that was appropriated for Planning for this fiscal year, the \$679,000 plus, was for 10.5 staff members. It didn't include half of the administrative position so that remained a half time position and it didn't fill the Planner II position.

Alderman Garrity stated Alderman Osborne was saying that you should both have full complements. Now you just told me that you have had vacant positions since 2007. I want to know what your line item would be if all of your positions were filled. Let's say the Mayor said to you at the beginning of the fiscal year, fill all of your positions including the ones you have had vacant for a year. If you don't have that information that is fine.

Ms. Goucher responded I have never given you a number for 12 positions and that is what you are looking for, correct?

Alderman Garrity replied yes.

Chairman O'Neil asked is 12 your current complement or if all positions were filled?

Ms. Goucher answered 12 is my current complement in Planning.

Chairman O'Neil asked and Leon, yours is how many?

Mr. LaFreniere answered 21 including the grant funded.

Chairman O'Neil asked can you provide those numbers?

Mr. LaFreniere answered absolutely.

Alderman Garrity stated Alderman Osborne stated that you should be fully funded with all of your positions and if you want to use that argument I think there are potentially more savings. Would you agree or disagree?

Ms. Goucher asked more savings with the merger?

Alderman Garrity answered yes.

Ms. Goucher replied yes.

Alderman Garrity stated let's say all of your positions were filled even the vacant ones.

Ms. Goucher responded yes.

Alderman Garrity asked so these savings would be even greater would they not?

Ms. Goucher replied the savings would be greater in the merger but keep in mind that in the merger we have eliminated positions. You do realize that, right?

Mr. LaFreniere stated that is where the savings are of course.

Chairman O'Neil asked eliminated or did not fill?

Ms. Goucher answered eliminated.

Chairman O'Neil asked they are not listed in HR and the positions do not exist?

Mr. LaFreniere answered well...

Chairman O'Neil interjected see there is a difference between unfilled positions...forget funding. How many positions do you have authorized but not filled? I believe that is where Alderman Garrity was going. Authorized positions and what would that total salary number be if those positions were filled?

Ms. Goucher stated so I need to give you 12 for Planning and I think Leon...

Mr. LaFreniere interjected I have the number for Building but we never calculated that for Planning. We will definitely get you that number and I understand. What I was saying is that in our proposal there are definite eliminated positions.

Chairman O'Neil asked there are two correct?

Mr. LaFreniere answered correct.

Alderman J. Roy stated I was just trying to clear up the question on the number. That number that you have here was just short of \$900,000. If we doubled that would it be fair to say that is about what it is with every one of your positions filled? I would still want to see the information that Alderman Garrity was looking for too about what HR says you have for positions.

Ms. Goucher responded we are authorized for 10.5 people whereas as I stated our full complement is 12, so doubling ours wouldn't do it. I believe doubling it might do it for Building.

Chairman O'Neil stated you guys keep track of information that we need and the City Clerk is also following up and I will ask them to follow-up again tomorrow to make sure that the questions we have are the same.

Mr. LaFreniere responded we probably have that information here but I would rather...

Chairman O'Neil interjected again, this is going to take us a little time to work through. I am going to grab a few questions and I apologize for jumping around and not being consistent but as I read and as I heard comments this evening I wrote some down. If the Board wanted to move the CIP function to another organization in the City I am curious as to what your thoughts would be on that?

Ms. Goucher responded I would not be particularly supportive of that idea. Obviously it is up to the Aldermen to make that decision. I think there is a direct link and I think it is important that it stay within the Planning Department. There would be potential conflicts if it was shifted into Finance I believe for the HUD funds and the monitoring and auditing. I think there is a potential for conflict which was for a long time I believe it was its own separate entity but from my understanding and I wasn't there at the time but it was brought into our department because there were some issues surrounding its autonomy if you will. I think that when you look at the mission of the Planning Department it definitely needs to have the component of the CIP as part of it. When you look at what we are doing with the neighborhood stabilization program and going after those funds it has a direct impact on how we view planning in the neighborhoods. If you look at the

lead paint program and how that is tied into the COC program and being able to offer owners the advantage of realizing those funds I think it would be a mistake to pull it apart.

Chairman O'Neil replied that leads into in one of your bullets on the first page of the executive summary. You talk about combining the Planning Department with oversight and expenditure and I won't list all of the programs with staff and inspection compliance services of the Building Department. Can you for our next meeting provide me some examples? Pam, you just rattled off a couple but I would like a little more detail. Leon, you also mentioned when you talked about new programs and this was my writing and not exactly what you said verbatim but you said CIP and enforcement resources for neighborhoods. I think they are similar bullets unless I missed it but can you give me some specifics for a future meeting?

Ms. Goucher responded are you looking for just the CIP component with Building or are you looking at Planning and Building?

Chairman O'Neil replied Leon made a statement and I wrote the heading as new programs and he mentioned four items – same day permitting, zoning clinic, user's guide and then he said CIP and enforcement resources for the neighborhoods. Now I abbreviated that and that is not exactly what Leon said in full but I relate that to one of your bullets in the executive summary that talks about combining Planning Department staff oversight with staff inspection compliance services of the Building Department. If they are two separate bullets let me know that but I read it as similar bullets. If we can be given some specific examples of what we are not doing now and what we will be doing in the future if this were to happen, that would be helpful to me. Also we talked about in one of your bullets streamlined code enforcement by planning housing standards and zoning compliance under one supervisory unit. You also mentioned later in your report...I am missing something there I don't know, I look at the organization chart and I don't see one supervisory unit. I guess I am missing it.

Mr. LaFreniere stated that is the...

Ms. Goucher interjected Code Enforcement Supervisor.

Mr. LaFreniere stated if you look at the colored chart we are looking at the blue. That is current...the Code Enforcement Supervisor is currently the Housing Code Supervisor and underneath him there are five Housing Inspectors, one of which is assigned to Zoning Enforcement currently. He is assigned to Zoning Enforcement but he works under a different supervisory unit. I want to bring him...

Chairman O'Neil interjected can you just give me a little write up on that to summarize it? I understand exactly what you are saying now. I guess you mentioned the downgrades. There actually are in the recommendation, a couple of upgrades, correct? I guess my question would be are those based on a conversation with the HR Department or are those your best guesstimates for talking terms this evening?

Ms. Goucher asked in terms of the Planner upgrades?

Chairman O'Neil answered the two Deputy Directors. One would get a one grade upgrade and one would get a two grade upgrade.

Ms. Goucher stated there was an initial discussion with the HR Director that most likely if there were additional responsibilities taken on that might mean there would be an upgrade.

Chairman O'Neil asked can you give us what those additional responsibilities might be? I know this has to go to HR for a lot of fine tuning. I guess the same would be true of downgrading the Planner IV to a Planner III. What that position, if filled, did or could do in the future? Also, the Planner II to a Planner III what that person currently does and what they could do? Finally, Leon I tried to keep up with...you mentioned...and I can't remember who was asking the question about scheduling and customer service but you mentioned that the Administrative Services Manager would become a new title of Community Development Support Specialist. Can you just provide some details on what your thoughts might be on what that person is doing now and what they could do to improve? You mentioned in your report Lowell, Worcester and Portland, ME. Did anyone have a similar model to what is being proposed here? Did you find a similar model in New England?

Ms. Goucher answered there is quite the variety. Portland seemed to have something that was similar but I think they had more staff for a city of about 64,000. They do have their inspections and their planning within one umbrella. They have more specific titles for some of their Planners. Nashua has the building operation and the zoning and planning under a Community Development Department.

Chairman O'Neil asked could you provide, if you have this on one page, some of the peer cities and how they have it structured? That might be helpful and maybe individual Aldermen will want to do some online research or make a call.

Ms. Goucher answered we can. It is harder to compare the CIP program because many of them...

Chairman O'Neil interjected okay take that out of...how do they manage it?

Ms. Goucher stated what I wanted to say is a lot of them still have part of the what we would call the CIP program in terms of someone monitoring the HOME and HUD funds but the capital improvements portion is sometimes done by the Aldermen. It is more of how they use the resources of the staff. It is not so much that it is pulled out of the division as much as the terminology as to what they do is somewhat different. Lowell I know has seven people just working on HOME funds and that is a comparable-sized city.

Chairman O'Neil stated I am hearing that you are not finding anything similar to what we do now or what we could do under this plan but for some background if you could give us a sample of what some of these other cities you referenced are doing or how they are structured...It doesn't have to be detailed. Maybe then individual Aldermen will want more information. There are two positions being eliminated: the Building Regulations Director...for our next meeting could you provide the justification on what we are eliminating? The Planner II position...If I read this right that is the second position to be eliminated.

Ms. Goucher responded I am not saying that I am necessarily an advocate. I am trying to be realistic here.

Chairman O'Neil replied okay but there must be some justification. Someone is going to have to pick that up if positions are filled.

Ms. Goucher stated it has something to do with trying to upgrade some of the positions so that I can expect additional responsibilities taken over by other individuals.

Chairman O'Neil stated we talked about the interaction with Code Enforcement and I think I counted at least four or five times or maybe more in your report where you referenced improved customer experience or customer service. You might have it worded a different way but you reference that about four or five times. Can you just either tonight or if you want to give some thought to it...obviously that was something you felt maybe was missing or we could be doing a better job of and if you want to elaborate tonight that is fine and if you want to think about it and put it into words that is fine. Obviously the two of your recognized it as some kind of issue because you referenced it a number of times in your report.

Mr. LaFreniere responded by stating it that doesn't necessarily mean we feel that it doesn't work the way it is. I think that is worth saying. One of the benefits that

we thought we could realize from this merger was an improved experience by virtue of the fact that the communication process would be improved. Someone who came to the department with a development proposal would not have to go through the process with one department and then walk over and go through another process for the other department. We could more fully integrate the process so that it is closer to the one-stop shopping model that has been touted as a desirable effort to achieve.

Ms. Goucher asked can I make one comment directly to that topic? I think the attempt to try to get the zoning review component wrapped in a little more closely with Planning, as well as knowing that the Zoning Board and the Planning Board are both Boards and that staff is more connected to those Boards. When we have development projects they come to Planning and we call Max at Building and ask that he sit in on a meeting and they usually do the same. It would be nice if initially when someone comes in we could say, this is as we see it for the zoning issues and this is as we see it for the planning issues and not say this is how we see the planning issues and you will have to get a zoning review done by the Building Department. I think there is a...

Chairman O'Neil interjected but how would the mechanics of that work, Pam?

Ms. Goucher answered well, it has to do a little bit with the zoning review officer as you see on this chart being part of the site development.

Chairman O'Neil asked where is that?

Ms. Goucher responded on the colored chart you would see that on the pink. That is taking one of the individuals that I would say currently does a lot more of the zoning review and enforcement and trying to wrap that person into doing some of the reviewing of the proposals that are coming into the City. In that respect, I guess I am also trying to answer some of the comments about if you eliminate a Planner II I need to make sure there are the resources of an individual that correlates and understands what we are doing in development.

Chairman O'Neil asked Leon, does that go to your earlier comment about the Zoning Inspector and some of that now being rolled into the new title of Code Enforcement Inspector? It seems like it kind of ties together a little bit.

Mr. LaFreniere answered it does. The thought process behind this proposal or that aspect of the proposal was to actually separate the functions that are currently undertaken by the Zoning Inspector and in part by the Deputy Director of Building and in part by the Plans Examiner and roll the review functions of those three positions into the single Zoning Review Officer position and separate out the

zoning enforcement function into this other supervisory unit in Code Enforcement. That is exactly what we are doing there is splitting the enforcement piece and review piece and putting the review piece in the front end where it should be and the enforcement piece on the other end.

Chairman O'Neil asked do you see the enforcement piece possibly changing the grade of the current Housing Inspectors then?

Mr. LaFreniere answered no.

Chairman O'Neil asked wouldn't it become an additional responsibility?

Mr. LaFreniere answered I don't see that. The Zoning Officer now is a labor grade 17. It is not as if it is a change that requires additional job requirements in the context of the class specification. Obviously that is something that we will look at with the HR Department.

Alderman Osborne stated what I would like to see next time around here is with a full complement what the difference would be on what you can do and what you can't do and the difference between being merged and where you are now with a full complement. That is all of it in a nutshell I think. What would we be missing out on by merging or not merging I should say?

Chairman O'Neil stated we will tentatively plan on meeting somewhere around the week of the 15th. We will work with the City Clerk to come up with a schedule that fits. We probably need to block out a good hour or hour and a half again. We need some information. As soon as you can get some of these various questions answered I think you can get it out to the members of the Committee. If you want to confirm with the City Clerk, they have been trying to write down the questions as you folks have to make sure you didn't miss anything. We will see where that goes. We may want to send it to HR at that point for their review and then bring it back. We may say we need another crack at this because we have new questions. I do think there are some opportunities and I think if we are going to do it let's do it right.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Murphy it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee