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**DECEMBER 10, 2020
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

A Special Meeting of the Salem City Council was held remotely on Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 6:15 P.M. for the purpose of taking action on committee reports for the second passage of a \$16.1 Million Bond Order for the Signature Parks Improvement Program, as well as the Plastics Ordinance, Gas Ban Ordinance, Green Buildings Ordinance as well as carry matters forward from the Committee on Public Health, Safety and the Environment and Government Services.

Notice of this meeting was posted on December 7, 2020 at 11:37 A.M.

All Councillors were present.

Council President Robert McCarthy presided.

#547 – (#480 & #538) - BOND ORDER SIGNATURE PARKS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Councillor Turiel offered the following report for the Committee on Administration and Finance co-posted with the Committee of the Whole. It was voted to accept the report and adopt the recommendation by a roll call vote of 10 yeas, 1 nay and 0 absent. Councillors Dominguez, Flynn, Hapworth, Madore, Morsillo, Prosniewski, Riccardi, Turiel and McCarthy were all recorded as voting in the affirmative. Councillor Dibble was recorded in the negative.

The Committee on Administration and Finance co-posted with the Committee of the Whole to whom was referred the matter of a Bond Order in the amount of \$16,100,000.00 for the cost of the Signature Parks Improvement Program has considered said matter and would recommend second and final passage by a roll call vote.

Councillor Turiel motion for immediate reconsideration in the hopes it does not prevail was denied by a unanimous roll call vote of 0 yeas, 11 nays and 0 absent.

Councillor Turiel stated they had a short meeting tonight – they only took a revote of last Tuesday's meeting. We had over a 2 hour meeting last week, but the vote wasn't valid due to sunshine ordinance issues. The general mind set of the committee is that we need to lard hard at a big dollar amount but most of the expenditure is over a period of time to make improvements for our City. Except for the Forest River Pool, the public and Councillors will be able to weigh in on the plans when the Park and Recreation Commission meet.

Councillor Dominguez stated this is the wrong time for this request. It is a great idea but there are other priorities to take into consideration. This pandemic, the worst witnessed by all us, local priorities need to be addressed and paid attention to such as streets, library, business owners to survive need help. As the liaison to the park and recreation commission we need to see a better plan on how to maintain the parks and the ADA components. Saying no to this bond not just to be opposed. He's reasons for saying no because now is not the time I would borrow money personally because I don't know what is going to happen. This is not the time to borrow money. This is not essential right now. Need to help businesses and unemployed. I'm in favor of the project but the timing is wrong. I'm in favor but not at this time. I know most of you are in favor.

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Councillor Dibble asked if the public can comment? Councillor Dibble made a motion to waive the rule so the public can speak. Councillor Dominguez seconded the motion. Councillor Turiel objected to the suspension of the rules.

Councillor Dibble continued to state he is a park person, but \$16.1 Million is a lot of money to be spending on 5-6 parks. Can the money be reduced? The timing is wrong, businesses are suffering, furloughs are being asked for.

Councillor Dibble made a motion to reduce the bond amount to \$3 Million. Seconded by Councillor Dominguez. The matter did not pass by a roll call vote of 2 yeas, 9 nays and 0 absent. Councillor Dibble and Dominguez were recorded in the affirmative. Councillors Flynn, Hapworth, Madore, Morsillo, Prosniewski, Riccardi, Sargent, Turiel and McCarthy were recorded in the negative.

Councillor Hapworth stated that we are all in general agreement that the parks need improvement and to be fixed. He has received a lot of emails. Out of 50 emails, 45 were in support. We need these improvements for our park. We will be borrowing the money over the next 6 years and paying back over the next 25 years. I know people think this is not the time to borrow money, but this is exactly the right time. We will be saving taxpayer money with the low interest rate. Smart companies, smart municipalities borrow money when interest rates are low. I hope we can get to some type of agreement because the parks need our help and we need to do it in a way where we save the taxpayers the most amount of money.

Councillor Dominguez stated he too received a lot of emails. I'm going to honor those in favor. Councillor Dominguez is willing to reconsider his position. I am still not in favor of the timing. He doesn't want to be painted as an obstructionist so will change his position and give what the people want. This is what most of the people want and he represents the people.

Councillor Turiel stated he thought the amount seemed high to him as will and he dug deep into the numbers, debt schedules, etc. The State is holding level on local aid. We were conservative on revenues and passed a very good budge. We have better bond rating then ever before. This is the time to do all these things that the people have wanted to see. Fix the Commons, rebuild the Forest River Pool. We will also save taxpayers money by low interest rates.

Councillor Madore took this position knowing she would have to make tough decisions. We cannot make a decision on the unknown and not the right time. Need to make decisions on what we do know. She is making her decision on the facts we have i.e. interest rates are low and construction rates are low. I know people are saying this is not the right time to borrow, but some businesses have to borrow money now to stay afloat. Parks are great equalizer. Everyone's equal when it comes to pools. I hope this passes tonight. If not going to borrow this money, then how are we going to pay for the ADA improvements. If we can amend fees if not happy with them.

Councillor Morsillo stated she was in favor of the bond order. The parks in our city are an important to amenity every resident no matter your age, income, ethnicity, race. She stated she is the liaison to the Board of Health and read their letter of support into the record.

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Councillor Dominguez said I don't think anybody here is against parks. He asked the following questions: if there were any maintenance plans? And if the plan can be revised to include Palmer Cove? How long? What is the time frame for these 6 parks once we apply for the funds? Will there be a difference in fees? Can we focus on one park that we can make ADA compliant completely before we move on to other parks? Not all can afford the same fee. Is there a plan for that? He doesn't expect answers tonight, but to consider.

Councillor Turiel replied that the answer to the timetable is on the website. For example, the pool at Forest River to be done for next season. And encourages Councillor and residents to attend Park and Recreation Commission Meetings to weigh in on design and fees. Help develop policies.

Councillor Morsillo told Councillor Dibble because he had good questions and Councillor Dominguez may find helpful. She called Jenna Ide last week. Jenna Ide stated that every park project comes with a maintenance plan so public and Councillors can follow these plans and ask questions. All new build and projects will be ADA compliant. She suggested if any Councillors have questions to call Jenna Ide.

Councillor Riccardi stated \$16.1 Million is a lot but the city is being fiscally responsible. There are things you want to use your cash on hand for but there are other things you can and should borrow for. A big park project like this makes sense to borrow on. Interest rates are so low right now. People are refinancing their mortgage right now rates are so low. Why now, my family income has been cut in half due to the pandemic, yes we need to be careful it is scary need be careful where we are spending money, but green space is important especially during this pandemic. Kids are inside all day but get outside and go to the parks. Parks are equitable. ADA is important, at the beginning of this year a resolution was brought in for the Assistant Ward 4 Councillor (Tanis Price); we are now having these conversations.

Councillor McCarthy stated he is fortunate to live in Salem and where he lives. He resides near the Willows and Winter Island. Parks this year took a different turn during this time. Types of uses and the way they use the parks were different this year. They were coming as families coming to parks and spending the day – there was no where else you could go during the pandemic; some people don't have back yards. Groups could be outside and physically distance. Seniors and kids need the parks. Our forefathers, who sat in these seats before us, had the vision and the sense and the foresight to make these areas dedicated parkland for all these reasons. You may question timing, but look at who uses the park. They serve the kids and the elderly. It our job to reinvest in these parks .were interested in open space. It was important to them to have and keep open space in Salem and its important to us.

Councillor Sargent stated he is favor of this for a number of reasons. I received a lot of emails in favor and against the bond. For those against it they have their reasons and we shouldn't vilify them. They are just looking at the \$16.1 Million one way and others another way and we should respect their opinion. Length of bond and interest rate are helpful. He stated he knows what parks did for him as a child and he wants to pay it forward for this generation and younger generations. Still don't take the money lightly but in favor of it . Parks kept us busy and off the streets and away from bad things. The pandemic may go away but the opioid crisis will be around for some time. In favor of it if it can help kids like it helped him. He's not taking the money lightly but take investment

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seriously. The people in these seats before us went on to do great things. Councillor Harrington went on to become Senate President, Councillor Ruane went on to be State Representative and they were both coaches. Wish we could bring back the park instructor jobs and summer jobs for kids to mow lawns and other things. This helped keep kids off the street and doing bad things.

Councillor Flynn added on to what Councillor Sargent said. He used these parks his entire life i.e. the Pool and Baseball Field at Forest River. Parks are important for the youths growing up. But what really changed for him was Tanis Price. Tanis opened his eyes for what it is like to be a kid in a wheelchair who wants to be able to play at these parks. Also know adults who are visually impaired, I think one of the most important things we can do as Councillors is to get our city up to ADA standards. We have made a good start but like to see us progress further with this signature money. What to challenge us to do more be the premier city on the north shore for ADA. Supports the bond.

Councillor Prosniewski stated he also received numerous emails and calls on both sides on the fence. The biggest concern was from taxpayers and how much taxes would go up. We are investing in our future generations. I am in support of this bond. As a community, we can't let pandemic stop us from moving ahead. He looks forward to our parks being beautiful.

Councillor Sargent like to pay tribute to these neighborhood park. With every park their were neighborhood associations of unsung heroes. The biggest unsung hero in his neighborhood park was a man by the name of Maxie Talkowsky, our City Clerk may know him since it was her father. They took good care of us. Involved in making sure the kids had an outing at the end of the year to an amusement park. With this money it will bring a lot of light to these unsung heroes.

#548 - (#149) – DRAFT GAS BAN ORDINANCE

Councillor Dibble offered the following report for the Committee on Public Health, Safety and the Environment co-posted with the Committee of the Whole. It was voted to accept the report and adopt the recommendation.

The Committee on Public Health, Safety and the Environment co-posted with the Committee of the Whole to whom was referred the matter of discussing and reviewing a draft gas ban ordinance has considered said matter and would recommend that the draft ordinance be sent to the City Solicitor for her legal review, put in ordinance format and to send comments back to the committee within ninety days and that rule 31B be suspended to carry matter forward into new year.

#549 – (#365) – DRAFT GREEN BUILDING ORDINANCE

Councillor Dibble offered the following report for the Committee on Public Health, Safety and the Environment co-posted with the Committee of the Whole. It was voted to accept the report and adopt the recommendation.

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The Committee on Public Health, Safety and the Environment co-posted with the Committee of the Whole to whom was referred the matter of discussing and reviewing a draft Salem Green Building Ordinance has considered said matter and would recommend that the draft ordinance be sent to the City Solicitor for her legal review, put in ordinance format and to send comments back to the committee within ninety days and that rule 31B be suspended to carry matter forward into the new year.

#550 – CARRYING MATTERS FORWARD – COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT

Councillor Dibble offered the following report for the Committee on Public Health, Safety and the Environment. It was voted to accept the report and adopt the recommendation.

The Committee on Public Health, Safety and the Environment to whom was referred the matter of carrying matters forward has considered said matter and would recommend that Rule 31B be suspended and that the attached list of matters be carried into the new year of 2021.

#551 – CARRYING MATTERS FORWARD – COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Councillor Flynn offered the following report for the Committee on Government Services. It was voted to accept the report and adopt the recommendation.

The Committee on Government Services to whom was referred the matter of carrying matters forward has considered said matter and would recommend that Rule 31B be suspended so the attached list of matters be carried into the new year of 2021.

On the motion of Councillor Sargent the meeting adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

ATTEST:

ILENE SIMONS
CITY CLERK