

CITY OF PROVIDENCE • RHODE ISLAND • Walter H. Reynolds • Mayor



D. Everett Whelan
City Clerk

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

CITY HALL

Vincent Vespia
First Deputy
William E. McWilliams
Second Deputy

IN CITY COUNCIL
January 7, 1957

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT OF CITY COUNCIL

The Chair calls for nominations for President of the City Council and Mr. Prete nominates Angelo Aiello, this nomination is seconded by Mr. Lorenzo.

There being no further nominations, on motion of Mr. Wexler, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, it is voted nominations be closed, and the City Clerk is directed to cast one ballot for Mr. Aiello as President of the City Council.

The Clerk casts one ballot for Mr. Aiello as directed.

The Chair thereupon declares Angelo Aiello duly elected President of the City Council for the ensuing term of two years ending on the first Monday in January, 1959.

D. Everett Whelan
D. EVERETT WHELAN,
CITY CLERK.



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CITY HALL

Vincent Vespia
First Deputy
William E. McWilliams
Second Deputy

IN CITY COUNCIL
January 7, 1957

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF CITY COUNCIL

The Chair calls for nominations for the Office of President Pro Tempore of the City Council and Mr. Boyle nominates William A. Gray, this nomination is seconded by Mr. Powers.

There being no further nominations, on motion of Mr. Wexler, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, it is voted that nominations be closed and the Clerk is directed to cast one ballot for Mr. Gray as President Pro Tempore of the City Council.

The Clerk casts one ballot for Mr. Gray as directed.

The Chair thereupon declares William A. Gray duly elected President Pro Tempore of the City Council for the ensuing term of two years ending on the first Monday in January, 1959.

D. Everett Whelan
D. EVERETT WHELAN,
CITY CLERK.



D. Everett Whelan
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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

CITY HALL

Vincent Vespia
First Deputy
William E. McWilliams
Second Deputy

IN CITY COUNCIL
January 7, 1957

ELECTION OF CITY CLERK

The Chair calls for nominations for the Office of City Clerk and Mr. Gallogly nominates D. Everett Whelan as City Clerk and this nomination is seconded by Mr. Matera.

There being no further nominations, on motion of Mr. Wexler, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, it is voted that nominations be closed and the First Deputy City Clerk be directed to cast one ballot for Mr. Whelan as City Clerk.

The First Deputy City Clerk casts one ballot for Mr. Whelan as directed.

The Chair thereupon declares D. Everett Whelan duly elected City Clerk for the ensuing term of two years ending on the first Monday in January, 1959.

D. Everett Whelan
D. EVERETT WHELAN,
CITY CLERK.

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

THE CITY OF



PROVIDENCE

I, D. EVERETT WHELAN, do
solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States
and of the State of Rhode Island and that I will faithfully discharge
the duties of the office of

City Clerk

to the best of my ability.

D. Everett Whelan

or

I, Walter H. Reynolds, Mayor

do hereby certify that on the 8th day of January, A. D. 19 57,

I did administer unto D. EVERETT WHELAN

duly appointed to the office of

City Clerk

the above subscribed oath.

Walter H Reynolds



D. Everett Whelan
City Clerk

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

CITY HALL

Vincent Vespia
First Deputy
William E. McWilliams
Second Deputy

January 7, 1957.

To the Honorable the City Council
of the City of Providence.

Gentlemen:

In accordance with the provisions of
Section 37, Chapter 832 of the Public Laws of
1940, I have this day appointed Vincent Vespia
of Providence, as First Deputy City Clerk and
William E. McWilliams of Providence, as Second
Deputy City Clerk.

Respectfully,

DEW:dkm

D. Everett Whelan,
City Clerk.

IN CITY COUNCIL

JAN 7 - 1957

READ:
WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.

CLERK

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

THE CITY OF



PROVIDENCE.

I, VINCENT VESPIA, do

solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and of the State of Rhode Island and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of

First Deputy City Clerk

to the best of my ability.

Vincent Vespia

I, Walter H. Reynolds, Mayor

do hereby certify that on the 8th *day of* January, *A. D.* 19 57,

I did administer unto VINCENT VESPIA

duly appointed to the office of

First Deputy City Clerk

the above subscribed oath.

Walter H. Reynolds

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

THE CITY OF



PROVIDENCE

I, WILLIAM E. McWILLIAMS, do

solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and of the State of Rhode Island and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of

Second Deputy City Clerk

to the best of my ability.

William E. McWilliams

I, Walter H. Reynolds, Mayor

do hereby certify that on the 8th *day of* January, *A. D. 19* 57,

I did administer unto WILLIAM E. McWILLIAMS

duly appointed to the office of

Second Deputy City Clerk

the above subscribed oath.

Walter H. Reynolds

DRABLE THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE

TO:

In November 6, 1956 the qualified voters of the City of Providence

granted to this administration the responsibility for organizing and conducting the government of this city for the next two years.

For this expression of confidence we are humbly appreciative. The problems of government are seldom easy. The decisions in government are often difficult. We have tried earnestly in the past to forego the too-easy answer. We have attempted conscientiously to reject the expedient solution. We have asked ourselves, when confronted with a problem, what is the right thing to do, what is best for all concerned. This we shall continue to do and I know that with the experience, with the sound judgement, and with the good will of this City Council, we shall not fail the people in the exercise of the obligations and the duties of public service.

The past several years in our city, as in most American cities, particularly the older cities, might perhaps be characterized as the years of experiment. We have employed - and in general successfully - new means of adapting to changed and modern conditions - city planning, freeways, off-street parking and redevelopment, are some of the elements of this experimental period. From our own experience, from the experiences of others, I think there can no longer be much doubt of the usefulness of these and other means of preserving and stabilizing the economic values and the living values which exist in the urban setting.

I do not propose that we should - or that we can - compete with suburban attractions upon suburbia's rules. To attempt to do so would be futile in the long run, and would result in a failure to develop properly those undeniable assets reposing in a central city with its convenience of access, its wide range of products and services, and its diversity of recreation and culture.

If it is fair to characterize the years immediately preceding as years of experiment, then I think the impending years may properly be anticipated as years of transition. Perhaps the phrase "urban renewal" defines as well as any phrase the concerted and coordinated action which will be required of us in future years.

Let us look briefly at some aspects of this action. We are informed that the United States Bureau of the Census, working with the Federal Civil Defense Administration through the Rhode Island Survival Planning Unit, places the population of this city for 1956 according to reliable estimates at 223,000 - a net loss of 25,000 persons since the last census. I do not cite these figures as cause for "pointing with alarm." Neither do I think they should be minimized. Actually a breakdown by census tracts indicates these losses have occurred substantially in those congested districts of the city where high density of population in itself presented something of a problem, and where de-congestion through migration and other causes had been anticipated by our City Plan Commission. Nevertheless, this loss and the causes therefor deserve further study and analysis.

-x-x-x-

I would expect the minimum Standards Housing Ordinance, a forward-looking code recently enacted by this Honorable Body to be of valuable assistance in this situation. By improving housing and by preventing housing deterioration, we can do much to increase the attractiveness of our residential areas.

Although we must expect, and perhaps actively seek, further declines in some of our congested areas, we must nevertheless take every practical step to insure that this new housing ordinance is fairly and effectively administered, that we keep fully abreast of any developing need for improvement in our zoning regulations, and we must provide adequately those public services which are so essential to the cultivation of neighborhood pride and satisfaction.

We must, of course, continue and expand our redevelopment and planning programs. In redevelopment we are now seeing results of a considerable nature. A new elementary school, a playfield and a large privately-developed shopping center are now rising on Willard Avenue. Condemnation has taken place and new industrial sites will, in the course of a reasonable time, be available at West River. Other redevelopment projects, as you Gentlemen are aware, are in various stages of study or execution, including Point Street, Constitution Hill and the Mount Hope Neighborhood.

A new planning grant has been sought from the federal government, to permit accelerated advance planning for the near east side.

Our business community has become increasingly concerned with the future of our high value downtown district. This is a concern which we share with our businessmen. As the result of work done by the Mayor's Hurricane Advisory Committee, a similar committee appointed by the Governor, and studies prepared by the Army Engineers, we have cause to believe a solution to our hurricane flooding problem is near. Protection, however, will avail us little unless the area retains its vigor and attractiveness for commercial purposes. It has been recommended that this portion of our city be studied and analyzed intensively and a plan be prepared for its preservation and enhancement. A demonstration grant application has been prepared to seek two-thirds federal financing for completion of this plan. The good will and the determination of the business community to improve its downtown resources deserves our reasonable and practicable support.

Within the next two years the State of Rhode Island will have completed Stage One of the North-South Freeway, a large part of the Louisquisset Pike, and should have made a substantial beginning on the Huntington Avenue Extension of the Dennis J. Roberts Expressway. This construction by its added capacity should serve in some measure to relieve our surface streets of much traffic congestion. As it progresses further, if the experience of other communities is indicative, the freeway proximity should stimulate building and increase land values. In this connection the new building code enacted recently by your Honorable Body, should in itself contribute to new construction activity through the new methods and new procedures provided by this modern performance type code.

Additional off-street parking remains a problem with which we must continue to struggle. Some portion of this parking problem may be solved in the course of preparing a comprehensive downtown plan if preparation of such a plan is approved. The transit situation probably also requires early re-examination, and as adequate and rapid bus service is of primary concern to our downtown area, there is a possibility that this matter also might well be examined as a part of a downtown plan, or otherwise might be explored independently.

I think it becomes readily apparent why I have referred to the next several years as a period of transition. We are compelled like many older cities to determine in our own self-defense how we may most rapidly convert what is basically a nineteenth century city to meet the challenge of the late twentieth century.

Clearly, the exodus of population to the peripheral areas, the need for preserving the integrity of urban residential properties, the redevelopment of deteriorated areas for present-day economic uses, the provision of efficient highway facilities to serve the needs of an expanding metropolitan area, the tendency toward decentralization of commercial and retail activities, and other related developments, not only create a challenging problem but encompass a scope and variety of concerns which make their solution one of the most exciting opportunities ever to confront our City.

I am aware of no substantial opinion that accepts the thesis that the central areas of our metropolitan cities are destined for oblivion. On the contrary, more and more attention constantly is being given to the development of imaginative plans for adapting our cities to the cultural and economic necessities of a new age.

I do not mean to imply that in "several" years I expect this task will be accomplished. I mean rather that I look forward in these years to a substantial beginning in the proper direction to bring this end about. I hope - and expect - that progress will be steady. I do not expect it necessarily to be rapid. We are after all most concerned with people and only with structures, highways, and land uses, because the proper design and arrangement of these things affect the welfare, the convenience, and the prosperity of the people. At all times the imposition of undue hardships must be avoided, and attention must be constantly centered upon the human and the humane aspects of such a program. Unless this factor is constantly remembered, we shall not have progress in its true sense. At the same time, of course, we shall need - and we shall expect to receive - a broad, democratic sympathy and understanding from the people concerning the nature of this program and its general objectives. Serious consideration must also be given to creation of the Urban Renewal Advisory Council strongly recommended by the Mayor's Committee on Housing, in order that we may secure the widest possible advice and support on the formulation of policy in these matters.

To achieve even initial success in such an undertaking, there must be the maximum of coordination and liason between the various operating departments and the office of the Mayor. I shall shortly appoint, therefore, a Housing Coordinator who shall have the responsibility and duty of bringing together the diverse departments and other interested agencies into a related effort, and who will be available to advise the Mayor and this Council on progress and accomplishments.

At the same time we must, within the limitations of our ability to service debt, continue with the capital improvement program required to modernize municipal facilities. We have constructed one new school at Fox Point. We have another now going up at Willard Avenue. Architects are working on plans for a third elementary school at Joslin Street. We expect within the next two years to see this school rise and become ready for occupancy. With the new bond issue of one million dollars available for school modernization we can look forward to immediate improvements in school housing, a highly desirable service to older schools in many neighborhoods.

Establishment and improvement of recreation areas will be a continuing concern. This administration over recent years added to our available recreation facilities at Sackett Street, at Arnold Street, at Knight Street, at the Esek Hopkins Junior High School and at Davis Park. We have made substantial improvements to recreational usefulness of such areas as Camp Street, Gano Street and Patterson Street. We have immediately before us improvement plans for the Danforth Street and for the Smith Street Playgrounds. A new playground and playfield must be developed on Willard Avenue.

Other areas of the City will also require new facilities and as the opportunity and as finances permit, these must be acquired through redevelopment or other means. In this category I place the long-deferred Central-Classical Playfield, a badly needed facility toward which I should like to see a further planning effort directed during these next two years.

The extensive alterations and rebuilding now being carried on at our sewage treatment plant will be completed and we shall have fulfilled our obligation with respect to anti-pollution measures in Narragansett Bay.

In relation to Narragansett Bay also, we must consider financing of a hurricane barrier. Unfortunately at this particular time, it is too early to determine what formula may be offered through the Congress to which the Army Engineers have yet to report. Doubtless, however generous the formula we hope to see, a contribution of city money will be required, very likely some benefit assessment along the lines recommended by the Mayor's Hurricane Advisory Committee will have to be considered also. We expect the state will be able and willing to play some part financially. Despite uncertainties, it is obvious such a barrier must be constructed as soon as practicable and we must be prepared to provide the financing with whatever assistance may become available.

We must continue our program of highway reconstruction, construction of neighborhood streets and sewer installation. For a number of years this administration has vigorously pursued construction of these improvements and we are, therefore, in the excellent position of having overcome a large back-log of such work which previously existed. While the time is not yet here, we may, with the continuance of this program, look forward to the day when this demand will begin to diminish substantially.

In previous messages I have occupied some considerable portion of your time with various administrative changes which I have found it necessary to recommend. I have no such specific recommendations this year. In adoption of the new building code, you Gentlemen have already provided a much needed reorganization of the building activity type of divisions within the municipal government. Through your adoption of the Minimum Standards Housing Ordinance you have provided a new Housing Division and a Housing Coordinator together with authority for a Housing Board of Appeals. These additions are all constructive and I deeply appreciate the action of this Council in making these services available to the people of this city.

Our great concern, beyond these thoughts which I have already placed before you lies in the problem of municipal financing. I refer not to capital financing, although that represents a factor in our requirements. I refer to the problem of providing annually sufficient municipal revenue to meet operating costs, of which debt service and debt retirement are the smaller part.

The costs of business, whether public business or private business, are steadily increasing. In recent weeks, for example, we have seen the United Transit Company, the telephone company and the electric company make application for additional revenue. The costs of government continue to mount also. The prices we pay for supplies, for material and for equipment have risen steadily. The compensation of our city employees must be increased for it has fallen in many instances well behind wage and salary levels prevailing in similar job classifications in comparable municipal governments, as well as in private industry. The factors which cause this situation are beyond the power of government - certainly beyond the power of any municipal government - to control. Inflation is a national or perhaps even international problem. Local government can affect its causes but little. Local government is compelled, however, to deal with the results of inflation which are higher prices, higher wages and salaries and a higher total cost of government.

In a situation where it appears that expenditures may exceed revenue three alternatives are open. First, it can and should be determined where money can be saved, or where expenditures now being made, can be forced to produce more efficient and more economical service. This alternative is one to which your administration has persistently devoted its attention in the past. As of the present time I am confident that most of the practical possibilities of this kind have already been realized. Second, it is conceivable that expenditures could be reduced by cutting services. I do not regard this as an adequate alternative, nor do I think, will you members of the Council. Fewer street improvements, less recreation or abandonment of services to householders, will not increase the attractiveness or desirability of our city, either to our residents or to those whom we may hope will in the future desire to live and to conduct their business here. Third - and the only realistic alternative which I can discern - is to obtain additional revenue. In my budget message which accompanied the budget last July as proposed for this fiscal year 1956 - 1957, I brought to your attention and to the attention of the general public, the need for additional and, if possible, new sources of revenue beyond whatever revisions might be effected in the schedule of licenses and fees, currently under study jointly by two committees of this Council.

This is a most serious problem for ourselves and our people. It is basically and simply a problem of economics and tax structure. A solution to the problem is essential and the values and the hardships of that solution will have its effect upon this administration, upon all of our citizens, upon labor, upon business, upon industry and upon the growth and the welfare of our community as a whole.

I propose, therefore, to appoint a committee of competent and resourceful citizens to find facts, to analyze, and to propose measures directed to a solution of the revenue problem. From such a committee nothing should be withheld. It should be aided and where necessary, it should be advised by our fiscal and other officers. It should have ample time to reflect and to consider. Such a committee, when it is prepared to make recommendations, should speak with considerable weight both before this administration, and before our citizens, who must be given the fullest opportunity to understand and appreciate the factors involved.

Gentlemen, the immediate years ahead will be difficult. But if they are difficult, they are also challenging. With your wise counsel, and with your cooperation, both of which you have given so generously and so graciously in the past, we shall with the help of Almighty God, bring these matters to successful progress.

Walter H. Reynolds
Mayor of Providence

IN CITY COUNCIL

JAN 7 - 1957

READ:

N. Everett Whelan
CLERK