

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 22, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Aikeem Boyd, Co-chair; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Co-chair; Alfredo Castillo, Matthew McCarthy, Samia Suliman, Rolanda Smith

OTHERS: Council Member(s): Maria Valle & Maria Pereira; Thomas Gaudett, Deputy Chief of Staff, City Attorney Mark Anastasi; John Mariani Jr.; Mark Stevens Harp; Council President A. Nieves

This meeting was held via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Boyd called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES:

- **April 24, 2023 (Regular Meeting).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 24, 2023 REGULAR MEETING.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 24, 2023 REGULAR MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Suliman joined the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

Due to connectivity issues, the audio of the call was breaking up throughout the meeting.

56-22 Appointment of John Mariani Jr., (D) to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED THE ITEM.**

Mr. Mariani greeted the Commission and said that he was a Bridgeport resident and former Marine. He said that he had worked as an assessor for many years and was looking to serve.

Council Member Pereira asked if Mr. Mariani was still active as an appraiser. Mr. Mariani said that he was. Council Member Pereira asked what would happen if a property was given to him for appraisal and then it came before the Planning and Zoning. Mr. Mariani said that he receives assignments from the company, he doesn't necessarily know who the owners are. He added that he also had been a licensed real estate agent and had always kept the two occupations separate. Mr. Mariani said that the only person that would have access to that information would be the government and he never speaks to anyone about the appraisals he does.

Council Member Pereira said that this would be a major conflict of interest. Mr. Mariani said that he was ethical and would not do anything unethical.

Council Member Pereira said the Supreme Court had stated that they had ethics but went on to mention someone who had voted to give himself a \$20,000 tax break. [Audio was intermittent]

Council Member McCarthy asked Mr. Mariani what he would do if a property that he had worked on came before the Commission. Mr. Mariani said that he would recuse himself.

Council Member Pereira said she had a problem with the make-up of the Planning and Zoning Commission. She asked Mr. Mariani if he was aware of the fact that the Planning and Zoning Commission was a nine member Commission with currently only seven members. If Mr. Mariani was approved to join the Commission, the Commission would be 63% white, while the latest census data indicates that less than 20% of Bridgeport residents are white. There is only one black individual on the Planning and Zoning Board and two Hispanics. Council Member Pereira said that it was in the Charter that the Boards and Commissions were to be reflective of the diversity of the community. She asked what his view of the fact that five of the eight members would be white since Planning and Zoning was a critical Commission.

Council Member McCarthy called the question.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 56-22 APPOINTMENT OF JOHN MARIANI JR., (D) TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PASSES WITH THREE IN FAVOR (3) (MCCARTHY, VIZZO-PANICCIA, AND SMITH) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (CASTILLO AND SULIMAN).**

57-22 Appointment of Mark Stevens Harp (D) to the Harbor Commission.

Mr. Harp greeted the Commission and said that he had been a long time Bridgeport resident and was a graduate of a Bridgeport high school.

[Loss of audio]

Council Member McCarthy said that the Harbor Commission has been struggling to find a quorum. He said that it was an important commission because of all of the waterfront property.

Mr. Harp said that he has always been interested in the water. Council Member McCarthy said that Mr. Holecz runs a very tight Commission.

[Loss of audio]

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED AGENDA ITEM 57-22 APPOINTMENT OF MARK STEVENS HARP (D) TO THE HARBOR COMMISSION.
** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira asked who nominated him. She was told it was the Harbor Commission Chair, Peter Holecz.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 57-22 APPOINTMENT OF MARK STEVENS HARP (D) TO THE HARBOR COMMISSION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

During the middle of the discussion regarding Mr. Harp, Council Member Smith said that her vote for Mr. Mariani had not been counted correctly due to connectivity issues. Atty. Anastasi clarified the details. Council Member Smith said she was opposed to Mr. Mariani and this would make the vote two in favor and three against. Atty. Anastasi clarified that this was not changing her vote, but the fact that her vote was erroneously recorded. There were six members of the Commission on the call and the chair can vote to affect the outcome. Council Member Boyd said that as Chair, he would like to register his vote in favor of the candidate.

Due to the audio difficulties involved with the call, the final vote was three in favor and three against. This vote would send the item to the full Council with a negative recommendation.

It was noted that Council President Nieves was now present. Atty. Anastasi said that Council Member Boyd should ask if anyone who voted against wished to reconsider the vote.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH MOVED TO RECONSIDER AGENDA ITEM 56-22 APPOINTMENT OF JOHN MARIANI JR., (D) TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION.
** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

A roll call vote for reconsideration was taken.

**** THE MOTION TO RECONSIDER AGENDA ITEM 56-22 APPOINTMENT OF JOHN MARIANI JR., (D) TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PASSED WITH FOUR IN FAVOR (4) (MCCARTHY, VIZZO-PANICCIA, BOYD, AND SMITH) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (CASTILLO AND SULIMAN).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED AGENDA ITEM 56-22 APPOINTMENT OF JOHN MARIANI JR., (D) TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION.
** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

A roll call vote was taken.

**** THE MOTION PASSES WITH FOUR IN FAVOR (4) (MCCARTHY, VIZZO-PANICCIA, BOYD, AND SMITH) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (CASTILLO AND SULIMAN).**

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services