

JAN 18 2006

COUNCIL NEWS

Compiled by Daily News Tribune
reporter Nicole Haley

School project ready for round 2

Construction of Fitzgerald Elementary School is gearing up for phase 2, after City Council members voted unanimously to release school building contingency money needed to push the project forward Monday night.

"F.L. Caulfield & Sons, Inc., the contractor responsible for Douglas MacArthur Elementary School, offered the lowest bid of \$18.8 million. Mayor Jeannette A. McCarthy requested the council release \$481,000 from a \$1 million construction contingency fund to cover costs added on from the pre-construction estimate.

"Previously, the School Building Committee could approve the release of contingency money on their own. But in past projects, McCarthy said, the council has been wary of releasing all of the emergency money at once for fear that contractors would spend unnecessarily.

"Our opinion is the contingency need is lesser going forward," said Councilor Stephen Rourke. Rourke said the early site package, including digging and preparing the grounds for construction, has completed. And that early phase, he said, is the time when most unexpected costs arise.

If additional expenses arise, through the course of the project, any release of remaining contingency funds must go through the council again, an extra step to assure more accountability in spending. Council President Thomas J. Curtin said he would be willing to call an emergency meeting at 48 hours notice to assure the council responds to any such request without holding up the project.

Once Caulfield receives a notice proceed, construction may begin as early as February, said Bob White, construction manager for Waltham Public Schools. Fitzgerald will be ready for occupancy by September 2008.

Pulte not complying with permits

The Ordinances and Rules Committee voted that Pulte Homes, the developer of a 268-unit condominium on Trapelo Road, is in violation of a special permit agreement involving affordable housing requirements. The committee will ask the building inspector to investigate before issuing additional occupancy permits to the developer.

The committee discussed the specific allegations against the developer in executive session before making a public vote. Minnesota-based Pulte Homes purchased Wellington Crossing from

JPI and sent a draft of deed restrictions to the council in September 2005, but the council has yet to pass it. The council made an agreement with JPI stating that 27 of the units must be affordable. City council members and the housing department now say Pulte prices do not meet those guidelines.

"We've asked the building inspector to withhold further occupancies at this time," said Chairman Edmund P. Tarallo.

Reached for comment yesterday, Pulte Homes Spokesman Ted Gowdy said the developer has done everything possible to comply with special permits and has not been given a clear explanation from the city as to what part or parts of the agreement are in question.

"We're going to continue to work with the city to try to resolve this and at the same time we'll take whatever steps we need to take to protect our interests," Gowdy said. "From our perspective, the city continues to change the target we need to meet in order to resolve everything."

Gowdy said he hopes the building inspector will allow his company the opportunity to respond before halting occupancy.

Open city jobs go unfilled

Councilor David H. Marcou Jr. said he is fed up with hearing about city jobs that stay open as long as 300 days, even though money exists in the budget to fund their salaries.

A report from the city auditor during Monday's Committee of the Whole meeting revealed that some \$1.3 million lay in this year's unreserved funds balance for wages and salaries not paid. That money, Marcou said, should be funding much needed work throughout the city.

"Some jobs get posted the next day and some are not posted for months," said Marcou, who asked the auditor produce figures on just how much money the city pays out in overtime to make up for unfilled positions. "We've taxed the taxpayers and now we have to deliver the services."

Council President Thomas J. Curtin made a request to the personnel department for a monthly report on the number of job vacancies with details on how long each position has gone unfilled. The committee also requested that more information on job openings be posted online sooner.

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MSPCA is selling personalized dog jerseys

By Scott Van Voorhis
BOSTON HERALD

Even local dogs are jumping on the Patriots playoff bandwagon.

With the Pats gearing up for their AFC Championship showdown with the Colts this weekend, a new line of Pats jerseys is hitting the market for Fido.

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals yesterday began selling personalized Patriots jerseys for dogs, with sizes able to fit canines ranging from chows to giant mastiffs, complete with dog's name and favorite number. Prices start at \$20.

"Patriots Nation could take on a whole new meaning," said Brian Adams, a spokesman for the MSPCA-Angell. "It's not just humans, it's dogs."

While the MSPCA's retail offerings are a bit unusual, the charity joins a long line of local establishments looking to cash in on Pats playoff fever.

Bars and restaurants are looking to draw big crowds this weekend, rolling out extra TV sets and planning special offers to draw members of Patriots Nation.

"Next weekend will be great for the sports bars in particular," said Patrick Moscaritolo, head of the Greater Boston

Convention and Visitors Bureau. "You will see a lot of restaurants doing things like bringing in TVs. They don't want people staying home."

At Jake's Dixie Roadhouse and BBQ in Waltham, owner Don Yoviesin is salivating at what promises to be his busiest weekend of the year.

He's looking at some new menu offerings - say a Peyton Manning or Tedy Bruschi burger - and looking to hire a disc jockey from a local rock station to rev up the crowd at his Waltham eatery.

As for TV sets, he's covered, with a 10-by-10 projection screen he claims is the biggest for a restaurant in the Boston area.

Fenway Parks big sports bar, Game On!, is planning a special "fan enthusiasm" contest where fans are invited to come decked out in Pats colors.

Meanwhile, Pats jerseys and other memorabilia is flying off the shelves at the Patriots Pro Shop at Gillette Stadium. Hot items include a hooded grey sweatshirt, Bill Belichick style, and of course, quarterback Tom Brady's No. 12 jersey.

Another hot item: dog collars and leashes covered with the Pats logo.

"I got one for my dog myself," said Brian Bilello, the Pats retail chief.

POLICE NEWS

Police: Waltham man burned girlfriend

WALTHAM - The girlfriend of a Robbins Street man suffered a severe headache and burns Tuesday, after he assaulted her during an argument that turned physical, police said.

Scott Mullen, 46, hit his girlfriend in the face, pushed her, which resulted in her head hitting the radiator, and then proceeded to burn her with a cigarette, Detective Sgt. Tim King said.

Mullen, of 144 Robbins St., Apt. 4, was charged with two counts of assault and battery, and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, he said.

He said the alleged victim was

taken to a local hospital by ambulance with a head injury.

"She said she was suffering a headache," King said.

Mullen was arrested about 10 p.m.

Sudbury man charged with driving offense

WALTHAM - A Sudbury man was arrested during a traffic stop on Gore Street early yesterday morning, police said.

Erlin Chavez, 22, of 655 Boston Post Road, was charged with driving with a suspended license, police said.

He was arrested at 3:51 a.m., police said.

-Compiled by Daily News staff writer Jennifer Roy

Family/Children's Event listings...

Submission for the Parents and Kids publication must be received at least one month prior to the event.
Thank you.

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Are Missing Teeth Affecting Your Self-Confidence Or Quality of Life?

Can you imagine how you'd feel