

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Town House,
ABERDEEN, 7 April, 2011

MINUTE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

S e d e r u n t :

Lord Provost Peter Stephen, Chairperson;
Depute Provost Jacqueline Dunbar; and

COUNCILLORS

GEORGE ADAM
MARIE BOULTON
SCOTT CASSIE
NORMAN COLLIE
JOHN CORALL
IRENE CORMACK
WILLIAM CORMIE
BARNEY CROCKETT
KATHARINE DEAN
ALAN DONNELLY
JAMES FARQUHARSON
NEIL FLETCHER
JAMES HUNTER
LEONARD IRONSIDE
MURIEL JAFFREY
JAMES KIDDIE

JENNIFER LAING
GORDON LESLIE
CALLUM McCAIG
MARK McDONALD
AILEEN MALONE
ANDREW MAY
ALAN MILNE
JAMES NOBLE
RICHARD ROBERTSON
JOHN STEWART
KEVIN STEWART
JOHN WEST
JILLIAN WISELY
WILLIAM YOUNG
and
IAN YUILL

Lord Provost Peter Stephen, in the Chair

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1 CALLING OF SPECIAL MEETING

In terms of Standing Order 4(2), the following eleven members of the Council had called for a special meeting of the Council to meet this day to consider a motion in relation to the City Garden Project - Councillors Adam, Allan, Cassie, Collie, Cooney, Crockett, Graham, Hunter, Ironside, Laing and Young.

2 CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Lord Provost welcomed Valerie Watts to her first Council meeting as Chief Executive, and wished her every success in the role.

The Chief Executive thanked the Lord Provost for his kind remarks; commented that she had received a very warm welcome from the people of Aberdeen; and emphasised that she would do her best for the city and the Council, and was looking forward to delivering on their behalf.

The Council resolved:-

to concur with the Lord Provost's remarks.

3 DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

The Council heard the Head of Legal and Democratic Services recommend that the meeting, this day, be held in private given the likelihood, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during consideration of the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of the classes described in paragraphs 1 and 6 of Schedule 7(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as enacted by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, as a result of the motion in the requisition questioning the validity and veracity of a report prepared by senior officers of the Council.

The Council resolved:-

to note the advice from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services but to proceed with the meeting in public.

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4 REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATIONS

The Council had before it the following requests for deputations:-

- (1) Friends of Union Terrace Gardens;
- (2) Mr Kenneth Watt;
- (3) Aberdeen City Gardens Trust Ltd; and
- (4) Mr Steven Bothwell.

The Lord Provost highlighted that none of the requests complied with Standing Order 10(1), which stated that applications for deputations must relate to a substantive report on the agenda, and that he was minded to refuse the requests on that basis.

Councillor Young moved as a procedural motion, seconded by Councillor Ironside:-

That Standing Order 10(1) be suspended to enable the deputations to be heard.

On a division, there voted:-

For the procedural motion (9) - Councillors Adam, Boulton, Cassie, Collie, Crockett, Hunter, Ironside, Laing and Young.

Against the procedural motion (24) - Lord Provost Peter Stephen; Depute Provost Dunbar; and Councillors Corall, Cormack, Cormie, Dean, Donnelly, Farquharson, Fletcher, Jaffrey, Kiddie, Leslie, McCaig, McDonald, Malone, May, Milne, Noble, Robertson, John Stewart, Kevin Stewart, John West, Wisely and Yuill.

The Council resolved:-

to reject the procedural motion and thereby refuse the requests for deputations.

5 THE CITY GARDEN PROJECT

The Lord Provost invited the members who had requisitioned the special meeting to put forward their proposal.

Councillor Crockett moved, seconded by Councillor Cassie:-

With reference to the decision of the City Council on 19th May 2010 reference item 14, Aberdeen City Centre a vision for the future, this Council now questions the validity and credibility of the report presented in this regard and the contents of the briefing provided to Councillors by the Director of Enterprise, Planning and

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Infrastructure on 2nd March 2011, all in relation to the provision of funding by Scottish Enterprise, and calls upon the Monitoring Officer to investigate the matter and report back to Council.

Furthermore that this Council reiterates its thanks to Sir Ian Wood for his extremely generous financial offer to help raise Union Terrace Gardens but on this occasion declines said offer on the basis that:- (i) the proposal would seriously damage the city's heritage by way of removing the green lung from the city centre; and (ii) progressing the proposal could have serious financial implications and considerable risk for Aberdeen City Council in the years to come and agrees that no further action is taken in respect of these proposals.

Councillor John Stewart moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Cormie:-
Aberdeen City Council:-

- (1) notes that the report 'Aberdeen City Centre - A Vision for the Future' was submitted to the Council by the then Chief Executive, on behalf of the whole Corporate Management Team;
- (2) condemns the Labour Party and Councillor Cassie both for their unwarranted attack on senior Council officers and for calling a special Council meeting at significant cost for no purpose other than a party political election stunt;
- (3) has full confidence in the impartiality and professionalism of the Corporate Management Team;
- (4) demands that the Labour Group and Councillor Cassie make an immediate, full and public apology to all those who participated in preparing 'Aberdeen City Centre - A Vision for the Future';
- (5) notes the previous decision of Council to agree an international design competition and to take a decision on the future of Union Terrace Gardens based on the outcome of the competition; and
- (6) agrees that should the competition fail to produce a design acceptable to the Council, officers prepare a report for members detailing the costs of maintaining and enhancing the existing gardens.

Councillor Boulton moved as a further amendment, seconded by Councillor Farquharson:-

That the Council:-

- (1) proceed with the design competition only and that a public consultation take place with a registered vote to help inform Councillors of the public's view - the options must include a do nothing option;

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- (2) agree that no lease of Common Good land be allowed until and if a design is selected - strict conditions to be agreed; and
- (3) agree that there should be no financial risk to the Council.

During the course of debate, Councillor Young, in response to Councillor John Stewart, stated that he would take no lecture from an 'in-about-comer' like the Council Leader. Following the intervention of Councillor Dean, and comment by the Chief Executive, Councillor Young apologised unreservedly for his remarks. Councillor McCaig requested that Councillor Young's comments be recorded in the minute and this was agreed.

On a division between the amendment by Councillor John Stewart and the amendment by Councillor Boulton, there voted:-

For the amendment by Councillor John Stewart (20) - Depute Provost Dunbar; and Councillors Corall, Cormack, Cormie, Dean, Donnelly, Fletcher, Kiddie, Leslie, McCaig, McDonald, Malone, May, Noble, Robertson, John Stewart, Kevin Stewart, John West, Wisely and Yuill.

For the amendment by Councillor Boulton (4) - Councillors Boulton, Farquharson, Jaffrey and Milne.

Declined to vote (9) - Lord Provost Peter Stephen; and Councillors Adam, Cassie, Collie, Crockett, Hunter, Ironside, Laing and Young.

The Council then divided between the motion and the amendment by Councillor John Stewart.

On a division, there voted:-

For the motion (8) - Councillors Adam, Cassie, Collie, Crockett, Hunter, Ironside, Laing and Young.

For the amendment by Councillor John Stewart (23) - Lord Provost Peter Stephen; Depute Provost Dunbar; and Councillors Corall, Cormack, Cormie, Dean, Donnelly, Fletcher, Jaffrey, Kiddie, Leslie, McCaig, McDonald, Malone, May, Milne, Noble, Robertson, John Stewart, Kevin Stewart, John West, Wisely and Yuill.

Declined to vote (2) - Councillors Boulton and Farquharson.

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The Council resolved:-

to adopt the amendment by Councillor John Stewart.

- **PETER STEPHEN, Lord Provost.**