

DISPENSATIONS SUB (STANDARDS) COMMITTEE

Monday, 11 November 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Dispensations Sub (Standards) Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 9.30am

Present

Members:

Nigel Challis
Revd Dr Martin Dudley
Alan Graham (Co-opted Member)
Oliver Lodge

Officers:

Lorraine Brook	- Town Clerk's Department
Michael Cogher	- Comptroller and City Solicitor
Edward Wood	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN

In accordance with Standing Order No. 29, the Sub Committee elected a Chairman.

Resolved: - That Revd. Dr. Martin Dudley be elected as Chairman for the meeting of the Dispensations Sub Committee.

3. REQUEST FOR A DISPENSATION

The Sub Committee considered a written request for a dispensation from Mr Gregory Lawrence, a Common Councilman for the Ward of Farringdon Without.

It was noted that the request for a dispensation under Section 33 (2) of the Localism Act 2011 concerned Mr Lawrence's disclosable pecuniary interest as a wholesale meat trader at Smithfield Meat Market (with a premises leased from the City of London) and his position as Chairman of the Smithfield Market Tenants' Association. Mr Lawrence's request to the Sub Committee, to participate in any discussion and vote on matters relating to Smithfield Meat Market, was based on the following grounds:-

- (i) that the dispensation was in the interests of persons living (or in the City's case, living or working) in the authority's area; and/or
- (ii) that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

It was noted that the request had been submitted in July 2013 but, due to the general and non-urgent nature of this request, consideration had been postponed to allow for the creation of the Standards Committee's new Sub

Committee. The Sub Committee did however acknowledge the importance of considering all requests as promptly as possible.

Following confirmation from the Comptroller & City Solicitor regarding the grounds on which a dispensation could be granted, the Sub Committee considered the request. The Sub Committee felt that the request was speculative and hypothetical as Mr Lawrence was not currently a Member of the Markets Committee and there was no way of knowing what business would arise at future meetings of the Court of Common Council (or its Committees and Sub Committees) and in what circumstances a pecuniary interest would therefore arise. Consequently, the request was for a blanket approval which, if granted, would deprive the Sub Committee of the ability to consider the precise circumstances in which the pecuniary interest was engaged and the appropriateness of a dispensation in the future.

It was felt that Mr Lawrence had a significant pecuniary interest as a result of both his position as a meat trader at Smithfield Market and his position as Chairman of the Smithfield Market Tenants' Association. As the request was for a general dispensation the Committee considered whether this was in the interests of those persons living and/or working within the Ward of Farringdon Without. Members concluded that residents/business voters were able to benefit from the support of a number of other Common Councilmen and the Alderman within the Ward, who did not have a similar disclosable interest, and therefore persons living and/or working within the Ward would not be disadvantaged if the general dispensation requested was not granted.

On the basis that the request before Members concerned a blanket dispensation, and in light of the significance of Mr Lawrence's pecuniary interest, the Sub Committee concluded that it was neither in the interest of persons living or working in the authority's area or otherwise appropriate to grant the dispensation. The Sub Committee concluded that a dispensation to speak and/or vote on a particular matter before the Court of Common Council (or any of its Committees and Sub Committees) could however be considered by the Sub Committee in the future with the benefit of knowledge of the particular facts of the case.

Resolved- That the request of Mr Gregory Lawrence for a dispensation under Section 33 (2) of the Localism Act 2011 in relation to his disclosable pecuniary interest (Chairman of the Smithfield Markets Tenants' Association and a wholesale meat trader at Smithfield Market) be refused.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT
There was none.

The meeting closed at 10.06am

Chairman

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