NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT

Minutes of the

COMMISSION ON ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION

Tuesday, August 5, 2014 Roughrider Room, State Capitol Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Ron Carlisle, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Senators Ron Carlisle, John Grabinger, Margaret Sitte; Representatives Lawrence R. Klemin, William E. Kretschmar; Citizen Members Maggie D. Anderson, Leann K. Bertsch, Dan Donlin, Justice Lisa McEvers, Jason T. Olson, Gary Rabe, Thomas L. Trenbeath

Members absent: Representative Marie Strinden; Citizen Members Mark A. Friese, Meredith Huseby Larson, Duane Johnston, Paul D. Laney, Justice Mary Muehlen Maring

Others present: See appendix

Justice McEvers said "response" was mistakenly repeated in the second to the last paragraph on page 3 of the minutes of the April 28, 2014, meeting.

It was moved by Justice McEvers, seconded by Senator Sitte, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the April 28, 2014, meeting be approved as revised.

Chairman Carlisle said the committee will be reviewing several bill drafts and considering possible recommendations for the inclusion of items in the executive budget. He said he intends this to be the last meeting of the commission during the interim.

MANDATORY SENTENCES BILL DRAFT

Representative Klemin said he incorporated into the bill draft many of the proposed revisions suggested at the last meeting. He said the revised bill draft [15.0033.03000] includes within the criminal code a definition of manifest injustice. In addition, he said, the bill draft was revised in Section 4 to provide that the exceptions to mandatory sentences would be in addition to any other exceptions already in law. He said the reference to any substantial reason in subsection 1 of Section 4 was removed. In subsection 2 of Section 4, he said, the word "willfully" was added. Also in subsection 2, he said, the references to physical injury were replaced with bodily injury. With respect to the use of a firearm in subdivision b of subsection 2, he said, the bill draft was revised to include other dangerous weapons. He said the exceptions that were in subdivision c of subsection 2 were removed from the bill draft. He said subsection 3 was revised to require the report to address the total number of departures from mandatory minimum sentences. He said the bill draft also removed subsection 4 of Section 4.

Mr. Trenbeath said the reference to the report of savings should be removed from the caption in Section 4.

Representative Klemin said the reference to "for" on page 3, line 12, should be replaced with "of".

Senator Sitte said if the goal of the commission is to address nonviolent drug offenses, subdivision d of subsection 2 in Section 4 should be removed.

Justice McEvers said she appreciates the idea of providing judges discretion in imposing sentences.

Mr. Trenbeath said this bill draft is a good start in providing judges additional discretion.

It was moved by Representative Kretschmar, seconded by Senator Grabinger, and carried on a roll call vote that the bill draft, as amended, relating to mandatory sentences be approved and recommended to the Legislative Management. Senators Carlisle, Grabinger, and Sitte, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, Donlin, McEvers, Olson, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

ENDANGERMENT OF A CHILD OR VULNERABLE ADULT BILL DRAFT

At the request of Chairman Carlisle, Commission Counsel reviewed a bill draft [15.0205.01000] relating to the endangerment of a child or vulnerable adult. Commission Counsel said the bill draft was prepared at the request of Mr. Friese. He said the bill draft amends provisions relating to the endangerment of a child or a vulnerable adult by revising the definition of a controlled substance to provide that a controlled substance does not include less than one ounce of marijuana. He said the definition of drug paraphernalia is revised to remove its applicability to marijuana paraphernalia. He said the bill draft removes references to exposure of a child or vulnerable adult to a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia.

Ms. Anderson said the Department of Human Services (DHS) is not in support of the removal of exposure as an offense because there may still be impacts when a child or vulnerable adult is exposed to a controlled substance.

Mr. Jonathan Alm, Legal Counsel, Department of Human Services, said the removal of references to exposure would have an impact on the Division of Child and Family Services and will affect the definition of a deprived child. He said DHS would not be able to find a child to be deprived if exposed to drugs under the proposed bill draft. He said the change to the definition of aggravated circumstances in Section 2 of the bill draft would affect the ability of prosecutors to terminate parental rights.

In response to a question from Representative Klemin, Mr. Alm said the bill draft would be less objectionable if the impact of the changes in the bill draft were limited to the criminal statute. However, he said, it would be necessary to include exposure within the definition of deprivation.

Justice McEvers said she has concerns with the proposed change to the definition of a controlled substance.

In response to a question from Representative Klemin, Mr. Alm said in determining child abuse or neglect, DHS likely would not conduct an assessment due to actions involving possession or use of marijuana in other states where that is legal.

Mr. Donlin said exposure to other drugs or paraphernalia such as meth labs is significant. Therefore, he said, he is opposed to removing the references to exposure from these statutes.

TRANSFERS FROM JUVENILE COURT BILL DRAFT

At the request of Chairman Carlisle, Commission Counsel reviewed a bill draft [<u>15.0193.01000</u>] relating to automatic transfers from juvenile court to adult court. He said the bill draft was prepared at the request of Justice Muehlen Maring. He said the bill draft eliminates the automatic transfer of juveniles to adult court for drug offenses.

Justice McEvers said because Justice Muehlen Maring is unable to attend the meeting, she asked her to express her support for the bill draft. She said the bill draft only removes the automatic transfer provisions, but still leaves open the possibility of transfer to adult court. She said the proposal provides discretion to judges and judicial referees to transfer juveniles to adult court only if there is a need for the juvenile to be transferred.

It was moved by Ms. Bertsch, seconded by Justice McEvers, and carried on a roll call vote that the bill draft relating to automatic transfers from juvenile court to adult court be approved and recommended to the Legislative Management. Senators Carlisle, Grabinger, and Sitte, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, Donlin, McEvers, Olson, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF A CHILD BILL DRAFT

At the request of Chairman Carlisle, Commission Counsel distributed a bill draft [15.0210.01000] relating to abuse and neglect of a child. He said the bill draft was one of the bill drafts presented at the last meeting by Ms. Bertsch. He said the bill draft amends the current provision relating to abuse or neglect of a child to separate the offenses so that abuse of a child is covered under the current statute and carries a penalty of a Class C felony unless the victim is under the age of six in which case the offense is a Class B felony. He said the bill draft creates a new provision relating to neglect of a child which is classified as a Class C felony.

Mr. Pat Bohn, Director, Transitional Planning Services, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, said the bill draft would clearly define the difference between abuse and neglect. He said registration as an offender is not required for an individual convicted of neglect of a child and separating the offenses would clear up confusion regarding registration.

In response to a question from Representative Klemin, Mr. Bohn said neglect of a child would be classified as a Class C felony regardless of the age of the child.

North Dakota Legislative Council

It was moved by Representative Klemin, seconded by Justice McEvers, and carried on a voice vote that the bill draft be amended to remove the changes relating to the references to a person and an individual.

In response to a question from Chairman Carlisle, Mr. Aaron Birst, North Dakota Association of Counties, said he does not believe that prosecutors would have concerns with the bill draft.

It was moved by Representative Klemin, seconded by Senator Sitte, and carried on a roll call vote that the bill draft, as amended, relating to abuse and neglect of a child be approved and recommended to the Legislative Management. Senators Carlisle, Grabinger, and Sitte, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, Donlin, McEvers, Olson, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

DRUG PARAPHERNALIA AND INGESTION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE BILL DRAFT

At the request of Chairman Carlisle, Commission Counsel reviewed a bill draft [15.0212.01000] relating to penalties for possession of drug paraphernalia and ingestion of a controlled substance. He said the bill draft was presented by representatives of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation at the last meeting. He said the bill draft removes the requirement that a court impose a period of probation of not less than 18 months for a person who has plead guilty or been found guilty of a felony violation for drug possession and allows a judge to have discretion with respect to the length of the probation within these statutory limits. He said the bill draft reduces the penalty for possession of drug paraphernalia from a Class C felony to a Class A misdemeanor for most drugs and reduces the penalty for possession of drug paraphernalia for marijuana from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class B misdemeanor. He said the bill draft also repeals the statutory provision that makes it a criminal offense to ingest a controlled substance.

Mr. Donlin said the provisions of this bill draft conflict with the bill draft he presented at the last meeting. He said he would like to see the offense of manufacturing drug paraphernalia remain a Class C felony.

Mr. Olson said the penalty for possession of drug paraphernalia should be equal to the penalty for the possession of the drug involved.

Ms. Bertsch said the paraphernalia provisions have resulted in a significant number of nonviolent offenders being incarcerated. In some cases, she said, individuals who have stopped using drugs have been incarcerated because they have not disposed of drug paraphernalia. She said the severe penalties affect resources throughout the criminal justice system and have clogged jails with people incarcerated for paraphernalia offenses. She said the law is a tool for prosecutors and does not necessarily enhance public safety.

In response to a question from Representative Klemin, Ms. Bertsch said removing Section 3 from the bill draft may be an acceptable compromise.

Representative Klemin said if Section 3 and Section 4 were removed from the bill draft, the possession of drug paraphernalia provisions could be addressed separately in the bill draft based upon the proposals submitted by Mr. Donlin at the previous meeting.

Mr. Trenbeath said the Attorney General likely would not be in favor of repealing the ingestion statute.

It was moved by Representative Klemin, seconded by Senator Sitte, and carried on a voice vote that the bill draft relating to drug paraphernalia and ingestion of a controlled substance be amended to remove Sections 2 and 3.

Mr. Bohn said the ingestion law creates a dilemma for probation officers. He said probation officers are faced with the decision to charge an individual on probation when the individual admits to having used a controlled substance even though the individual is not in possession of the controlled substance. He said the ingestion law is enforced differently across the state. If an individual uses a substance that is legal in another state but illegal in this state, he said, the individual likely could be charged with a violation of the ingestion provision.

Mr. Trenbeath said law enforcement and judges have the ability to use discretion in application of the ingestion offense. He said he would prefer removing Section 4 from the bill draft.

In response to a question from Mr. Donlin, Mr. Bohn said probation officers exercise discretion in charging individuals with ingestion offenses and likely could charge many more probationers with the offense.

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Mr. Donlin said there would be resistance from law enforcement officials to repealing the ingestion provision. Although treatment is needed, he said, until additional treatment options are available, some people need to go to jail. He said additional resources are needed for treatment.

In response to a question from Senator Sitte, Ms. Bertsch said South Dakota has repealed its ingestion law as part of its criminal justice reform initiative. She said the trend among other states is to eliminate ingestion laws.

Representative Klemin said South Dakota studied its ingestion law closely before repealing it. He said it may be premature to repeal the ingestion law without further study in this state.

Senator Sitte said providing treatment options is preferable to incarcerating individuals who may have a temporary relapse.

In response to a question from Senator Grabinger, Mr. Donlin said it is difficult to prove possession of a controlled substance if an individual swallows the controlled substance to avoid arrest.

It was moved by Representative Klemin, seconded by Senator Grabinger, and carried on a roll call vote that Section 4 be removed from the bill draft relating to ingestion of a controlled substance. Senators Carlisle and Grabinger, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Donlin, McEvers, Olson, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." Senator Sitte and Citizen Members Anderson and Bertsch voted "nay."

It was moved by Representative Klemin, seconded by Representative Kretschmar, and carried on a roll call vote that the bill draft, as amended, relating to drug paraphernalia be approved and recommended to the Legislative Management. Senators Carlisle, Grabinger, and Sitte, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, Donlin, McEvers, Olson, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

DRUG PARAPHERNALIA PENALTIES BILL DRAFT

At the request of Chairman Carlisle, Commission Counsel distributed a bill draft [<u>15.0211.01000</u>] relating to penalties for the possession of drug paraphernalia. He said the bill draft was presented at the last meeting by Mr. Donlin.

In response to a question from Chairman Carlisle, Mr. Birst said if possession of a particular drug is a Class C felony, possession of the paraphernalia for that drug should be a Class C felony. He said prosecutors may have some concerns with the bill draft.

Mr. Donlin said not all law enforcement officials are in support of changing the penalty for paraphernalia possession. However, he said, the bill draft is a good point of discussion.

It was moved by Senator Grabinger, seconded by Dr. Rabe, and carried on a roll call vote that the bill draft relating to drug paraphernalia penalties be approved and recommended to the Legislative Management. Senators Carlisle, Grabinger, and Sitte, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, Donlin, McEvers, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." Citizen Member Olson voted "nay."

MANDATORY SENTENCES AND DRUG OFFENSES NEAR SCHOOLS BILL DRAFT

At the request of Chairman Carlisle, Commission Counsel reviewed a bill draft [15.0213.01000] relating to controlled substances offenses and aggravating factors in controlled substances offenses. He said the bill draft removes the mandatory imprisonment provisions with respect to the manufacturing, delivery, or possession of controlled substances and changes the penalty for the manufacture, delivery, or possession of a controlled substance within 1,000 feet of a school from an eight-year term of imprisonment to a term of not to exceed eight years if the court determines there is a nexus between the offense and the real property comprising the school.

In response to a question from Senator Sitte, Representative Klemin said the term "nexus" is commonly used by courts. He said the intent of the bill draft appears to be to remove the strict liability offense with respect to an offense within 1,000 feet of a school.

Mr. Trenbeath said the bill draft is a step in the right direction with respect to the treatment of aggravating factors triggering mandatory sentences.

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Commission on Alternatives to Incarceration

Ms. Bertsch said the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation proposed this bill draft at the previous meeting because of the necessity to address the large increase in sentences due to the mandatory sentencing provisions. She said the provisions with respect to the 1,000-foot threshold should be removed and the emphasis should be on whether an individual is dealing drugs to a student, rather than focusing on the property. She said any location in Bismarck is likely within 1,000 feet of a school. Thus, she said, the impact of the 1,000-foot restriction may be to push drug dealing out of town.

In response to a question from Mr. Olson, Mr. Birst said the mandatory sentences are a tool used by prosecutors to obtain guilty pleas. He said prosecutors seldom go to trial with mandatory minimum sentence cases. He said prosecutors would likely be opposed to losing that tool.

Mr. Olson said the reality is that the mandatory minimum sentences are a tool used to fight the trafficking of drugs.

In response to a question from Representative Klemin, Mr. Birst said the 1,000-foot threshold is a bright line. He said changing the provision to require a nexus to the school would likely result in an increase in litigation.

In response to a question from Chairman Carlisle, Mr. Donlin said law enforcement is seeing an explosion of firearms being used in drug trafficking. He said the 1,000-foot threshold may assist in keeping firearms farther from schools.

Ms. Bertsch said the law would be clearer by removing the 1,000-foot threshold. She said 1,000 feet is an arbitrary line, and the law is arbitrarily applied as a stick for prosecutors. If guns near schools are a problem, she said, the gun laws should be addressed.

Mr. Trenbeath said the bill draft is a giant step and it may be best that such a bill draft not be introduced as a Legislative Management bill.

Representative Klemin said the 1,000-foot threshold is easy to understand and there are concerns with drugs being dealt near schools. He said he is not ready to go so far as recommending removing mandatory sentences without more study.

Senator Sitte said three states that have done major reforms for nonviolent drug offenses have seen criminality reduced dramatically. She said the goal of the study of nonviolent drug offenses was to examine giving judges additional discretion. She said the support of the commission to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences would have a significant impact.

Ms. Bertsch said even if the provisions relating to the 1,000-foot threshold were removed from the bill draft, she would like to see further consideration of giving judges additional discretion. She said the bill draft leaves the full penalties in place while shifting the power from prosecutors to elected judges. She said prosecutors are not neutral and objective and the system is not about giving discretion to prosecutors while tying the hands of judges.

Justice McEvers said she used the mandatory sentencing provisions as a tool when she was a prosecutor to try to get people to plead guilty. She said she agrees that judges should have that discretion rather than prosecutors. She said judges can examine the various factors present in determining sentencing.

It was moved by Mr. Trenbeath, seconded by Representative Klemin, and carried on a voice vote that the bill draft relating to mandatory sentences be amended to remove all of the changes in the bill draft after page 2, line 7.

Representative Klemin said eliminating mandatory sentences is a giant step and he is not ready to take that step without further study.

Ms. Bertsch said the state has data on how mandatory sentences are used. She said a significant amount of research shows change is needed and many other states have looked at issues related to mandatory sentences. She said the bill draft is really a baby step and it does not reduce penalties. She said the bill draft gives judges discretion and if policymakers do not like the decisions judges are making, the Legislative Assembly can reconsider mandatory sentences. She said she does not think the state has bad judges and the judges should have the ability to look at all facts and provide individualized sentences.

Representative Klemin said although there may be a large amount of information regarding mandatory sentences, a study by a consultant would provide a good basis for an informed decision.

Senator Sitte said judges have been telling legislators to quit tying their hands and allow them to make determinations regarding appropriate justice.

In response to a question from Mr. Olson, Mr. Bohn said the parole board may review a minimum mandatory sentence. However, he said, there is no guarantee that an offender will receive the benefit of parole. He said on December 31, 2013, there were 36 individuals under the supervision of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation who were serving mandatory sentences. Of those offenders, he said, 30 were male. He said 26 of the 36 individuals were sentenced by a court in one county and 5 of the remaining 10 were from another county. Of the offenders serving a mandatory sentence, he said, 4 were sentenced for an offense involving methamphetamine, 7 were sentenced for an offense related to cocaine, 19 were sentenced for an offense related to opiates, and 10 were sentenced for an offense related to other drugs. He said the average length of a term of imprisonment under a mandatory sentence was approximately 10 years and the average amount of time served was 1,026 days.

Mr. Olson said the parole board is able to act as a check and balance. He said the general public expects that people will serve a sentence and most offenders are not serving the time to which they were sentenced.

Justice McEvers said the check and balance should be provided by the judiciary not the parole board.

It was moved by Senator Sitte, seconded by Ms. Bertsch, and carried on a roll call vote that the bill draft relating to mandatory sentences be amended to reinsert the changes that originally were made in subsections 4 and 5 of the bill draft. Senator Sitte, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, McEvers, and Rabe voted "aye." Senators Carlisle and Grabinger and Citizen Members Donlin, Olson, and Trenbeath voted "nay."

It was moved by Senator Sitte, seconded by Ms. Bertsch, and failed on a roll call vote that the bill draft relating to mandatory sentences, as amended, be approved and recommended to the Legislative Management. Senators Grabinger and Sitte and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, McEvers, and Rabe voted "aye." Senator Carlisle, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Donlin, Olson, and Trenbeath voted "nay."

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM FUNDING

Chairman Carlisle said the committee has previously discussed the possibility of recommending an increase in the amount appropriated for community service supervision grants.

It was moved by Representative Kretschmar and seconded by Mr. Trenbeath that the commission recommend to the Governor that the executive budget include an appropriation of \$750,000 for the next biennium for community service supervision grants.

Ms. Bertsch said community service program funding was part of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation budget until recently. She said community service does not divert an offender from prison. Although some of the community service programs do good things, she said, there are great needs like addiction treatment and mental health treatment programs.

After this discussion, Representative Kretschmar withdrew his motion with the consent of the second.

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAMS

In response to a question from Chairman Carlisle, Ms. Anderson said she distributed a list of DHS programs at an earlier meeting. She said information from shareholder meetings indicated there was a need for residential and crisis beds in a number of areas of the state. She said some jails are serving as a holding place for individuals with mental health and substance abuse issues.

It was moved by Dr. Rabe, seconded by Senator Grabinger, and carried on a roll call vote that the commission recommend to the Governor additional funding be included in the executive budget to provide residential treatment program beds statewide, with an emphasis on additional beds in the western portion of the state. Senators Carlisle, Grabinger, and Sitte, Representative Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, Donlin, McEvers, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

JAIL DIVERSION PROJECT

It was moved by Senator Sitte, seconded by Mr. Trenbeath, and carried on a roll call vote that the commission recommend to the Governor that funds be included in the executive budget to provide resources to replicate the Cass County jail diversion project in other areas of the state. Senators Carlisle, Grabinger, and Sitte, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, Donlin, McEvers, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

JUSTICE REFORM STUDY

It was moved by Senator Sitte, seconded by Justice McEvers, and carried on a roll call vote that the commission recommend that the Governor contact The Pew Charitable Trusts to propose a collaborative effort to implement a justice reform study in the state. Senators Carlisle, Grabinger, and Sitte, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, Donlin, McEvers, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

TREATMENT SERVICES

Senator Grabinger said the commission has heard how important treatment is and how the state is not meeting treatment needs. He said additional funding for treatment services is necessary.

It was moved by Justice McEvers, seconded by Senator Grabinger, and carried on a roll call vote that the commission express to the Governor its support for funding of appropriate treatment services to support the Department of Human Services and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in meeting identified treatment service gaps. Senators Carlisle, Grabinger, and Sitte, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, Donlin, McEvers, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

HOPE PROGRAM

Dr. Rabe said he would like to see an effort to implement a program similar to the HOPE program that was implemented in Hawaii and Washington.

It was moved by Dr. Rabe, seconded by Senator Sitte, and carried on a roll call vote that the commission encourage the judicial branch to examine implementing a pilot program similar to the HOPE program. Senators Carlisle, Grabinger, and Sitte, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, Donlin, McEvers, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

RECIDIVISM REDUCTION

Senator Sitte said an additional indepth study should be done to examine evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism.

It was moved by Senator Sitte, seconded by Ms. Bertsch, and carried on a roll call vote that the commission request the Governor to include funding in the executive budget for a study of evidence-based practices used by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Department of Human Services, and other agencies which are intended to reduce incarceration and recidivism. Senators Carlisle, Grabinger, and Sitte, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Bertsch, Donlin, McEvers, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS

It was moved by Representative Krestchmar, seconded by Mr. Trenbeath, and carried on a roll call vote that the commission express its support for increased funding of community service supervision grants. Senators Carlisle and Grabinger, Representatives Kretschmar and Klemin, and Citizen Members Anderson, Donlin, Rabe, and Trenbeath voted "aye." Senator Sitte and Citizen Members Bertsch and McEvers voted "nay."

It was moved by Senator Grabinger, seconded by Mr. Trenbeath, and carried on a voice vote that the Chairman and the Legislative Council staff be requested to prepare a report and the bill drafts recommended by the commission and to present the report and recommended bill drafts to the Legislative Management.

It was moved by Mr. Trenbeath, seconded by Representative Kretschmar, and carried on a voice vote that the meeting be adjourned.

No further business appearing, Chairman Carlisle adjourned the meeting at 12:55 p.m.

John Bjornson Code Revisor

ATTACH:1