

PUBLIC SAFETY

Tuesday, January 17, 2017 – 6:10 p.m.

Police Training Room – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Gonzalez, Vice Chairman Andreano, Alderman Witte, Alderman Dougherty, Alderman Crawford, Alderman Smith, and Alderman George. Others: Mayor William Aiello; Nicholas DiCerbo, Jr., City Attorney; Fred Saradin, City Auditor; Tom Windus, Director of Public Works; Jeff Rowley, Police Chief; Ed Jennings, Code Enforcement Supervisor, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Gonzalez called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meeting (Tuesday, November 15, 2016)

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2016 meeting was made by Alderman Gonzalez, seconded by Alderman Crawford. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

None

4. New Referrals for Consideration

- a. PL #01-17: (Andreano) To form a taskforce for empowering neighborhoods and encouraging proactive change throughout the City of Olean.

Alderman Andreano began by stating that she began a conversation regarding this with the Council at the end of last year. She doesn't care what the group is called, she simply wants a citizen group through the City to get together to discuss what is going on (crime, etc.) and to discuss what is working and happening in each neighborhood. She stated that a monthly or quarterly meeting of the group would save a police officer from going to each individual Neighborhood Watch meeting throughout the City.

She continued in stating that she would like the group's meetings to be in a structured format with an agenda. She would like to get information out to residents, and be more proactive about issues rather than reactive.

Alderman Gonzalez stated that he feels that this is a good idea. If someone wants to make a difference and get involved in their neighborhood but don't know where to start, this group could provide an excellent resource to point them in the right direction with help and guidance.

Alderman Andreano added that they could possibly bring in speakers with information for the group, such as what is law and what is not, as well as what is a good Code Enforcement call.

Alderman Gonzalez stated that if this is something that helps develop a continuity of neighborhood groups, then it is worth our time. Alderman Crawford stated that you see houses with faded "Neighborhood Watch" signs that don't stand for anything anymore, and the problem people in neighborhoods know that these don't stand for anything. They are no longer a deterrent to crime or nuisances, so we want to show people that these signs mean something again. Alderman Andreano stated that there is a discussion in the works regarding getting new signs.

Alderman Witte stated that when she was on the Council before, the signs did work and people did call the Neighborhood Watch numbers. We need to get residents to take ownership of their neighborhoods again. She thinks that it is a good idea to throw this out there and see how it works. Alderman Crawford added that this is something that we cannot simply do once. We need to get it out there, as the problem is not remedied with a onetime solution. We need to keep this group and their meetings ongoing.

Mayor Aiello stated that, 15-20 years ago, there was a strong community policing, including Civilian Captains on each block. As funding waned and people left, the policing faded away. Unfortunately, a lot of streets are very mobile with people coming and going. He feels that we can get this going, and we have plenty of facilities to hold the meetings in.

He continued in reminding the Council that we will need to keep some things in mind during budget time. There will be some funding required, although minimal, for things such as the cost of signs, potential speaking fees, and an attendant at the Community Building during meetings. He does, though, feel that this is a good idea.

Alderman Gonzalez stated that he feels that everyone seems in favor of the creation of a group. He thinks that we should kick this down to a future meeting for further discussion. Alderman Andreano stated that she will put together a structure for the group and send it out to the Council, so that they can input their ideas in the meantime. She stressed that a key component to making this work is staying on course and following the meeting agenda. Mayor Aiello added that someone will always come with their own agenda and their own pet peeves, and it is important that we do not allow them to get the group's discussion off on a tangent. We want to keep the meetings informational and get information out there for the public to use.

A motion to postpone PL #01-17 to the next Public Safety meeting was made by Alderman Gonzalez, seconded by Alderman George. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

- b. PL #02-17: (Dougherty) To amend the City of Olean Code of Ordinances Section 21-5, Removal of snow and ice from sidewalks.

Alderman Dougherty stated that he has received complaints from business owners that they are unsure as to where to put the snow from their sidewalks, now that the meters are gone. He is unsure if we need a change to the Code, or a clarification.

Mayor Aiello stated that this has not been a problem for as long as he can remember, as business owners always piled their snow up by the meters and along the curb. The issue is now starting only because the meter posts have been removed.

Alderman Gonzalez questioned if there is an issue because people were told they were able to put their snow in the street, and Alderman Smith stated that yes, it is. On West State Street, merchants who were shoveling their sidewalk were threatened with tickets when they pushed their snow in to the road. Mr. Windus stated that he doesn't feel that shovelers are the issue, only larger businesses that plow entire parking lots full of snow into the roadway.

Alderman Smith stated that when there is no subway to put snow into, he feels that the Code should state only so many feet of the sidewalk need to be shoveled (as right now it clarifies that the entire width of the sidewalk needs to be cleared). Alderman Dougherty stated that it seems that there are a lot of different situations to consider.

Alderman Gonzalez asked when the parking spaces are plowed on State and Union Streets, and Mr. Windus replied that they are plowed whenever DPW has a chance to do them. Mayor Aiello stated that, periodically through the winter months, we can work with businesses to let them know when the spaces will be plowed, giving them an opportunity to shovel the snow into the roadway during these specific times.

Mr. DiCerbo stated that he could put together wording to amend the Code to allow businesses in the Commercial district, who have no delineation between the sidewalk and subway, to be required to clear only eight feet of the sidewalk. Mr. Windus agreed with this idea, as well as giving notification to businesses when we will be out clearing the spaces to give them a chance to move excess shoveled snow into the roadway.

A motion to postpone PL #02-17 to the Committee of the Whole Tuesday, January 24, 2017 was made by Alderman Dougherty, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

- c. Discussion – Charges for Business Signage (Code Amendment)

Alderman Andreano stated that we also discussed this briefly at the end of last year. She stated that we are charging business owners for signs on their business every three years, in addition

to the original permit fee for placing the sign on their property. She has received numerous complaints from business owners regarding this. Mr. Jennings stated that they had done this for some time, but as they did not have a Codes Secretary for a period of time, it fell to the wayside until the current secretary got around to billing again.

Alderman Andreano has spoken with Mr. Jennings, and upon review, they feel that we should remove this fee for signs (with the exception of billboards), as well as add Residential Transition and Industrial zones to the areas with fees, as they are currently only in Commercial zones.

Alderman Smith questioned what a billboard is considered in terms of size, and Mr. Jennings stated that he would have to look into it.

Alderman Andreano would like to put together language with Mr. Jennings and Mr. DiCerbo to discuss later with the Council in the form of a PL.

d. Discussion – Speeding on Side Streets

Alderman Andreano stated that she has had issues in her ward, especially on Clark Street and Seneca Avenue, with cars driving at what seems to be excessively high speeds. She knows that the answer is not always STOP signs and patrolling 24/7, so she wants to know what the Council feels that we can do proactively about this situation.

Alderman Witte stated that this has been going on for as long as she can remember. She doesn't feel that STOP signs are the answer, either. Chief Rowley stated that he doesn't feel that using the speed trailer will help, as he feels that the residents would be surprised to see how fast (or slow) the drivers in their neighborhoods are actually going. There is an appearance of speed, when there is not, because of narrow side streets. These issues have always been around, and they still will be long after this Council is gone.

Alderman Andreano stated that she still feels that she would like to see the speed trailer used in these areas. She asked if there were any other ideas. Chief Rowley replied that he would have to look at individual streets and intersections with issues. One isolated incident isn't enough to warrant change. We could try the flashing speed trailer for a few days.

Alderman Crawford stated that the trailer could be a benefit to both drivers as well as residents, as they will be able to see how fast (or slow) people really are going. Alderman Smith stated that he feels that the speed trailer is only a short-term solution.

After time for the Council to consider the issue, this item will be brought up in a future committee meeting.

e. Discussion – Zombie Houses

John Irons of 118 East Henley Street stated that he lives next door to the home at 122 East Henley, which was deeded to the City from Cattaraugus County. He stated that the property is quite an eyesore, as well as multiple other properties on the street. He is just trying to get a feel for what is going on, and he hopes that the City and Council take action on these properties soon.

5. Executive Session

A motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss collective negotiations pursuant to Article Fourteen of the Civil Service Law, as well as the proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property was made by Alderman Gonzalez, seconded by Alderman George. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Executive session began at approximately 7:05 p.m.

A motion to adjourn from Executive Session was made by Alderman Gonzalez., seconded by Alderman George. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Executive session adjourned at approximately 7:50 p.m.

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Gonzalez, seconded by Alderman Smith. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:40 p.m.