

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Tuesday, March 19, 2019 – 6:00 p.m.

Police Training Room – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Alderman Crawford, Alderman Witte, Alderman Andreano, Alderman Gonzalez, Alderman Dougherty, Alderman Smith, and Alderman George. Others: Mayor William Aiello; Nicholas DiCerbo, Jr., City Attorney; Fred Saradin, City Auditor; Bob Ring, Director of Public Works; Bob Bell, Fire Chief; Jeff Rowley, Police Chief, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

### 1. Roll Call

Alderman Crawford called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present.

### 2. Unfinished Business

None

### 3. New Referrals for Consideration

- a. PL #24-19: (Crawford) To establish the City of Olean Sidewalk Rebate Program.

Alderman Crawford presented to the Council a rough draft of a program description, as well as a draft of the application. He explained that about a year ago the Council transferred \$50,000 into a Capital Fund for the purpose of a Revolving Loan Fund for sidewalks. He explained that no one has come to take advantage of this program, so he has been in conversations with Mayor Aiello, Mr. Ring and Mr. DiCerbo to use the funding as one time rehabilitation project funding.

He continued that the program would be for owner occupied properties with sidewalks that require improvements. He explained that they would be a cap on how much the City would reimburse the resident, based on the amount of square feet that are replaced, as well as a cap on the per project rebate. He noted that he would like to leverage \$50,000 to be able to get \$100,000 or more worth of sidewalk improvements done.

Mr. Saradin noted that there is only around \$29,000 left in the Capital Fund for sidewalks, and Alderman Crawford asked where this funding had gone. Mr. Saradin stepped out of the meeting to get the details on the funding.

Alderman Crawford explained that homeowners could apply on a first come, first serve basis, and once the application is received DPW could verify that the sidewalk is a hazard and in need

of replacement. He noted that sidewalks that are replaced for purely aesthetic reasons would not be eligible for the rebate.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that a lot of the worst sidewalk hazards are on rental properties, and Alderman Witte asked why landlords could not be included in this program. Alderman Crawford replied that it is not sure what is expected in terms of how many property owners will apply for the rebates. Mr. DiCerbo added that the rationale is to try to reward owner occupied taxpayers, rather than to subsidize rentals. Alderman Crawford noted that one is a business and one is a home.

Alderman Andreano explained that the program could give priority to owner occupied homes, but still be made available for rentals.

Alderman Witte explained that the City has tried several different things to get sidewalks fixed, but nothing seems to work. She asked what will happen if this doesn't work, and when the City will step in and get things done.

Alderman Smith explained that he gets what the program is trying to do, and it's a great idea, but it is hard to enforce. He explained that he feels that we are punishing the people who live in Olean for ticketing and fining them for tripping hazards on the sidewalks in front of their properties.

Alderman Crawford asked how the new tree program is working, and Mr. Ring replied that there were a lot of people who came forward at first, but that it has since died out.

Alderman Smith explained that he feels that people will show up for this. He feels that we should stick to owner occupied properties because allowing rentals could open up Pandora's Box and other businesses could expect this as well.

Alderman Dougherty explained that he feels that if a landlord comes forward for this program to address a tripping hazard prior to a warning by DPW, then they should be eligible for proactively trying to fix an issue.

Alderman Crawford explained that the rebate could be a percentage of an invoice cost for the replacement, or it could be a price per square foot so that regardless of whether you do the work yourself or hire it out you get the same rebate. The ultimate goal is to have the job done right and up to Code.

Alderman Crawford asked what the cost of the rebate was for the model City that the draft policy was based off of (Utica), and Mr. DiCerbo replied that it is between \$4 and \$6, depending on the area of the City. Alderman Crawford asked how large one sidewalk block is, and Alderman Dougherty replied that it is 16 square feet. Mr. Ring noted that the City's contracted

price per square foot is \$16, and that the sidewalk thickness is 4 inches (8 inches at the driveway). Mr. Ring noted that there is a \$350 minimum for concrete, and that the price per square foot could be lower if more than two blocks are replaced.

Alderman Crawford explained that he will follow up with Mr. Saradin on the funding questions.

A motion to postpone PL #24-19 to the next Committee of the Whole meeting was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Smith. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

#### 4. Approval of Committee Reports

None

#### 5. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Dougherty. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:15 p.m.