

PUBLIC SAFETY

Tuesday, July 18, 2017 – 6:25 p.m.

Police Training Room – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Gonzalez (via teleconference), Vice Chairman Andreano, Alderman Witte, Alderman Dougherty, Alderman Smith, and Alderman George. Others: Mayor William Aiello; Bob Bell, Fire Chief; Jeff Rowley, Police Chief; Ed Jennings, Code Enforcement Supervisor, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Andreano called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present except for Alderman Crawford, who was excused, and Alderman Gonzalez, who joined the meeting via teleconference.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meeting (Tuesday, June 20, 2017)

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2017 meeting was made by Alderman Andreano, seconded by Alderman Smith. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

- a. PL #25-17: (Dougherty) To amend and replace the City of Olean Code of Ordinances Chapter 12 in its entirety with the following: Chapter 12, Property Maintenance and Residential Occupancy Code: Article I, Property Maintenance Code; Article II, Residential Occupancy Certificates; and Article III, Rental Dwelling Registration, Inspection and Occupancy permits.

Alderman Dougherty stated that the next step in this process is to move forward and hammer out the details. If we can come to an agreement on the frequency and price of inspections, the City Attorney can draft the legislation to be fine tuned at the next meeting.

Alderman Gonzalez stated that he has been thinking about this, and he feels that the easiest, fairest way is to charge \$50 per rental unit and to do the inspection every three years. When you pass, you receive a Certificate of Occupancy that is good for three years. When that time is up, you need to get another inspection to get a new certificate. Alderman Dougherty stated that the certificate would still be subject to revocation if complaints find issues. Alderman Gonzalez agreed that there would be conditions on the Certificate of Occupancy.

After some pushback on the \$50 per unit fees, Alderman George stated that we are simply trying to raise the minimum standard of living.

Alderman Gonzalez questioned how we ensure that the “bad” landlords are bringing their units to a minimum standard without discriminating against them, and Alderman Andreano replied that we use the raking system she proposed. She stated that she is also against putting something in line that we do not have the staff for. Alderman Dougherty stated that he doesn’t understand how the rankings work because if you don’t get a 100% on the inspection, you do not get the Certificate of Occupancy.

Alderman George questioned how we pull this off from a staff perspective. There was some discussion regarding filling positions in the Code Enforcement office. Alderman Gonzalez stated that the fees for inspections will eventually cover the cost of additional staff.

Alderman Witte stated that if we do the first year inspections for free, as was previously discussed, then we are a year behind on funding. We should start fees from day one.

Alderman Smith stated that he has received many comments on this legislation. Every person that has disagreed with it, that has spoken with him, has been a landlord. Tenants or homeowners that live next to blighted rental properties agree with the legislation and ask that he stick to his guns on this one. He stated that the law that we currently have is broken. Fifty dollars per rental unit equates to about \$16 a year per rental unit for the inspections. He stated that if this sinks a landlord’s financial plan, then they are in the wrong business. If landlords have their units up to minimum standards, then it will be an easy process for them.

Mayor Aiello stated that, a few meetings ago, there was discussion regarding attacking blight in the City. He doesn’t feel that good landlords have an issue with this. We have to have a mechanism to clean up blight in the City, and this is one way to do it.

Alderman Smith stated that he wishes that we didn’t have this issue, but we do, and it is a large issue.

Alderman Andreano questioned how we would enforce this legislation if we pass it. Alderman Gonzalez stated that is part of the discussion that we need to continue having.

Mayor Aiello stated that there is money in the budget for a part time position to help, and firefighters can be trained to do the inspections. There is a plan in the works.

Alderman Witte questioned if the firefighters were able to step in to do this or if there is training required. Chief Bell stated that they have to be trained. Alderman Witte questioned if it is realistic to think that this can be done, and Chief Bell replied that we can certainly try.

Alderman Andreano stated that she wants to make sure that we continue to take care of other issues in neighborhoods that Codes handles. She doesn’t want other issues and complaints to fall to the wayside for these inspections.

Mayor Aiello stated that he feels that if we do these inspections, not only will we potentially reduce blight, we will be proactively taking care of some of the issues that Codes deals with.

Alderman George questioned if there is a way to figure out how much the inspection costs the City in terms of manpower. Alderman Smith added that although he is alright with the \$50 per inspection, he wonders if this will cover the cost and if this is feasible. The Mayor stated that he will work with Code Enforcement and the City Auditor to get this information to the Aldermen.

Alderman Witte stated that she feels that it is important to have a public comment opportunity for this prior to a vote in order to allow the public's opinions to be heard.

A motion to postpone PL #25-17 to the next Public Safety committee meeting was made by Alderman Dougherty, seconded by Alderman Smith. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

4. New Referrals for Consideration

Alderman Andreano stated that she will be having a neighborhood task force meeting in August. She asked those who have names for members that have not been submitted to Mayor Aiello to get them turned in.

5. Approval of Committee Reports

None

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman George, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:55 p.m.