

SPECIAL ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 7, 2023
City Hall West
131 North Main Street, Second Floor Bristol, CT

ATTENDEES: Susan Tyler, Cheryl Thibeault, Sebastian Panioto

ABSENT: - - -

STAFF PRESENT: Thomas Conlin, Assistant Corporation Counsel
Noelle Bates, Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order

The Ordinance Committee was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairwoman Tyler. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Minutes

a. January 3, 2023

Councilwoman Thibeault made a motion to approve the minutes of January 3, 2023, seconded by Councilman Panioto. All present voted in favor – Motion passed.

3. Public Participation

Lindsey Rivers, Department of Public Works stated that she misspoke at the last meeting about the amount of stores that do not have a compliance plan. There are two stores that are not in compliance and they are Dollar Tree and Family Dollar. She is going to try and reach out to their headquarters.

4. Old Business

a. Air Quality Issues

Chairwoman Tyler stated that she had no updates from Covanta. Councilwoman Thibeault stated that we probably won't hear anything until the Hartford Plant closes.

Councilwoman Tyler asked recording secretary, Noelle Bates to post the Stack Test Report on the City's website.

No action taken.

b. Noise Ordinance

Councilwoman Tyler stated that they are working on cleaning up the antiquated language of the Noise Ordinance. They discussed the church bells and the noise level as they have in previous meetings. Councilwoman Tyler would like the Ordinance to mirror the State Statutes. A meeting is being scheduled with the contractor that fixed the bells to see if there is a solution. Once we meet with them, then the Committee can make a decision on Prospect United Methodist Church.

No action taken.

c. Farmer's Market Section 17-22

Attorney Conlin suggested taking out subsections A and B as it is 40 years old and doesn't reflect the intended purpose of the Ordinance. It was in there to protect the farmers from local markets. He suggested leaving in subsection c as it is statutory relating to veterans.

Councilwoman Thibeault made a motion to approve the suggested changes and to send it to the City Council to set it for a public hearing. All present voted in favor – Motion passed.

d. Cannabis usage in public places

Councilwoman Thibeault suggested tabling this until the State of Connecticut can come up with a new bill so we don't have to make additional changes later on. She also stated that there is a meeting next week with the Housing Authority because right now cannabis is banned federally but not locally. Councilwoman Tyler stated that she and Attorney Conlin had a meeting and it was suggested to contact the State's Attorney for direction on the draft ordinance.

No action taken.

e. Shopping Cart Section 21-21.10

Attorney Conlin stated that he drafted some language and simply took out the numeric designation of "10" shopping carts.

Councilwoman Thibeault made a motion to approve the language change and to refer to City Council to set it for a public hearing. All present voted in favor – Motion passed.

f. Removal of Elected and Appointed Officials

Attorney Conlin said he pulled the actual language from the last election and drafted new language from 3-4 communities he researched. He asked the committee to review the language provided at the last meeting.

Councilwoman Tyler would like a specific definition in place of work place harassment. She also wanted to know who determines a finding and what authority they have.

No action taken.

g. Peddler's Fees – Report from Public Hearing Section 17-34

Attorney Conlin stated that a public hearing was conducted to change the fee structure. Now it is in line with the State statute. A motion to adopt was submitted to the City Council.

No action taken.

5. New Business

a. Fair Rent Task Force report and recommendations

Attorney Conlin stated that the City formed the Fair Rent Task Force as it is mandated by the State. The Task Force had a few meetings and concluded its task and submitted a report to the City Council in January. It is ready to be adopted. He suggested tabling this item to next month when Attorney Welch would be in attendance to answer any questions.

Councilwoman Tyler stated that the Fair Rent Task Force, by statute, is for a population of 25k or more. There is a bill on the table to reduce that number to 10k or more. She stated that their authority is very powerful. They can tell a landlord that they can't raise a tenant's rent and that they can conduct inspections of the rental unit. It was suggested that in order to be on the Task Force, members should 1) have been a landlord for a least one year. 2) a landlord must own at least 2 units, or 3) if a landlord only has one unit, it must have been owned for more than 5 years.

The Task Force determined it should consist of 7 members with 3 alternates. 2 members must be landlords and 2 members must be tenants. 1 alternate should be a landlord and 1 alternate must be a tenant.

The Committee had discussion regarding training for members, adding a mediation clause and suggested that someone from social services serve on the task force. It was also suggested that a budget be put in place so that the City can hire a company to do inspections as the City doesn't have the manpower to conduct them. And lastly, the Bristol Housing Authority needs to be involved.

No action taken.

b. Fats, Oils and Grease Section 22-77 et. seq. review

Attorney Conlin stated that the Water and Sewer Department is reconsidering redrafting this Ordinance. They have concerns regarding enforcement and fines and feel that there needs to be an expansion on penalties.

6. Committee member comments

None.

7. Adjournment

Councilwoman Thibeault made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 pm. All present voted in favor – Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Noelle Bates
Recording Secretary