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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Brian Candela at bcandela@norwalkct.org to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

**CITY OF NORWALK
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 20, 2021
BY VIDEOCONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Lisa Shanahan, Chair; David Heuvelman; Dominique Johnson;
Thomas Keegan; Thomas Livingston; Kadeem Roberts

STAFF: Brian Candela, Corporation Counsel; Broderick Sawyer, Fire
Marshall; Margaret Suib, Fair Housing Officer

Ms. Shanahan called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

Discuss and Vote on Chapter 7, General Provisions:
Section 7-6 – Definitions – Gender

Public hearing comments are not verbatim and represent a summarization of statements unless otherwise noted.

Ms. Diane Lauricella said she was in favor of codifying the definition relative to gender. She thanked Ms. Johnson and everyone who made it happen. She encouraged everyone to think outside of the box and said that she is interested in environmental management, health and gender equality. She said she praised this Committee and hoped that they would approve the gender-neutral language and that the work will be reflected on how everyone treats each other every day.

Ms. Lauricella said there is work to be done.

Ms. Shanahan clarified Ms. Lauricella's comment and said that this is an Ordinance change and is not a charter change.

No other members of the public wished to speak this evening.

PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION:

Mr. Keegan thanked Ms. Johnson on behalf of the Republican party. He noted that she is a strong advocate and worked very hard on this.

Ms. Shanahan thanked Ms. Johnson and expressed her appreciation for her hard work.

Mr. Livingston thanked Ms. Johnson and said this is an elegant solution that works really well.

Ms. Shanahan said that the other alternative would have been to revise each of the Ordinances in the Code.

**** MS. JOHNSON MOVED TO APPROVE CHAPTER 7, GENERAL PROVISIONS:
SECTION 7-6 – DEFINITIONS – GENDER**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. HEUVELMAN; MS. JOHNSON; MR. KEEGAN; MR. LIVINGSTON; MR. ROBERTS; MS. SHANAHAN)**

This item will be forwarded to the Common Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public who wished to comment this evening.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

March 16, 2021 – regular meeting

Mr. Candela made corrections to the minutes as requested by the Committee members.

**** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

OLD BUSINESS

Discuss and Vote on Chapter 59A Housing: Equal Opportunity

Section 59A-1
Section 59A-2

Ms. Johnson thanked Ms. Suib for attending this evening's Ordinance Committee meeting. She said that Ms. Suib was prepared to explain the proposed changes to the draft.

Mr. Candela shared his screen showing Sections 59A-1 and 59A-2. The Committee members made recommendations on the language with input from Ms. Suib.

Mr. Heuvelman said that at the last meeting, a discussion took place with Ms. Keegan regarding Romantic Orientation. Ms. Shanahan said that at this time, she is reluctant to move forward with that language because there is no legal definition of Romantic Orientation. Ms. Suib said it is safe to keep the definition as Sexual Orientation to be comprehensive.

Discuss and Vote on Chapter 60 Human Relations Commission

Section 60-1
Section 60-2

Mr. Livingston suggested adding the relevant statutes after 46-A – 64-C. Mr. Candela said that the Corporation Counsel's office has not had an opportunity to look at the issues. There needs to be more research and follow up with Ms. Johnson and Ms. Suib. Ms. Suib proposed adding the citation to the relevant statute.

Following a discussion, the Committee members decided to wait for pending revisions before sending this item to the next Common Council meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss Consumer Fireworks Dales Permit Process

Mr. Sawyer explained that this issue was initiated by a resident. A local store sold fireworks to this resident's 14 year old son. He said there are talks that the state of Connecticut legalizing the sale of larger fireworks.

Mr. Sawyer explained his request and said that people have been driving to Norwalk from down south and buying both legal and illegal fireworks and selling them to the small local stores. His proposal is to inspect and to charge a fee to anyone who sells consumer fireworks in the City of Norwalk.

Mr. Candela shared the Ordinance relative to fireworks and firecrackers. He added that he needs to look at the general statute.

Mr. Keegan commented that around 2000, the State of Connecticut changed the definition of fireworks and differentiated what are considered fireworks and sparklers. What you see at Walmart are defined as sparklers. The possession of other types of fireworks is a crime – they are contraband. He said he was not sure what Mr. Sawyer was trying to accomplish with requiring a permit.

Mr. Candela reviewed the Town of Stratford's Fireworks Ordinance and suggested looking at the legislative articles. He also suggested looking at how Stratford handles fireworks. This would be a way to figure out a permit process. Mr. Livingston said he believes that Norwalk's statute is out of date. Ms. Shanahan asked Mr. Sawyer if imposing fines would be helpful with enforcement. Mr. Heuvelman said the sparklers and fountains seem to be allowed by the State. Mr. Candela said the City can not enforce anything that is contrary to State law. He said they need to be sure Norwalk's Ordinance mirrors State of Connecticut law. He added that he wants to make policing and monitoring this as easy as possible for the Fire Department. Ms. Shanahan noted that she and Mr. Livingston received a lot of complaints about fireworks last year.

Mr. Heuvelman asked about the next step with private citizens who travel down south and purchase illegal fireworks and return and sell them. Mr. Keegan reiterated that those kinds of fireworks are contraband and illegal to possess. Mr. Livingston said they need to revisit 38-7.

Mr. Candela said they need to update the Statute to provide a permitting process for those who want to sell fireworks legally. Mr. Roberts said it would make sense to stop the supplier.

Mr. Candela asked Mr. Sawyer if he envisioned the permitting process to be on an annual basis. Mr. Sawyer said that annually would be the best bet. He added that people would be given information on the proper storage of fireworks. Mr. Candela asked if there would be a liability if someone was storing fireworks illegally and their store burned.

Mr. Sawyer said there are easily 1,000 stores selling fireworks and there would be a liability if they were not inspected.

Mr. Candela said he wants to look at the State Statute regarding fireworks. At least with something in place, they will be able to educate people about fireworks.

Ms. Shanahan asked about next steps. Mr. Candela said they need to look at the State Statute, legislative research and Ordinances in other cities. He added that it will take several sessions to get this done. Mr. Candela will forward any information he finds to the Committee members.

DISCUSSION ITEM:

There was no further discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. ROBERTS MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services