

**CITY OF NORWALK
HEALTH, WELFARE &
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 22, 2009**

ATTENDANCE: Michael Geake, Chair; Laurel Lindstrom; Richard McQuaid

STAFF: Tim Callahan, Health Director; Darlene Young, Assistant City Clerk

OTHERS: Diane Cece; Diane Lauricella; Nanette Vallas, Ballet Etudes; Deputy Chief Thomas Kulhawk

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Geake opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. He noted that a quorum was not present, therefore he would use the prerogative of the Chair to forward items to the full Council.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 24, 2009

Due to a lack of a quorum, no action could be taken. Ms. Lindstrom noted that the minutes of July 23rd have not been approved yet. They will be approved along with the minutes of September 24

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Diane Lauricella, Marlboro Road commented on the minutes of September 24. She said that on page 1, Pratt Street, should be Platt Street. She added that the minutes stated that she complained, and she said that she does not complain; rather she is always attempting to inform. Ms. Lauricella said that the word complain should be stricken from the record because it was an interpretation by the secretary.

Ms. Lauricella said that things have been done at the Platt Street property; what was left out of the minutes was the section of the City Code that allows this Committee to call witnesses if they so choose. She asked for that to be added to the minutes. Ms. Lauricella said that at that meeting, she said that the Health Director has the legal ability to cause an investigation.

Ms. Lauricella said that she attended a conference at the DEP and that some people believe that the clean up method that was used is insufficient. She said that the public has the right to know and that the League of Women Voters is all about having a dialogue.

Ms. Lauricella said that Ms. Lindstrom requested that 23 Platt Street be put on the agenda, but it was not. She requested that the Committee suspend the rules to discuss when they plan to discuss this item.

Ms. Lauricella said that it seems that when the Corporation Counsel speaks, the Common Council feels that it is the word of God. It is only an opinion and she said that the Committee can get a second opinion. Ms. Lauricella said that she never asked this Committee to do drilling and testing. She said that the DEP has the final word on what is clean on this site, but they are begging the City to assist them because they are understaffed.

Ms. Lauricella said that there may be problems with the condos that were built above the landfill and that she thinks that this Committee would want to know if the residents in the condos have an imminent health issue.

Ms. Lauricella said that she hoped the Committee would suspend the rules to discuss an action plan.

Ms. Diane Cece, Olmstead Place asked that the minutes of September 24th reflect that the correct spelling of her last name and her correct address. She said that at the meeting of September 24th, she opened her comments by complementing the Committee and Ms. Young on the revised agenda.

Ms. Cece said that she believes there is no program or plan to address the swine flu, which is hitting a lot of people. She said that she wants to know what the City's plan is. Ms. Cece said that when she spoke with the Health Director about plans to close schools, he said that he had a discussion with the interim school superintendent, and they do not want to close schools. Ms. Cece said that schools are a breeding ground and the H1N1 is deadly to young people.

Ms. Cece said that she hoped there would be some discussion about item Via. She said that crime may not be reflected in the Police records. She asked if the statistics were being sanitized, thereby distorting them.

Ms. Cece said that she agreed with Ms. Lauricella and she expected Platt Street to be on the agenda. Mr. Geake said that it was his error that it was not on this evening's agenda.

VI. UPDATE/DISCUSSION

The rules were suspended to move the following item up on the agenda.

A. 94 Wall Street - Proposed Package Store

Ms. Nanette Vallas, Director of the Ballet Etudes said that she was here to protest the opening of a liquor store on Wall Street. She said that she did not think that the population in that area would benefit from a liquor store. She said that she has 300 students and My Three Sons has a number of kids.

Mr. Geake said that he went to the School on Saturday to see the lay out. The back door was locked and when he knocked, a young girl let him in, not knowing who he was. Ms. Vallas said that there was a discussion at the School about that. She explained that the dancers open the door for each other. She said that they are a stone's throw from the bus depot and OTB and there is a lot of crime back there.

Ms. Vallas said that this is not a personal affront to the store owner; his only retort to her was that if they don't buy from him, they will buy from someone else.

Mr. Geake said that the liquor store owner has been issued a temporary permit during the application process. Ms. Vallas asked how the law regarding distances could have been changed without citizens having the right to speak on it. Mr. McQuaid explained that the law was not changed by the City of Norwalk; it is a state law. They do not have to announce when a liquor store is moving into an area. He suggested to Ms. Vallas that she let her attorney handle this matter.

Ms. Vallas asked what happens now. Mr. Geake said that the Deputy Chief was here tonight so that he could lay out the situation to the Committee.

Ms. Lindstrom said that through the Neighborhood Association, they keep track of new and renewed liquor permits and that Ms. Cece was an expert on this.

The Deputy Chief provided Ms. Vallas with a Police report for the area; he noted that the liquor permit process is not controlled by the City of Norwalk.

Mr. Geake said that he had hoped to get a sense of the Committee so that he could write a letter from the Committee objecting to the liquor store, but is not comfortable doing that without a quorum.

Mr. Geake asked the Deputy Chief if the Police have a concern. He said that he could not speak for the Chief, but having kids coming and going, would be a concern.

Ms. Cece said that this is a situation where landlords are looking to rent to a successful tenant; this would be a landlord issue. She said that the provisional license period is a good thing.

Mr. McQuaid told Ms. Vallas that he and other Councilmembers would write letters in support of her.

Ms. Lauricella suggested that Ms. Vallas speak before the Planning Commission. She said that he would have been given a provisional license if the City had been on the ball; it takes political will and internal dialogue. She said that Planning and Zoning along with Redevelopment should be able to find another location for the liquor store.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Police Department

The Deputy Chief explained the items. He said that they had three bids and went with the lowest bidder.

Mr. Geake said that he would move the following items on his discretion.

1a. Authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute a purchase order, on behalf of the Norwalk Police Department, to TMDE Calibration Labs, Inc of Richmond, Maine, the low bidder, for the purchase and installation of (2) two Genesis II Select Dual Ka Band Radars for a total amount not to exceed \$4,000. Account # 35309C 5731.

1b. Authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute a purchase order, on behalf of the Norwalk Police Department, to TMDE Calibration Labs, Inc of Richmond, Maine, the low bidder, for the purchase and installation of (2) two Genesis II Select Dual Ka Band Radars for a total amount not to exceed \$4,000. Account # 35309C 5764.

1c. Authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute a purchase order, on behalf of the Norwalk Police Department, to TMDE Calibration Labs, Inc of Richmond Maine, the low bidder, for the purchase and installation of (2) two Mirror Displays for Genesis II radar units for a total amount not to exceed \$1,700. Account # 35309C 5731.

1d. Authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute a purchase order, on behalf of the

Norwalk Police Department, to Advance Emergency Products, for the purchase of (1)one TruSpeed Laser Radar, under State Contract # OOPSXOO64 for a total amount not to exceed \$2,000. Account # 35309C 5764.

VI. UPDATE/DISCUSSION (continued)

B. Police Dept. - Crime at South Norwalk Train Station

Mr. Geake said that he wanted the facts on how crime was reported at the South Norwalk Train Station. The Deputy Chief said that the Police respond to almost anything that occurs there. If something happens on the train, they standby and control the situation until Metro North Police arrive and take the case. They have offices in New Haven, Bridgeport and Stamford. They travel up and down the corridor constantly.

He said that in general, there is little activity. About a month ago, there were a few car burglaries. In each instance, the owner left equipment in the car. He said that if the Norwalk Police respond, their system reports it. If there is a murder on the platform or on the train, it would be under the jurisdiction of Metro North.

Mr. Geake asked if there is a problem with trains later in the evening. The Deputy Chief said that there were very little problems then. The MTA and TSA target various stations randomly.

Mr. Geake said that he heard there are difficulties between the MTA and the Norwalk Police communicating through their radios. The Deputy Chief said that their radios do not communicate. Mr. Geake asked if they need equipment to allow both to communicate. The Deputy Chief said that they get along well with Metro North police and have not experienced any problems with them. During a disaster a radio frequency can be activated to allow communications, but it is not used on a day to day basis.

Mr. Geake said that he heard that accidents on the train are not being reported. The Deputy Chief explained that when trucks run into Metro North railroad bridges, standard protocol is to call the Metro North Police and they have an inspector come out. Mr. Geake asked if a lot of truck hit the rail road bridges. The Deputy Chief said that it happens mostly at Strawberry Hill Avenue.

V. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

C. Health Department

Mr. Geake said that he would move the following items on his discretion.

1a Authorize the Mayor, Richard Moccia, to execute any and all documents necessary to apply for and accept funds from the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health for a Public Health Emergency Response H1N1 program for the period July 31, 2009 to June 30, 2010 in the amount of \$44,253.

1b. Authorize the Mayor, Richard Moccia, to execute any and all agreements, documents, instruments or amendments as may be necessary to implement a Public Health Emergency Response H1N1 program for the period July 31, 2009 to June 30, 2010.

Mr. Callahan explained that the State Health Department is providing funding to all mass dispensing areas.

Mr. McQuaid asked about the policy of the Board of Education about notification about possible cases of H1N1. Mr. Callahan said that the seasonal flu does not kick in until February or March. If someone presents with flu symptoms now, it would be the H1N1. The schools are going to monitor attendance and absences. If they see a spike, they will notify the Health Department. If they reach a point, where they cannot function, such as not enough staff or a large number of students are out, then they will close the school.

Ms. Lindstrom asked if protocols have been established or is that by the Board of Health. Mr. Callahan explained how the H1N1 vaccine would be allocated. He said that each Wednesday, the state issues their request to the providers and based on the number of doses requested, the State makes the decision about how many vaccines go to how many providers.

Mr. Callahan said that pregnant women and children are the biggest challenge to vaccinate. It is believed that it is best to administer the vaccine at the doctor's office. He added that the call volume requesting the vaccine is up, but there is not enough vaccine available.

Mr. Callahan said that the demand for the seasonal flu vaccine is also very high. He said that seniors are asking for the H1N1 vaccine, but they are not in the risk group. This is a new virus and young people have no immunity to it. Older people built up an immunity to the Swine flu in the 1970's. Mr. Callahan said that the plan is subject to change, because the situation is changing.

Mr. Geake asked Mr. Callahan about the severity of the H1N1. Mr. Callahan said that he did not know. He said that the interest in the vaccine is very high; once they get a supply, they plan to run flu clinics.

Ms. Lauricella asked Mr. Callahan if they plan to use the media for a city outreach for prevention. She also asked Mr. Callahan if he felt there should be hand sanitizer dispensers in public buildings. Mr. Callahan said that every contact with the press stresses prevention. The State Health Department is rolling out TV and radio spots talking about prevention. He said that hand sanitizers work ok. He said that at the Health Department, they encourage people to wash their hands; they chose not to put hand sanitizers in the Health Department.

Ms. Lauricella suggested marketing hand washing. Ms. Cece said that she agreed with Ms. Lauricella. She said that she has not seen an emergency task force. She said that when the outbreak hits, she feels that it will be worse than expected. Ms. Cece said that she would like to see a cohesive plan in place; one that is communicated and informs people.

Mr. Geake suspended the rules to add the following discussion item to the agenda.

PLATT STREET

Mr. Callahan said that there was nothing to report; this is a DEP matter. He said that he is following the opinion of the Corporation Counsel.

Ms. Lauricella said that in due respect to all entities, the Common Council has to show the will to check. She said that she did not suggest that the City do the actual testing. She said that her suggestion was to have an expert advise the Committee and flag anything that was problematic.

Ms. Lauricella said that there are plenty of LEPs that the City has used in the past, but if there is no political will, it will not happen.

Ms. Lauricella said that Mr. Maslan is incorrect; it is not clear what he was asked. She said that she would love one of the Committee members or the Chair to get in touch with her to discuss this. To have the Health Department say that nothing is happening is incorrect. She said that she would like to know that someone will keep their hand on the pulse. There are going to be interveners on this soon.

Ms. Lauricella implored the Committee to get in touch with her. She said that she has been to numerous meetings on behalf of the neighbors. No one except for Ms. Lindstrom from this Committee contacted her. She said that this is an important Committee that she had a lot of respect for, but she has gotten an anemic response.

Mr. McQuaid said that he disagreed that it was anemic. He said that there was a lot of work done. He said that as Council members they cannot micro manage the way she wants. Ms. Lauricella said that the Health Department Director's actions have been anemic.

Ms. Lindstrom said that when this came up in 2008, the Committee moved to put aside \$5,000. She asked if there were other communications that ended up being communicated to anyone causing the legal opinion from the Corporation Counsel. Mr. Geake said that the fundamental issue is that they were denied the funding.

Mr. Callahan said that in reading the statute, Mr. Maslan agreed that the local Health Department has no stand in the matter.

Mr. McQuaid said that the opinion is that they can't spend the money and that the Committee does not have a stand on the matter. Ms. Lindstrom said that she believes that Mr. Maslan misinterpreted what the question was for. She said that the item was taken off of the Council agenda due to Mr. Maslan's opinion. Mr. McQuaid said that the need to review the opinion. Ms. Lindstrom said that the item was pulled.

Ms. Lauricella asked Mr. Geake to ask Mr. Callahan what question was asked of Mr. Maslan, in writing. Mr. Callahan said that it was a telephone call.

Mr. Geake told Ms. Lauricella that she could criticize all she wanted, but it did not happen. Ms. Lauricella said that it was a shame that it is not the end of the terms.

Mr. Geake explained to Ms. Lauricella that the City was \$4 million in the hole. Consultants are not going to work for free. He asked her where she thought the money was going to come from. Mr. Lindstrom said that Ms. Lauricella believes that it would be less than \$5,000 to review the documents. Mr. Geake said that they would then have to make cuts.

Mr. McQuaid thanked Mr. Geake for chairing the Committee. He said that there has been more information given. He also thanked him for how he handled chairing the Committee.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and Mr. Geake closed the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services