

Ordinance Meeting – January 17, 2017 @ 4:30 p.m.

Members in attendance: Cheryl Lounsbury – Chairman, Anthony D’Angelo – Co – Chairman, Susan Locks – P & Z, Zaya Oshana, Bd. of Ed., Chris Palmieri – Town Council, Deputy Chief Wm. Palmieri – P.D. Patricia Queen – Bd. of Ed. Victoria Triano – Town Council.

Absent: Jennifer Clock, P & Z

Chairman Lounsbury Opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Cheryl Lounsbury stated that Jennifer Clock could not be on the committee do to personal reasons and the will ask James Morelli from P & Z to be on the committee.

Cheryl started off the meeting with conversation about Excessive Police calls. She said she met with Deputy Chief Palmieri. Thanked the residence for bringing this to our attention. Department calls have gone down substantially. I don’t believe we can inforce an ordinance to limit the calls in to the PD.

Atty. Futtner passed out the Office of the General Counsel Guidance on Fair Housing Act Standards so we can all read and be informed. Makes job impossible because of violation of the Housing Ordinance. Fines could range from \$55,000 up to \$100,000. There would be liability from 911 calls if we put one into effect.

Tony D’Angelo asked if there were any other towns that have ordinances for this matter.

Deputy Chief Wm. Palmieri stated that New Britain does, but does not inforce it and Manchester also has tried.

Victoria Triano asked Atty. Futtner if the existence of a Group Home comes under the Fair Housing Act?

Atty. Futtner explained that State and Federal Regulations prohibit us from making ordinances because they are a protected Group.

Cheryl stated because of who is living in the Group Home on Birchcrest Drive that they are protected. If we come up with an ordinance it would have to be for the whole entire population of Southington not just a select few. What does the Police Dept. feel about the progress that has been made?

Deputy Palmieri: We are hoping that we are going to maintain progress in a positive direction but we don’t know what the future holds. Bridge made changes that started helping. Residence in the area and the Group Home are now having meetings.

Zaya Oshana stated that the numbers keep going up and down. Is there a reason why? And will they go down?

Deputy Chief Palmeiri: Stated they are starting to look at 2017 compared to 2018. So many variables in the numbers. We are looking at all our data received during this time and comparing.

Patricia Queen: The ongoing dialog with the Group Home, Police Dept. and the residence is very important and is going in the right direction. Can we request more supervision if needed in this area?

Deputy Palmieri said they are being more consistent in screening calls and accumulating more data. The monthly meeting are a positive step. Want to start Emailing the residence and let them know what is happening – such as a missing person email to get communication to the residence. The next residence meeting is tomorrow night January 18, 2018.

Victoria Traino stated that State Senator Joe Markley will be in attendance. She is hoping they could come up with a bill to legislate group homes.

Zaya Oshana said the more information we can give him the better.

Victoria Tianao: Maybe we can get something on the State level. It's our responsibility to the neighbors and the residence.

Cheryl Lounsbury: In summary we are making progress but no guarantees. I think we should give this 6 to 9 months and gather more information. I know the residence want an ordinance but the Town would be liable.

Chris Palmieri: I think we should look at this in about 3 months. Check the numbers and see if they have gone done or not. All numbers right now our in line with last year.

Cheryl Lounsbury: Every meeting would be too soon to be put on the agenda.

Deputy Chief Palmieri: We can have a format for each month: Service calls / Enforcement etc.

Cheryl Lounsbury: I am still worried about the town being liable.

Tony D'Angelo: We should match last year's numbers with the current year.

Deputy Palmieri: We had 3 calls for service and 2 arrest. Need to create something for the physical year. Like how many areas location and time consumed. Will have more data forthcoming.

Patricia Queen: We are privileged to have all the stakeholders engaged in working together to better the situation. This group home is not going anywhere. We should address the issue of missing person with Bridge.

Deputy Chief Palmieri: Bridge recently brought in a Clinical Therapist into the home and this is helping. An ordinance would only be effective if the group home was paying for it.

Victoria Triano: We are hitting a brick wall with the state. Group homes attitude has been very defensive. Currently working with the main players except for the commissioner. We can't let this die both for moral and ethical responsibility to the residence.

Cheryl Lounsbury: Data will be powerful with DCF. Documented with the police department where the State stands with this.

Atty: Futtner: We need a bill put thru with the state that address it. Economic climate has changed and next year financially it will be worse. April agenda this will be put on.

Victoria Triano: Dawn Micelli said in New Britain the ordinance is not being enforced. But Tim Stewart is in favor – but no response. Recent meeting with Bridge we felt like we were held hostage and not treated well.

Resident Bob Sargent asked if we can set something up on Facebook.

Cheryl Lounsbury reminded everyone that we can't get rid of the group home. We are hopeful with Senator Joe Markley's visit with us will be positive. We don't have no say in this matter but Joe Markley does.

Dawn Micelli said she was hopeful that some legislation will happen. Maybe we can request a meeting with the commissioner.

Patricia Queen: It would be nice to have monthly meetings with the commissioner.

Chris Palmieri: Victoria Triano and Dawn Miceli continue to serve the residence and are actively monitoring the situation.

Tony D'Angelo thanked Deputy Chief Palmieri for the numbers and data provided. I think we have a good chance of fixing this situation. We need to at least maintain or improve.

Cheryl Lounsbury: Moved to continue this at the April meeting.

Blight Ordinance was handed out.

Deputy Chief Palmieri was to Thank Matt Remondo and Stephen Elliott for their hard work.

Sec. 5-38 Notice of Violations

- a. Complaints must be submitted to the Town Manager or his/her designee by members of the public or employees of the Town, but such complaints must be in writing and signed on forms provided by the Town. The Manager or his/her designee shall report the complaint to the Building Official who shall advise the Town Manager or his/her designee whether a violation exists.

Chris Palmieri: Neighbors of blight don't want to file a complaint because of repercussions. But a complaint does need to be signed. Blight needs to be addressed especially if it is viewable from the street.

Deputy Chief Palmieri: It also depends on the grade level. If it's the front yard/back yard or side yard.

Chris Palmieri: If there is a junk yard next door it is devaluing my property.

Zaya Oshana: Why only from the street? You can have a deck and looking right at it because of the level. We have to protect people's property values.

Victoria Triano: Sometimes these issues become a personal vendetta between neighbors.

Chris Palmieri: If you have a deck and next door looks like a used car lot. Adversely affecting the property owners.

Cheryl Lounsbury: We have to take a look at the bigger situations.

Victoria Triano: Need to take a look at Page 5 – Penalties and Enforcement – Gives us opportunity to put more teeth into this area. Also, sidewalks can be a financial issue.

Chris Palmieri: Is 30 days the norm.? Letter to the Town Manager, then to the Zoning Enforcement Officer (Pictures), Mitigate and then comes back to the Police Dept.

Misdemeanor Summons: If it's an older person do we try to compromise? The purpose of this is not to arrest people but to fix the problem.

Tony D'Angelo asked if signing of the form has to be done legally. (Atty. Futtner will find out.)

Public Communications

Bob Sargent asked who is responsible the tenant (renter) or the owner of a property?

Cheryl Lounsbury: Homeowner and not the tenant is responsible. We will find out the legalities.

Bob Sargent: How many red flags have to go up before something is done? There should be a legal ordinance for over 25 calls etc.. Numbers of calls are incorrect. They drive to the Police Dept.. It's a game. And they are moving kids back and forth from other places to keep it quiet.

What are you waiting for another 10 years before creating an ordinance? All the calls that go into the P.D. must be over \$50,000. Has anyone been fined for it?

Deputy Chief Palmieri: The report given is the physical year. Illusion by Bob passing out his numbers.

Melissa Hallgren: There is legally significant justification. A homeowner in our neighborhood could not sell their house because of this group home. (Rent under Sec. 8?) There are so many properties that have been vandalized. Who's responsible?

Atty. Futtner will report at next meeting

Motion to adjourn at 5:47 p.m.

