



City Council Minutes The City of Cortland

February 7, 2006

Council Meeting #3
February 7, 2006
Regular Business Session
City Hall
7:00 PM

Present: Alderman VanGorder, Terwilliger, Cobb, DeCarlo,
Quail, Feiszli, Partigianoni and Michales

Staff Present: Director of Admin. & Finance Andrew Damiano,
Corporation Counsel Lawrence Knickerbocker and
City Clerk John O. Reagan

Mayor Gallagher calls the third Common Council meeting of the year to order at 7:00 PM.

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG.

Public Comment

Kay Zaharis, Director of the Cortland Free Library, was there to welcome the new Council Members and invite them to come to the Library for a tour. She would be happy to answer any of their questions, as they will be voting on the Library budget later in the year. She extended an invitation and a thank you to the incumbent Council members who voted to help the Library budget.

Mike Dexter of Cedar Street was present to inquire if it would be possible to make a tax payment in two parts and not have to pay the penalty fee. Since the first payment is received on time and the second payment is allowed to be paid in August, but the full penalty fee is assessed at that time. That is not how it is with the school's taxes. He wondered why the City didn't follow the lead of the school district or vice versa. Alderman Partigianoni asked if Andrew Damiano would comment. Mr. Damiano noted that Mr. Dexter made a good point, but the City encourages taxpayers to pay on time.

Minutes of January 17, 2006

RESOLUTION #16 OF 2006 - Approve the minutes of January 17, 2006 as amended.

By: Alderman Terwilliger
Seconded: Alderman Partigianoni

Approved: Ayes - 8
Nays - 0

Bills were reviewed and received.

Mayor's Report

He attended Leave A Legacy program meeting and told about how the foundation program works. He also attended the I-81 Rail Corridor meeting in Binghamton. He met with Young Leadership group to discuss erecting a concession stand at the new Little League's Ball Park at the Armory. He met with Andy and Ken Craig to discuss pilot program for Housing Visions. He also attended a meeting with Bonnie Heath at the Red Cross to discuss the viability of that program in our community and attended the CMH annual meeting and the United Way meeting.

He participated as a judge in the Girl Scout's Sweet Sensations at the Holiday Inn. He met with Andy and Marilyn Brown and members of the County Legislature to discuss recycling and moving City Court as well as attending the joint Planning Commission/ Zoning Board of Appeals meeting on February 6. He also interviewed with Kevin Mooney at WKRT.

Ward 1 - Alderman VanGorder

She is continuing to work on a couple of code issues. A constituent spoke with her during her campaign in regards to the light on Madison Street and 281 she wrote a letter to the DOT and she received a response that they had adjusted the timing. She also received an e-mail that it is much better now for people coming out of Madison Street onto 281. She spoke with the Mayor in regard to the crow situation. She hadn't received any more calls. She hoped they could hold out until March when the crows tended to move out of residential areas and not have to do anything about them. She has been working with Alderman Feiszli in regard to the bus shelter situation. She has spoken with Mr. Orrange and with Ken Morey and Sandy Price. She and Alderman Feiszli are planning to put together a little bi-partisan group together to take care of this situation. She also met with Chris Kradery about forming a Ward Beautification Committee. She spoke with the DPW in regards to their spring pickup and clean up that's done in April and May. Chris has students that need to perform community service. Also when it's spring clean up she is working with the Chamber on providing bags and she has spoken about having a spring clean up day in the wards. She spoke with Felicia Deliello and she would like to do something like that, too. She has been working on the idea of developing a street e mail list for the 40 streets in her ward. She wants someone on each street to be on the contact list and e mail her as to what is happening on their street.

Ward 2 - Alderman Terwilliger

She received one call regarding a problem with a street light on the corner of Grace and Madison and that is all she has to report.

Ward 3 - Alderman Cobb

She received a crow call from a resident on Broadway. There are just so many crows in that area and she will get back with the resident regarding this issue. She saw a program where Mike Sweeney was discussing the crow problem and she wondered if that was something the City was looking at doing. Mr. Damiano stated that the City has lined up Sweeney Pest Patrol to do crow removal. It's costly. She asked residents of her Ward to contact her as to where the crows were roosting in the evening. They would probably be in the area for another four (4) more weeks. She has also been working with the Code Office regarding a certain property and is hoping to come to a resolution with the issues there.

Ward 4 - Alderman DeCarlo

He has received a couple of phone calls, he has made some calls. There have been no major issues.

Ward 5 - Alderman Quail

He noted that he was giving Mr. Damiano a request from the Central New York Mustang Club to close off Main Street on May 21. He has had a few calls regarding the salting at the intersection of Sunnyfield. These were at intersections between Fox Hollow and Kent where people were sliding through those intersections.

There was a question regarding if the Main Street closing might conflict with the college graduation. It was thought that the schedule had been checked and graduation would not be on that weekend.

He noted that the police officer that was injured in the altercation at the Youth Center could have been more seriously injured if some of the youth's present had not stepped forward to assist him. He felt that those young people were heroes for preventing a situation from getting worse for the officer. He has a pile of rubbish that is collecting at 10 Winter Street. It looks like someone has emptied their house. He is having a Ward meeting on February 16 at 6:30 pm. It will be at the Randall School. He will be bringing some information to this meeting in regards to the information the Council receives this evening from Ken Craig of Housing Visions and the Cortland Crown Homes Project. Cliff Kostuk, the Principal, will also be in attendance.

Ward 6 - Alderman Feiszli

There was another flood over on Kennedy Parkway. She did get a call from a resident noting that the DPW did a great job and they used one of their plows as a giant squeegee to get the water out. The two (2) drywells there are not functioning right now and will be replaced in the spring, along with the drywell on Rt. 13 near Kennedy

Circle that's been crushed. People will need to be careful when driving over that area. She thanked Val VanGorder for working with her on the bus shelter issue and they hope they will get somewhere with that on Thursday. She also thanked Sandy Price for bringing this up with the Legislature Planning Committee. She also noted that Mr. Knickerbocker is looking into the location of the Verizon House.

Ward 7 - Alderman Partigianoni

He has officially requested that the Syracuse Office of the State Department of Transportation look into the potential traffic and traffic light at the intersection of Pomeroy Street and Clinton. This has come about because of the new proposed Visitor's Center. He is also concerned with the new business there and that it is a tough corner. There is confusion by some with the signal arrows. We'll see what their investigation comes up with.

The big news that he has for the Ward is that on Sunday at 3:00 pm they are expecting a large turnout for the talk on the Lebanese immigrants and their contribution to the development of Cortland and the County. Longtime Mayor Harry Calale and he will be accompanied by other prominent Lebanese who have been influential in the history of the County. He also announced some events on the calendar at the Community Center. On March 1 there will be a personal safety workshop, conducted by Officer Nelson at 7:00 pm. On March 6 there will be a resumption of the family history research program which will feature Anita Wright from the Historical Society and Tom Gath from Cortland High School. This will be a very interesting program. This Saturday from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm they are beginning volunteer income tax assistance program. This is being sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service. To obtain an appointment, call 753-5077. It is a free.

On Sunday there was a session at the Center. New York State now mandates that any sports official must be fingerprinted. He thanked Ms. Klockowski from Cortland High School for coming there and hosting the Cortland Ithaca Combined Meeting and over twenty (20) individuals were fingerprinted to meet the State's requirement.

There were also a couple of code issues. He turned one (1) over to the Code Department and the other one was turned over to the Health Department and work is continuing on these issues.

Ward 8 - Alderman Michales

He received a call concerning two (2) code issues, which were turned over to the Code Office to be addressed. He attended an informational meeting regarding the Habitat Project at Fox Hollow, discussing their sewage problem. He attended the Police Commissioners' meeting and met with the Habitat Committee and toured the potential project house at 12 Winter Street last Saturday. They are interested in pursuing that project. It would be a good project house for some of the kids to work with. The Mayor noted that the property would be advertised again. It was noted that the interested group was part of the Habitat for Humanity Program. He also referred to 10 Winter Street and the garbage issue there. He has a tentative Ward meeting

scheduled for March 1 here at City Hall. He has to work this out yet and the agenda for that meeting will be brought up at the next Council meeting. He also would like to place on the agenda for the next meeting the discussion of bicycle racks for Downtown Cortland. There are some folks who would like to speak about this project and perhaps make some kind of a proposal. It was noted that perhaps before the proposal was presented that they contact and meet with the Mayor or Andy Damiano in regard to liability issues.

He received some concerns in regard to getting an update on the downtown Main/Court St. fire. The Mayor is also waiting to hear an update.

It was also noted that if anyone missed the newspaper ad, the Cortland County Recycling Center on Pendleton Street is now accepting electronics (computers, TV's, copier, telephones, etc.) every second Saturday of the month.

The Mayor noted that if anyone did not have an opportunity to read the article in the paper by Linda Hartsock about cleaning up the community, they should. It is very interesting. There is also the Woman of the Year dinner next Monday.

Item No. 1 - Presentation by Ken Craig of Housing Visions regarding the Cortland Crown Homes Project.

Mr. Craig made a complete presentation of the Housing Visions program from it's beginnings in Syracuse on to Utica, NY and their plans for various properties in the City of Cortland. He outlined how the project will be funded and the process of tenant relocation and property renovation.

RESOLUTION #17 OF 2006 - Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the Mayor to act on behalf of the City on all matters relating to the ERP application submitted for funding for the Noss Park environmental clean up project. (Amends the Resolution previously adopted on December 21, 2004).

By: Alderman Quail
Seconded: Alderman DeCarlo

Approved: Ayes - 8
Nays - 0

RESOLUTION #18 OF 2006 - Consideration of a Resolution authorizing Code Enforcement personnel to attend the schedule of educational conferences which has been submitted. (Required to obtain the annual 24-hour in-service educational credits - as mandated.)

It was noted that this is required training. Mr. Damiano noted that he would like to be able to approve these requests without bringing each request before the Council. He felt that the requestor and Finance could determine the merit of each request and that if there was a certain amount budgeted by the department for the request, that it be

allowed. This has become quite a process because there was an issue with an individual who is no longer associated with the City.

Alderman Quail indicated that he still liked to know where staff was going and what they were attending. He liked to review the trip reports to determine what is being accomplished. Mr. Damiano indicated that in building the budget the department heads included all the information that they had at the time on the specific training sessions that they had included in their budgets. He also asked that the Council approve this request and that they later adopt a resolution rescinding their requirement to come before the Council in the future.

Alderman Partigianoni noted that he, too, would like to be apprised of who would be attending what training prior to their attending. It was also noted that they would like to have the opportunity to ask questions or reject a request. At the Council's request it was noted that it would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

By: Alderman VanGorder
Seconded: Alderman Terwilliger

Approved: Ayes - 8
Nays - 0

Item No. 4 - Discussion regarding the proposed tree ordinance.

Mike Dexter presented the ordinance proposed by his commission, Landscape and Design, to remedy a nonexistent policy regarding the planting and removing of trees within the City. It was noted by the Council that it felt that the ordinance might create a bureaucracy in this process that might be too burdensome for the City residents. It was felt that people might not know what the rules were and they might be reprimanded after the fact. Commission member Diane Batzing, noted that the proposed ordinance puts into writing policies regarding the placements of trees in relation to curbs and sidewalks, the trimming of trees and the removal of healthy trees.

Alderman Quail felt that trees were important in terms of the environment, energy conservation and overall city aesthetics. He noted that in the City of Cortland Master Plan, it was the Council's responsibility to do that. There was discussion regarding what kind of policies should be put in place to protect the trees. Mr. Damiano noted that the Commission would have a tremendous amount of power and that needed to be seriously considered by the Council. They are volunteers and they are not on staff. It was noted that there were enforcement and decision making responsibilities tied into this ordinance that should be left to existing staff rather than a volunteer commission that should be advisory. Alderman Quail agreed that a volunteer commission should not be given too much final decision making ability, but he noted that the dedication of the commission members should be embraced by the City. He noted that they are active, artistic and creative and he felt that the Council should step up and support them. He felt that this ordinance was giving them an opportunity to affect true change in the community. Mr. Damiano noted that this was a dedicated Commission and he commended them, but noted that the City might not always have that. Giving them too

much authority could be dangerous. He felt that a volunteer commission should offer advisory opinions to either the code officer, public works superintendent or the police. It was noted that this was only a discussion and no decision was being made at this time.

Alderman Partigianoni noted that no other City commission had the power that this group was proposing. Every other commission was an advisory board. He went on to describe the history of why the commission came to being. Mike Dexter noted that his commission could meet the next day and begin refining the language in its proposal to hopefully account for the concerns of the Council. He noted that a timetable for the revisions would be discussed at that meeting. His commission was not looking for power and control, but to take care of the beautiful trees of this City. The other goal of this commission is to plant trees. They wanted to protect the City's urban forest.

Alderman Feiszli inquired if they would be talking about the City's Master Plan/Comprehensive Plan. Alderman Quail noted that it would take a lot of time to review it. Mr. Damiano noted that any revision is really a professional undertaking and would be very expensive.

Adjournment

By: Alderman DeCarlo
Seconded: Alderman Quail

Approved: Ayes - 8
Nays - 0

I, JOHN O. REAGAN, CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF CORTLAND, NEW YORK, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT SAID RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORTLAND, HELD ON THE 7TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2006. I FURTHER CERTIFY THE FOREGOING RESOLUTIONS WERE PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR IN THE TIME REQUIRED.

JOHN O. REAGAN - CITY CLERK

MAYOR THOMAS GALLAGHER