



City Council Minutes July 16, 2002

The City of Cortland, New York

COUNCIL MEETING #12
July 16, 2002
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
Pomeroy Place
7:30PM

PRESENT: Mayor Mary E. Leonard
Alderman Faraoni, Tobin, Morey, Guido, Quail, Partigianoni, Testa and Hennessy

Staff present: City Clerk, William J. Wood, Corporation Counsel Mark Suben

PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing was opened at 7:25 for the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant Application administered by the U.S. Department of Justice – Bureau of Justice Assistance in the amount of \$11,364.00 calling for the City matching funds in the amount of \$1,263.00.

There was no one to speak; therefore the public hearing was closed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chris Farkas of 23 Crandall Street thanks Alderman Faraoni for coming to the meeting and dealing with the animal issues. Also, on the corner of Main and Groton there is one curb that is not accessible. It is extremely dangerous for people with disabilities. He asked that someone in the City please take care of this.

Linda Kline of 12 Arthur Ave. decided to wait until the agenda item is brought up.

MINUTES

Approve the amended Common Council minutes of July 2, 2002.

By: Alderman Faraoni
Seconded: Alderman Morey

Approved: Ayes - 8
Nays – 0

BILLS

Red Cross in house training was clarified.

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MAYOR'S REPORT

Thanks Jim and Chris Place for hosting the meeting. Terri Brookins and Tammi Beebe speak regarding the services the Cortland Family Resource Center provide. She explains the Center is like a clearinghouse for information of all types. There are workshops for parents, field trips, and activities for children. There have been over 400 families who have visited the Center during the past year. This is free.

The Mayor thanks all of those in attendance for the Empire State Games flag raising. It will run from the 31st of July to the 4th of August. The events will include downtown sales, sidewalk art contest, fireworks, etc. She also has the report on the public library if anyone is interested. She has information from the Dept. of Transportation on the traffic study she has requested. Saturday the SPCA had it's open house. The Mayor will give the "Kitty Committee" some information she has obtained from the SPCA. There has been no official word regarding the scrap yard. The Mayor has gotten a lot of comments on how nice downtown looks.

WARD REPORTS

Ward 8 – Alderman Hennessy

Thanks the resource center for providing such a wonderful service to the community. The flowerpots on Main St. look very nice. She will have her next ward meeting in September. The lateral replacement-taking place on Hyatt and Bartlett St. has been completed. There was an 8-week gap between the times the water board went in and the private contractor finished up. This is too long.

Ward 7 – Alderman Partigianoni

Alderman Partigianoni explains that in addition to the Empire State Games there are about 20 Softball teams coming into Cortland for the NYS Championship. A discussion ensues regarding the wading pools in the three parks. They cannot be wading pools unless there is a filtration system. He brings up the aged exemption and asks the Council to take a look at raising this. Preble is 50% higher and Homer is 25% higher. He also wanted a "children at play" sign put up. Alderman Faraoni states the City does not put these up. He also will look into the tree removal program to check if there are any monies left over.

Ward 5– Alderman Quail

Thanks Jim Place for the Facility. He feels it is an asset to the community. Thanks Code and DPW for cleaning up certain areas in his ward. Thanks Sue Reynolds for posting his ward meeting minutes on the web site. There will be a BBQ picnic for the 5th ward September 14th. The information is posted on the web site. His next ward meeting will be Monday July 29, 2002 at 7:00. Don Chambers will be present to answer questions regarding the South Main St. project. He has received a number of complaints regarding loud motorcycles. There was a major party on Saturday with fireworks and loud music, which was found to be outside the City. He feels a noise ordinance for motorcycles should be looked at. The new location of the 5th ward-polling place will be at the Youth Bureau. He will bring this as a resolution in front of the Council at the next Common Council meeting.

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Ward 6 – Alderman Testa

He had a call from a lady who has a blind child. He contacted Mike Preston and they were able to get a sign up on Miller Street. Miller Street has a lot of traffic. The street is very narrow. He is looking into diverting traffic behind Miller Street especially City and County vehicles. He also has a concern regarding the Hickory Park/Yaman Park entrance. The residence of Hickory Park need to turn left in front of the cars coming out of Yaman Park. He has talked to Mike Preston and they are looking for a sign. His ward meeting will be July 31, at 7:00 PM at the Grange Hall.

Ward 1 – Alderman Faraoni

The next Kitty Committee meeting will be at CAPCO on July 25th at 7:00PM. The retirement incentive program discussion will be on the August 6th meeting.

Ward 2 – Alderman Tobin

He has had calls regarding speeding through the City streets. He hopes the police department can set up road checks and give tickets to the speeders. Alderman Quail states that if someone gets the license plate number of the speeders to give Lt. Catalano a phone call, they will make a home visit to the individual. He would like to have a couple of items on the agenda. One item is using City funds for travel and education. The other item he would like put on the agenda is an application from one of his constituents to house an iguana.

Ward 3 – Alderman Morey

Thanks Jim and Chris Place for hosting the Council. She has concerns about appliances outdoors with the doors left on them. Corp. Counsel states these should be reported to the Code Office immediately. She has had calls on sidewalk and sidewalk funding. She has had calls on fluoride. She had a call on how nice the water works looks. She also has had a call requesting a doggy pot be placed somewhere near the water works. A discussion regarding paving ensues. She also brings up the intersection at Pendleton and Port Watson. The turn arrow and cross walk go at the same time.

Ward 4 – Alderman Guido

He has had calls regarding woodchucks and skunks. Perhaps this is something the City could look into funding in the future. He has had calls on how nice downtown looks but how bad the parking lots look.

AGENDA

RESOLUTION #66 of 2002 – Authorize the closing of Glenn Street on August 4, 2002 from Noon to 5:00 PM in order to hold a neighborhood picnic. The rain date will be August 13, 2002.

By: Alderman Morey
Seconded: Alderman Faraoni

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

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Item No. 2 – Consideration of a Resolution approving a permit for Brian Hull of 17 North Church Street to house two (2) snakes at his residence.

Motion to bring the discussion to the floor.

By: Alderman Quail
Seconded: Alderman Morey

Chris Farkas feels it seems that a lot of time could be spent bringing animals in front of the Council for their approval. He doesn't feel the Council should have to waste their time on this. Alderman Testa states he has had a couple of phone calls on this and none of them have been favorable. They seem to be against this. Alderman Hennessy asks if this person is a renter? She would like to know if the landlord approves of this application. A discussion ensues regarding the other renters in the house and what would happen if the snakes got loose. Alderman Partigianoni says he has three calls all of which were not favorable.

On the question to approve the permit application.

Ayes – 0
Nays – 8

RESOLUTION #67 of 2002 – Resolved to deny the permit for Brian Hull of 17 North Church Street to house two (2) snakes at his residence.

Item No. 3 – Discussion regarding apartment rental signs.

Alderman Quail notes that the apartment rental signs should be temporary, they give a sense of what we want the community to be. Having a big piece of plywood attached to the side of a building is not acceptable. There are some really nice houses with huge signs hanging off of them. Everybody he has talked to does not want these signs. If we cant put something out there that is not respectful of our community then they all should come down. Alderman Morey feels the student rental landlords are the ones with the permanent signs. She feels there are other forms of advertising such as the Internet. Alderman Guido visited Oswego and there are no signs plastered on the houses there. The City of Oswego tries to discourage signs on the houses. Alderman Testa states this is big business. They should have signs that reflect this.

Amy Bertini speaks briefly on her experiences with rental signs and the fact the signs must come down when the apartment is rented. She states rental signs and for sale signs come under the definition of real estate signs in our ordinance. Unlike real estate sales where we are notified by the Assessor's Office of the completion of the sale, there is no monitoring process when the rental properties become vacant. Apartment owners have told us their rentals are a "business" and they rent several semesters in advance, therefore they consider their properties to never be vacant. There is no permit process for real estate signs. Amy has spoken to Linda Kline regarding a process to control the student signage issues and she has come up with a possible design for the Council's consideration.

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Linda Kline of the City Architectural Design Review Board, (historical board) speaks to the Council regarding a proposed shape, dimension, and color that would compliment any building facade. Colors, size, simplicity was discussed.

Alderman Tobin wants the signs to come down. They should not be permanently affixed to the building. Alderman Morey asks what the procedure is for a new business. Amy Bertini states the ordinance does not require permitting for residencies. A brief discussion ensues regarding permanent signs and how this pertains to the City Code, code revisions, and enforcement. Corp. Counsel Suben states as long as we allow people to advertise, that would be the first step. Alderman Quail would like to get a committee together. Corp. Counsel would like to include the Code Office, ZBA, Planning, etc. and discuss this. Alderman Quail would like to see these signs come down for the weekend of the Empire State Games.

Item No. 4 – Discussion regarding possible changes to the public comments policy during Council meetings.

Alderman Quail would like to continue the public comment period in the beginning of the meeting but allow three minutes per person to speak after the motion has been made and have public comment at the end of the meeting prior to closure. This should be kept to meaningful input. Alderman Morey feels this needs to be organized and it should not turn into a debate with the public. Alderman Partigianoni feels the Common Council is a meeting of City Officials not a public forum to be turned into the Gerry Springer show. A discussion ensues regarding the structure of the meetings and if and when someone should be allowed to speak. Mayor Leonard feels it is good that we have an open discussion and we are happy people want to participate but it is up to the Council to determine how they want their meetings to run.

The Mayor summarizes by stating the Council will consider this as a draft and it will be discussed at the next Common Council meeting.

Adjournment

By: Alderman Hennessy
Seconded: Alderman Faraoni

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

I, WILLIAM J. WOOD CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF CORTLAND, NEW YORK DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT SAID RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED AT A MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORTLAND, HELD ON THE 16th DAY OF JULY 2002. I FURTHER CERTIFY THE FOREGOING RESOLUTIONS WERE PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR IN THE TIME REQUIRED.

WILLIAM J. WOOD – CITY CLERK