

**CITY OF NORWALK
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023
BY VIDEOCONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Lisa Shanahan, Chair; Josh Goldstein; James Frayer;
Nora Niedzielski Eichner; Edwin Camacho (7:15 p.m.)

STAFF: Greg Pacelli, Planning and Zoning Transportation Planner;
Matt Sapienza, Corporation Counsel; Jessica Vonashek, Chief of
Operations and Public Works

OTHERS: Hannah Brockhous and Mike Morehouse, FHI Studio

Ms. Shanahan called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL:**

Ms. Shanahan called the Roll as indicated above.

2. **PUBLIC HEARING** (possible action on):

3. **PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION:**

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Public participation comments are not verbatim and represent a summarization of statements unless otherwise noted. Speakers are Norwalk residents unless otherwise noted.

Ms. Diane Lauricella said she was pleased that the item regarding the leaf blower ordinance in the last meeting minutes had a lot of back up information. She said she was in favor of the City getting into the Complete Streets.

Ms. Lauricella said she wanted to talk about the item related to Affordable Housing, and she specifically looking for clarification about qualifying expenses related to ADUs. She said it is important to have them included as a qualified expenditure.

5. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

- July 18, 2023 – regular meeting of the Ordinance Committee

**** MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

7. NEW BUSINESS:

**** MR. GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO TAKE THE AGENDA OUT OF ORDER**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

- Discuss the City of Norwalk Complete Streets Ordinance following a presentation.

Mr. Camacho joined the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Ms. Brockhaus and Mr. Morehouse shared their slides and presented the proposed Complete Streets Ordinance.

Mr. Morehouse explained that the Complete Streets movement will design streets for safety, mobility and accessibility for all road users. He said that the re-design of streets neglects a wide swath of people. In addition, there are more people who are choosing to live where they are not auto dependent. The Complete Streets need to accommodate traffic and provide space for other types of transit and amenities. The entire right of way needs to be thought about.

Mr. Morehouse explained that in 2019, the City of Norwalk adopted the Plan of Conservation that includes transportation choice. Currently streets are classified to determine their function. He described a Complete Streets approach where there will be more definitions of streets and design flexibility.

Mr. Morehouse said that Complete Streets can address heat islands, asthma rates, crash maps and flooding. He said there are a lot of elements to the policy that includes the Ordinance, design guide and the integration plan followed by a strong engagement component.

Ms. Brockhaus reviewed the best practices of the Ordinance. She said the Ordinance is essential to how the Complete Streets are going to be built in Norwalk. They are working with the Department of Transportation, Mobility and Parking on the Policy and it will be about 10-20 pages. The draft Policy is expected to be completed in a couple of months.

Ms. Brockhaus reviewed the Ordinance section of the Policy and said it is the result of a comprehensive overview of national best practices. A workshop will be held on September 28th from 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. in the City Hall Community Room.

Ms. Shanahan asked why they need to establish an Ordinance. Mr. Morehouse explained that the Ordinance is the framework of how this is done. They want this to be the framework of how Norwalk does business for the future.

Mr. Goldstein said he was interested in how this Ordinance could actually be enacted and would like to know the enabling statute. He also asked what other cities do. Mr. Morehouse said the Ordinances they have are based on best practices. He suggested looking up the Complete Streets Coalition.

Mr. Morehouse said they will be looking at all of the regulations to determine where Complete Streets will have the best impact. He noted that there are roads in the network that will require cross coordination to ensure Complete Streets is part of the process.

Mr. Camacho asked if there was an example of the Ordinance and what this will add to what Public Works is already doing. Mr. Morehouse said they have a memorandum of all the case studies.

Ms. Niedzelski Eichner said she was concerned that an Ordinance may not be appropriate. Ms. Shanahan said the design guides are in the Ordinance.

Mr. Frayer said he would like to see an example of a city that has as a diverse network of roads like Norwalk and how they handle that. Mr. Morehouse said that projects don't often go the entire length of the road. Complete Streets recognizes that it can't all be done at once. Mr. Frayer said he did not see the need for an Ordinance. Mr. Pacelli said the Ordinance adds consistency to the project.

Mr. Goldstein asked what the Ordinance looks like if it is the best solution.

Ms. Vonashek said the impetus and goal is to show that the City is committed to Complete Streets. The Ordinance is the only way to do that. She noted that in 2022 the City had the lowest number of crashes and they want to continue that trend, especially since they are seeing growth in the City.

Ms. Shanahan encouraged everyone to join the workshop on September 28th.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

- Discuss and vote on the Affordable Housing ordinance.

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner shared her screen and reviewed the amendments made to the Ordinance. She explained that the proposed Zoning regulations related to workforce housing require options that provide workforce housing funding. The core of the Ordinance is to create the account.

In response to Ms. Lauricella's comment earlier in the evening, Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said that qualified ADU (attached and detached accessory dwelling units) expenditures will comply.

Mr. Goldstein asked how much money is generated each year. Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said it is not a large amount, but believes it is a couple of hundred thousand dollars at most. She said the City does not have a mechanism to fund affordable housing outside of the Housing Authority. She said this Committee is going to have to determine the best use of the funds.

Mr. Frayer asked about the difference between this and the Redevelopment Agency. Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said the Redevelopment Agency is a potential applicant for these funds. Mr. Frayer noted that the Redevelopment Agency does some of the same things the City plans to use the funds for. He asked about the difference between the two of them. Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said the Zoning regulations require the development of mechanism for dispersing the funds. She added that the Housing Authority could also be a recipient of the funds. The point of this is to have a mechanism to get these funds out the door. None of the money has been spent because there is no mechanism at this point.

Mr. Frayer asked how the Finance Department accounts for the funds. Ms. Shanahan said the money sits in an account without any direction.

Mr. Camacho mentioned there is a fee in lieu of parking and asked if that money is in an account for parking. Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said that is a good thing to follow up on. She said there is a lot of concern about the deed restrictions because they do not allow the owner to earn equity. The Committee will make a recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission related to deed restrictions.

**** MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER MOVED THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING
ORDINANCE AS AMENDED TO A PUBLIC HEARING AT THE NEXT
MEETING OF THE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE ON OCTOBER 17, 2023
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

7. **NEW BUSINESS:**

- Discuss Chapter 58A – Blight Prevention.

Mr. Sapienza explained that the State allows an increase in Blight Ordinance fees. The immediate goal is to amend the Ordinance to comply with the State Statute which comes into effect on October 1, 2023.

Ms. Shanahan said she gets a lot of calls from Constituents about blight in the neighborhoods. The new Ordinance will be reviewed at next month's meeting.

8. **DISCUSSION ITEM:**

There was no further discussion.

9. **ADJOURNMENT:**

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

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services