

Members of the public can use a telephone to call in, attend, listen and comment during the meeting. However, they will not be able to see any of the meeting participants. Each meeting will use a unique Meeting/Webinar ID. For the current meeting, the meeting ID is 838 8053 7065 and the call in number is 646-558-8656. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, dial *9 on the phone and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda, and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually-explicit language, will be removed.

Upon written request, not less than 24 hours prior to the meeting, a member of the public can request a physical location to attend this virtual meeting at City Hall. Such a member of the public will be provided access to a telephone so that they can attend the meeting in real time. The member of the public can call in, attend, listen and comment during the meeting. Each meeting will use a unique Meeting/Webinar ID (see above). A set of instructions will be left with the telephone for the member of the public to use in order to access the meeting.

Members of the public who wish to “view the meeting live” and/or "provide live comments" can use the Zoom meeting platform by going to either <https://norwalkct-org.zoom.us/j/83880537065> or www.norwalkct.org/meetings and clicking on the “View/Participate Live on Zoom” link that is on the line with the meeting date and time. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the “raise your hand indicator” and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda, and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually-explicit language, will be removed.

Members of the public who wish to view the meeting, but are not participating, can view a live stream on the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. This stream is delayed by approximately 20 seconds. Please find the information using the link above. The meeting recording and minutes will be posted on the City of Norwalk website within seven (7) days after the meeting.

Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be included into the record, they must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. the day of the meeting. Please email Brian Candela at bcandela@norwalkct.gov with the subject line “Public Comment” to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

**CITY OF NORWALK
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 20, 2024**

VIDEOCONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE

ATTENDANCE: Nora Niedzielski Eichner, Acting Chair; Heather Dunn; Joshua Goldstein; Johan Lopez; Melissa Murray; Jalin Sead

STAFF: Brian Candela, Corporation Counsel; Sharon Conners, Purchasing Agent; Stuart Wells, Registrar of Voters

OTHERS: Steve Mednick, Counsel

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She announced a change made by the Common Council that going forward, they will not be reading comments into the record. However, tonight she will read an e-mail into the record as requested.

1. ROLL CALL:

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner called the Roll as indicated above.

2. PUBLIC HEARING (possible action on):

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 spoke about Section 9-3 and said she felt \$50,000 was too high and asked the Committee to reconsider that amount. She said the first step should be that a real/proper appraisal is received and referred to a recent sale of City property in Rowayton.

There were no other members of the public who wished to comment.

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said this item has been thoroughly discussed and she feels comfortable with the Ordinance.

Ms. Diane Lauricella spoke about Chapter 58A and suggested adding a caveat that the Mayor's appointees be approved by the Common Council.

Ms. Ana Tabachneck reiterated a request she had related to taking a deep look at the Blight Ordinance, because there need to be more parameters regarding the appointment of the Blight Officer. She added there should be term limits and asked for a review of the adjournment of the open blight violations. She also asked for transparency for the public regarding violations.

3. PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION:

Mr. Goldstein commended the efforts by all involved and said this is a valuable step forward.

Ms. Dunn agreed with Ms. Lauricella and Ms. Tabachneck and said she feels this Chapter 58A – Blight Prevention is a little rushed. There should be more oversight of the Blight Officer and they need to be sure they are trained properly. She added there should be a flow chart with a time frame for the Blight Officers.

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner noted they are bringing additional Blight Officers on. She said they take the comments seriously and appreciate the people making the comments. Mr. Goldstein said ordinances are living documents and this is an on-going process. Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said it is a struggle to get the right balance in Blight Enforcement.

There were no members of the public who wished to comment on Ordinance Establishing an Advisory Committee for the Reapportionment of Common Council Voting Districts.

Mr. Candela said there was a specific request to read an e-mail into the record and attach it to the minutes. Going forward letters will be attached to the minutes but will not be read into the record. Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said directions will be added to the agenda on how to have a letter added to the minutes for all committee and Common Council meetings.

Ms. Dunn questioned if it would be her prerogative as a Common Council member to read a letter into the record, if requested to do so by a resident. Ms. Niedzielski Eichner encouraged sending an e-mail to Mr. Candela.

Mr. Candela read a letter into the record from Ms. Lisa Brinton, Chair Norwalk Independent Party and Mr. Fred Wilms, Chair, Norwalk Republican Party regarding Establishing an Advisory Committee for the reappointment of Common Council Voting Districts.

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner expressed thanks to all involved and said a substantial amount of time was spent on establishing an Advisory Committee for the reappointment of Common Council Voting Districts. She said the committee being appointed has no political party as a majority. This will not be a bi-partisan committee and added that this is not a bi-partisan city. She said this Ordinance requires re-districting every 10 years. She said she was grateful for everyone coming to a non-partisan solution.

- Discuss and vote on Section 9-3: Procedure for sale of City property.

**** MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER MOVED SECTION 9-3: PROCEDURE FOR
SALE OF CITY PROPERTY TO THE FULL COMMON COUNCIL
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

- Discuss and vote on Chapter 58A – Blight Prevention.

**** MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER MOVED CHAPTER 58A – BLIGHT
PREVENTION TO THE FULL COMMON COUNCIL
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

- Discuss and vote on Ordinance Establishing an Advisory Committee for the Reapportionment of Common Council Voting Districts.

**** MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER MOVED THE ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING AN
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE REAPPORTIONMENT OF COMMON
COUNCIL VOTING DISTRICTS TO THE FULL COMMON COUNCIL
** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) VOTE IN OPPOSITION (MS. DUNN)**

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no members of the public who wished to comment this evening.

5. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

- January 30, 2024 – special meeting of the ordinance committee

Corrections were made to the minutes and the corrected minutes will be placed on the City website.

**** MS. MURRAY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

6. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business discussed this evening.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business discussed this evening.

8. DISCUSSION ITEM:

There were no other discussion items.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

Candela, Brian

From: Lisa Brinton <lisabrintonthomson@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 11:58 AM
To: Niedzielski-Eichner, Nora; Shanahan, Lisa; Goldstein, Josh; Lopez, Johan; Sead, Jalin; Dunn, Heather; Murray, Melissa
Cc: Candela, Brian; Chapman, Nancy Guenther; Lutge, Katherine; Kelly Kultys; Friedrich Wilms
Subject: Ordinance Committee Meeting - Joint Public Statement
Attachments: Nowalk Ordinance Committee 0220.docx

Importance: High

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Some people who received this message don't often get email from lisabrintonthomson@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please read this joint public statement into the record and include it in the meeting minutes for the February 20th Ordinance Committee Meeting. It is also attached as a Word document.

Dear Members of the Common Council Ordinance Committee,

As Chairs of the minority parties in Norwalk, we remain grossly disappointed in the public statements and votes by Democrat members of the Ordinance Committee regarding the selection process for convening the Reapportionment Advisory Committee for changing the voting boundaries in the City of Norwalk.

The process being forwarded to the full council (in record time, we might add) forcefully and deliberately signals to the public that you have absolutely NO intention of allowing 45% of the public, including Democrats, Republicans, Independents and Unaffiliated voters to have ANY voice in redrawing Norwalk's electoral district boundaries.

Committee members' response to the Minority Leader and Independent council member is unacceptable. When she asked that the document reflect more than lip service for inclusion of diverse perspectives, the response was to try and gaslight her into believing that the goal of the Democrat majority is to create a non-partisan committee. The 45% of us in the minority know better than to believe the redistricting committee will be composed of anything but 'acceptable insiders,' when the authority to put forward names rests in the hands of one person. We also know that there is nothing in the proposed language blocking that from happening. The viewpoint being expressed, that 'elections have consequences' or "to the victor belong the spoils" is insulting and undemocratic. Why don't we call it what it is: codification of gerrymandering for the next 50 years.

Norwalk remains a gross outlier compared to other Connecticut cities, where the Minority Leader is allowed to appoint individuals with 'genuine' diverse views. The process continues to remain 'insider baseball' and is inconsistent with best practices of neighboring Democrat controlled cities: Bridgeport, Danbury, Stamford. It is also inconsistent with the bipartisan approach the CT State Legislature utilizes to map both state and federal districts.

Concentrated power in a single party has everything to do with special interests and little to do with democracy, serving constituents or improving our city. The concept of checks and balances was to limit the power of a single individual, body of government or party. Concentrated power in Norwalk has bred cronyism and conflicts of interest.

Given the Ordinance Committee's failure to consider any sort of fairness in this process, you have left us with no other recourse than to file a joint ethics complaint with the appropriate city and state agencies.

Lisa Brinton

Fred Wilms

Independent Party Chair

Republican Party Chair

19 Shorefront Park

6 Westview Lane

February 20th, 2024

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Lisa Brinton
Independent Party Chair
19 Shorefront Park

Fred Wilms
Republican Party Chair
6 Westview Lane

Candela, Brian

From: Jessica Garnett <jessicadgarnett@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 2:23 PM
To: Shanahan, Lisa; Candela, Brian
Subject: Blight Ordinance

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jessicadgarnett@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: EXTERNAL Email: Don't open links or attachments from untrusted senders

Hello Brian,

I would appreciate this email being added to the official record for the meeting of the Ordinance Committee today, February 20, 2024.

Members of the Ordinance Committee,

Please note, the agenda for tonight's meeting is not accessible on the city's website for public viewing.

When discussing and voting on revisions made to the Blight Ordinance, I implore you to give some teeth to the enforcement of blight!! Properties are sitting for years covered with junk, houses rotting and in utter disrepair, dead cars and vehicles strewn on lawns and peeling paint blowing onto neighboring properties.

Once one house becomes decrepit in a neighborhood, others tend to follow. These properties take years to clean-up and the city requires neighbors to report blight time and time again.

PLEASE make enforcement swift and a priority to the city in 2024. I have included an email chain below that shows the current lack of ordinance enforcement. An ordinance is only as good as it is enforced.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Regards,

Jessica Garnett
287 Fallow Street

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Frayer, James <JFrayer@norwalkct.gov>
Date: Mon, Nov 6, 2023 at 7:40 AM
Subject: Re: Violation of City Ordinance- Question
To: Jessica Garnett <jessicadgarnett@gmail.com>