

**CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC SAFETY AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 27, 2022**

Attendance: Jenn McMurrer, Chair; Dominique Johnson; Nicol Ayers; Heidi Alterman (arrived at 7:12PM); Diane Revolus; Bryan Meek

Staff: Michele DeLuca, Deputy Director Emergency Management; Deputy Chief Susan Zecca, Lieutenant Weisburger; Steve Kleppin, Director of Planning and Zoning; Jessica Vonashek, Chief of Economic and Community Development; Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services; Kirk McDonald, Deputy Fire Marshal

I. WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Ms. McMurrer called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES-AUGUST 24 (NOTE: THE 9/22 MEETING WAS CANCELLED)

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 24TH AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Meek joined the meeting at 7:01PM

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public comments this evening.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

1A. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT GRANT FUNDING UNDER THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FFY 2023 COMPREHENSIVE DUI ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM, NOT TO EXCEED \$50,000. ACCOUNT TBD

Deputy Chief Zecca said that this is a standard DUI grant for enforcement and have gotten it from the state for many years and allows them to put extra patrols out at certain times for DUI enforcement.

**** MS. JOHNSON MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT GRANT FUNDING UNDER THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FFY 2023 COMPREHENSIVE DUI ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM, NOT TO EXCEED \$50,000. ACCOUNT TBD.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

1B. AUTHORIZE THE CHIEF OF POLICE TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS AND AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FFY 2023 CLICK IT OR TICKET ENFORCEMENT GRANT, NOT TO EXCEED \$50,000. ACCOUNT: TBD

**** MS. JOHNSON MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE CHIEF OF POLICE TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS AND AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FFY 2023 CLICK IT OR TICKET ENFORCEMENT GRANT, NOT TO EXCEED \$50,000. ACCOUNT: TBD**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2A. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT GRANT FUNDING UNDER THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FFY 2023 CLICK IT OR TICKET ENFORCEMENT GRANT, NOT TO EXCEED \$10,000. ACCOUNT TBD

Deputy Chief Zecca said that this is also an annual grant that they receive from the State of Connecticut and provides for seatbelt enforcement and comes in two waves and the first is in November and the second is May into June and this provides funding for that.

****MS. AYERS MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT GRANT FUNDING UNDER THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FFY 2023 CLICK IT OR TICKET ENFORCEMENT GRANT, NOT TO EXCEED \$10,000. ACCOUNT TBD**

2B. AUTHORIZE THE CHIEF OF POLICE, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS AND AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FFY 2023 CLICK IT OR TICKET ENFORCEMENT GRANT NOT TO EXCEED \$10,000. ACCOUNT TBD

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE CHIEF OF POLICE, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS AND AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DEPARTMENT OF**

TRANSPORTATION, FFY 2023 CLICK IT OR TICKET ENFORCEMENT GRANT NOT TO EXCEED \$10,000. ACCOUNT TBD

3.A AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT, SHARON CONNERS TO ISSUE A PURCHASE ORDER OF BEHALF OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO FARO TECHNOLOGIES, INC. FOR THE PURCHASE OF FARO FOCUS PREMIUM SCANNER AND RELATED EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE, AS PER SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT REQUEST FOR AND AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$110,000 ACCOUNT# 09233010 5777 C0809

Deputy Chief Zecca said that there is funding in the capital budget for this item and have been seeking it for many years. Lieutenant Weisburger said this is to upgrade the forensic mapping equipment from equipment that there are now using from 2010 that was surveying equipment that had been modified to be used by police departments to do 2-D and 3-D diagrams, but the data collector and download system is a windows mobile device center and is only supported up to windows 7 platform. He said all of the technology has gone to FARO now and it does a 2-D and 3-D replicas of the room or environment in 11 minutes, and it is the technology of the future. Ms. McMurrer asked in an ideal world how many of these units would be needed. Lieutenant Weisburger said only one because up to six officers can be trained and will be including the accident investigators with the training.

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** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION- MR. MEEK**

V. DISCUSSION

ILLEGAL APARTMENTS IN NORWALK

- Steve Kleppin- Planning and Zoning
- Lamond Daniels- Community Services

Mr. Kleppin discussed illegal apartments and said with a one- and two-family houses the city does not have the ability to go onto anyone's property but if complaints are received, they send an inspection request asking the property owner to let them onto the property based on the complaint or concern that has been raised, but if they deny access to the property they have no means to get onto the property. He said it is a different scenario with multi-family units because the health department and fire marshal have the ability to get into those units if something is suspected, and there are different threshold's that are required for licensing and they have a very good relationship with the fire marshals office as well as the health department and when they go out and do an inspection and find an illegal apartment they often times will set up a joint inspections with them, but the PZ department is who determines what is legally allowed to be on a property, and that is when they trace back to permit history for the property and sometimes look at the historic tax cards.

Ms. McMurrer said she thinks that is a lot of work to put onto Planning and Zoning staff on top of their regular duties and asked how many people of his team work on this and on average, and how many

complaints are received. Mr. Kleppin said that it is the main function of the Deputy Zoning Enforcement Officer Mr. Hayducky, and there is a standard operating procedure set up for enforcement and there are also two other staff members who spend a portion of their time doing enforcement but spend more time on the inspection part of things versus the actually processing of the complaints and violations. He also said that Planning & Zoning receives on average 125 complaints on a typical calendar year, and two weeks ago when he asked staff what the number of complaints were for 2022 the total for this calendar year was 111, so it's on that timeframe. He said there are approximately 400 outstanding confirmed violations that are in different stages of actions, and there are just over 200 confirmed outstanding complaints and on an annual basis there are about 25-30 complaints of illegal apartments, and this year have received about 25 complaints. He said on an average year Planning and Zoning will close out 59 different complaints that come in a year and close out about 73 zoning violations a year, and often people will call in what they think is a zoning violation but it's not really a zoning issue.

Ms. Ayers said that she is the representative from District A and she has received a lot of concerns from the constituents particularly in the Spring Hill and West Main Street area and she understands that there are limited things that Planning and Zoning can do, and she understands that affordable housing is a problem in Norwalk but asked what the Common Council can do from a safety perspective. Mr. Kleppin said there is a distinction between occupancy and illegal apartments and in both State Statute and Norwalk zoning regulations is defines family as any number of individuals related by blood or marriage and allows up to three unrelated individuals, but if and when they confirm that there is an illegal apartment it is much easier to take action and will put the property through the citation process. He also said there is a new housing prosecutor has been appointed and P&Z is going to get a fresh perspective on what the law allows and if there are changes that they can make. Ms. Ayers said she things we can be doing something that we are not doing to make people aware, and we don't want our residents not to be safe and to be in an unsafe situation.

Mr. Meek asked why water bills cannot be subpoenaed to determine usage at a property. Mr. Kleppin said he would need to check with the law department to see if that is something that can legally be done but based on his past conversations with the housing prosecutor his guess would be that is not something they can do but he would be happy to ask. Mr. Meek asked that he inquire as other towns are doing that.

Ms. Alterman gave an example from two years ago where she was delivering boxes of food to a family and when she got there, she found two families living with six or more people in one room and kept the oven door open to heat their apartment. She said she was very upset by this, and they went on to tell her that the landlord turns off their heat if anyone in the building had not paid their rent on time and there were six families in a one family building and said that after listening to Mr. Kleppin explanations of illegal apartments asked technically if someone owns a one family dwelling there is nothing that can be done unless someone makes an outside complaint or a resident makes a complaint. Mr. Kleppin said to file civil action they need to provide proof and that often means getting permission to get onto the property. Mr. Alterman asked when in that situation she felt a need to help but not knowing what to do she referred them to the Housing Authority and asked if there is anything that can be done to protect someone in that type of situation, and if the city has any resources for when a tenant is evicted. Mr. Kleppin said if there is a multi-family situation and found to be unsafe, they will be relocated to safer quarters but again if this were to happen in a single- or two-family house there is a different set of rules.

Mr. McDonald said one of the most common scenarios that does get them into the door of a single- and two-family house is a medical call and find it to be unsafe they can contact his office and as long as they stay on the scene, they will determine what resources are available to protect the family.

Ms. Revolus said she once rented a place with a full kitchen, bathroom, four bedrooms, the works but she didn't realize it was illegal. Mr. Kleppin said that sometimes illegal apartments are gorgeous, they're

beautiful units, well done but are completely illegal in one way or another. Ms. Revolus asked if clarification is easy to obtain because people may not even know what illegal apartment would like and asked how often clarifications are shown and suggested a webpage that outlines indicators that an apartment is illegal. Ms. McMurrer said she thinks that is a really good idea to make is obvious of what the rules are/aren't and communicating that very clearly to their constituents.

Ms. McMurrer asked when someone does come across something that they feel is illegal how do they go about reporting that. Mr. Kleppin said to contact P&Z and they will pull the permits and check that against the tax cards, or submit a request customer service or visit the PZ webpage to file a complaint.

Ms. Alterman added that the most shocking thing was the family shat she spoke about were paying at least \$1,600 a month in rent and, and she thinks they were just worried nobody else would rent to them and some of them literally had only been here like a week or two, they had just immigrated here and she finds it obscene on how much money that people were charging for the situation they were living in.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd