

**CITY OF NORWALK
COMMON COUNCIL AD HOC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 16, 2018**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chair; John Igneri, Tom Livingston, Michael Corsello (7:07 p.m.)

STAFF: Raymond Burney, Personnel and Labor Relations Director

OTHERS: Mayor Harry Rilling, Bill Ireland, Chief Building Official; Steve Kleppin, Planning and Zoning Director; Kathryn Hebert, Public Works; Laoise King, Assistant to the Mayor; Lisa Thompson

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. A quorum was not present.

Mr. Kydes said that there was a tremendous amount of information that was just sent out. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the economic development portion of the Mayor's Reorganizational Plan.

Mr. Livingston asked the staff what things they felt were the strong points and the deficits of the proposed changes. The Mayor said that the administration wants feed back, both positive and negative. He added that if the staff were uncomfortable expressing themselves in front of him, he would be willing to leave. The staff said that they were fine answering the questions with the Mayor present.

Mr. Livingston said that this was an opportunity for the staff to tell the Council Members the pros and cons for their departments.

Mr. Ireland said that this would formalize the current practices. He said that the neighborhood improvement efforts would help. He said that right now, he tries to review all the complaints dealing with blight and direct them to the appropriate department. It would be helpful to bring everyone together, particularly with blight or zoning issues.

Mr. Corsello joined the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

The new process would allow him to call people in for a meeting to coordinating the effort. The discussion then moved to a previous discussion involving the addition of a new building inspector.

Mr. Kydes asked what the Building Department's biggest need was. Mr. Ireland said that in the past, there had been a Permit Coordinator position and that individual

handled the overall permit process to make sure that the applicants had what Zoning, the Fire Marshal's office and other departments needed. This position was later cut.

The discussion then moved to the Fire Marshal's inspection process for three or more family residences. Mr. Kleppin said that there was discussion underway of having a joint inspection team to inspect the buildings at one time. He explained that the Zoning Department does not have the ability to get into residential buildings on their own, but the Fire Marshal's Office does have that authority. Mayor Rilling said that the Fire Department had just been authorized to hire two more Fire Marshals. The discussion moved to illegal apartment complaints.

Mr. Burney pointed out that the idea was just to group various employees who have the same form and functions together. Mr. Burney said that having the Permit Coordinator position would be a wonderful example of the goal of this reorganization. Mr. Ireland said that it would be important to have someone like a retired contractor, developer or someone who was very familiar with the process.

Mr. Livingston asked Mr. Kleppin about the process. Mr. Kleppin replied that the glaring deficiency was in economic development. Mr. Livingston asked what the biggest need was for the zoning department. Mr. Kleppin said that there had been a new position approved and once the employee comes on board, it will free up the technical staff to do their job. He said that by bringing on a new hearing officer, the cases move forward more efficiently. The new permit software system is working but he pointed out that having an applicant going from office to office with the plans is not a good process and gave an example of an applicant presenting a set of plans to him, and he signed off on them. The individual then went to a different department with a different set of plans for the same project.

Ms. King said that everyone agreed that the process needs to be improved. Mr. Burney pointed out that Mr. Kleppin's department was slight ahead of the game since they were already working on updating the job descriptions and re-aligning the responsibilities for better efficiency.

Mr. Kydes asked what kind of background would be best for someone who was an economic development coordinator. Mayor Rilling said that the economic development coordinator area was lacking for years. An economic development coordinator should be reaching out to the various businesses and capitalize on this. The Fairfield Five has been doing this in a regional form. Discussion followed.

Mayor Rilling directed everyone's attention to the job description for the Economic Development Director included in the hand out from Mr. Burney.

Mr. Livingston asked Mr. Kleppin if there was anything missing from the process. Mr. Kleppin said that he could see where the roles and responsibilities would change and gave an example of someone eventually working on sustainability.

Mr. Kydes asked if the scope and responsibility for the Chief of Economic Development was appropriate and reasonable. Mr. Kleppin said that he believed it would be reasonable.

Mayor Rilling said that there has frequently been criticized for the staff salaries but gave an example of trying to recruit for an executive position, because the salary that is offered is less than the surrounding towns. It is very expensive to live in Fairfield County and this means that some new employees that move in from other parts of the state or the country leave rather quickly.

Ms. King pointed out that some of the neighboring towns have these positions covered by contracts so that someone does not arrive and then have the administration change a year or so later.

Ms. Hebert said that she would like to mention how the departments work together. She said that they had already realized that the various departments need to work together because they ended up having three studies underway at the same time. Transportation and mobility are key factors. There are many competing interests not only in the urban core, but in the outer neighborhoods. People get frustrated trying to move around and the more options available such as biking, walkability, or mass transit.

Ms. Hebert said that the proposed plan would bring together both on street traffic and off street parking, which are closely related. Both areas are under the DPW department. Alicia said that it would be important to have the new plans managed by a transportation developer. That person would be coordinating both areas.

Mr. Kydes asked if there would be issues if the on street and off street mobility was separated from DPW. Ms. Hebert said that it would not have to be separated out, but pointed out that mobility was a key factor. When it is fleshed out, the roles may change a bit.

Mr. Livingston asked what kind of special kind of skill set would be important. Ms. Hebert said that it would be important to have someone that could work with all the new department heads.

Mr. Kydes asked about the Transportation Planner. Ms. Hebert said that the individual would be working very closely with the Zoning.

Mr. Kydes thanked the staff members for their time.

Mr. Livingston said that he felt it was very good about the feedback from the staff. The new coordinator would be key.

Mr. Corsello said that he wanted to better understand what they were doing and was not ready to vote on the issue. Mr. Igneri agreed. Mr. Corsello said that by implements this in increments, it would be more manageable. Ms. King said that if it was done piecemeal, it might end up with creating a job function without the proper support. Mayor Rilling said that implementing it piecemeal would delay the process by six months or more. Discussion followed.

Mr. Burney then distributed copies of the proposed job description to the Committee members.

**** MR. KYDES MOVED TO PRESENT THE PLAN TO THE FULL COUNCIL.
** THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (KYDES, IGNERI
AND LIVINGSTON) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (CORSELLO).**

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service