

# Minutes

Housing Committee  
July 17, 2023  
6:30 p.m.

Police Training Room  
Municipal Building, Jamestown, New York

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilwoman Carrubba, Councilman Sheldon, Regina Brackman

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: City Clerk/Treasurer Jennifer R. Williams, Director of Development Crystal Surdyk

Councilwoman Carrubba called the meeting to order.

## **Opportunities for Public Comment**

Doug Champ of 225 Bowen Street appeared before the Housing Committee to discuss the proposed local law from the Department of Development. He would like to see changes made to housing court and the legal ramifications of code violations. The new law will help to ensure that code violations are handled in a timelier manner and enforce the housing code.

Roseanne Himes of 218 Bowen Street appeared before the Housing Committee to express concern regarding residents parking cars on their front lawns and the lack of follow through and enforcement. Many residents are putting up swimming pools and making alterations to their properties without a building permit. Many residents and past residents are very upset with the state of neighboring properties.

Melissa Paterniti of 346 Falconer Street appeared before the Housing Committee to share some information that she learned from spending some time with Code Enforcement Officer, Bronson Abbott. She taught Ms. Paterniti about the trials of code enforcement and used the example that one property in particular has been called into Housing Court 28 times. That is unacceptable. Ms. Paterniti once again brought up the property at 5 Hammond to call out the conditions of the property. She noted that many real estate agents in the city are selling properties in deplorable condition. They should not be allowed to sell these properties in such a condition. Ms. Paterniti asked if it might be possible to let the public know when a property is being rehabbed. She also asked if it may be possible for the public to be made aware of the status of code complaints.

## **Quality of Life Ordinance**

Ms. Surdyk opened the discussion regarding the Quality of Life Ordinance. She presented the third draft to the committee for review and discussion. The hope is that this new ordinance will allow code enforcement to issue a ticket, immediately upon inspection for animal maintenance (waste and feces cleanup), junk and debris exterior, high weeds, grass or plant growth, dangerous trees, unauthorized motor vehicles (including parking on front lawns or illegally parked or unregistered vehicles), and illegal burns. While there are currently ordinances that address all of these items, this ordinance will give the code enforcement officers the ability to issue tickets and fines.

Councilwoman Carrubba asked which cities are currently utilizing a Quality of Life Ordinance. Ms. Surdyk noted that she would provide a complete list but she knows for sure that Rochester and Geneva are currently operating under a similar ordinance as the one being proposed. All aspects of the ordinance are being reviewed, specifically, how this will impact other departments.

Councilwoman Brackman questioned the process for when someone is fined and doesn't follow through with the remediation. Each time someone is issued a fine, it will double and then triple to the maximum amount allowed. Following the maximum allowed fine, if the issue has not been mitigated, the department can then remediate the problem themselves and bill it back to them. If still unpaid, the fine will go to a credit collector to recoup the funds. This is similar to the parking ticket fee collection.

Ms. Surdyk noted that this process is not finished. More meetings are set with police, fire, code enforcement officers, etc. to make sure everything is consistent.

Ms. Surdyk addressed Councilwoman Carrubba's question as to how the tickets will be served. Safety of the issuing officer is of paramount importance. Typically, what is done, if a code enforcement officer issues a ticket at a property personally, they bring along another code enforcement officer. In person, tickets attached to the property and mailed tickets will all be ways of distribution.

Councilman Sheldon asked if the open fire section banned people from smoking meat. Ms. Surdyk said no, but she would update the section that was inadvertently omitted from the draft ordinance presented to the committee. She has been working with the Fire Code Enforcement Officer, Ryan Saunders to obtain the open fire law definition. Generally, if you are using a fire too cook on, it is allowable, but the language will be clearly stated in the ordinance. The hope is to eliminate bringing every single case to court, the goal is to fine individuals to spur them to take care of the citation, saving court for the most severe cases.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jennifer R. Williams  
City Clerk/Treasurer