

City of Norwich Electrical Board

April 10, 2019

8:00 am

Fire Station Conference Room

Present:

Richard Barnes

Ald. D. Zeino

Mayor C. Carnrike

Tom Jensen (on speaker phone)

Chief J. Papelino

CEO A. Donnison

CEO D. Smith

Tom Mealey

Pat McNeil

Meeting opened at 8:02am with A. Donnison stating the reason for this meeting is to address a question about the definition and/or interpretation of "repair". All present were given copies of an email asking City Attorney S. Natoli this question upon giving him what has historically been used which is something must be in existence in order to repair it. Mr. Natoli agreed. Also included is a statement of a conversation with Kevin Duerr-Clark, P.E., Assistant Director NYSDOS who also agreed and asked if the city code referenced the NYS Existing Building or NYS Build Code for the definition of repair. The answer is no. Leaving that to mean that the city may interpret it as it has historically or make an amendment to the code adding a specific definition to be upheld.

Mayor Carnrike stated that from the records she could find there has not been an electrical board meeting since 2013. A. Donnison stated that this is incorrect, R. Barnes agreed. Ald. Zieno stated he recalled being at the last meeting in 2017. A. Donnison did state that they did not meet quarterly for the simple reason it is often difficult to get a quorum and unless there is a specific topic to discuss there seemed to be no need to meet to say hi and can find no record of when they ever did meet quarterly. R. Barnes did state that he requested this meeting and it took a couple of attempts to get a date set.

All present were also given a list of all eligible current master electric license holders in the City of Norwich. There are currently 60 on the list of which 37 have renewed so far in 2019. Mayor Carnrike asked what the process was for someone to sit for an exam. A. Donnison stated there is an application and a minimum years of service in the field. This can be met in a combination of ways: education in the electrical field, employment in the field, apprentice listed on current master license holder to name a few. There is also available a reciprocating license with Oneonta and Binghamton as well as one time one job temporary license with proper documentation supplied with an application.

Mayor Carnrike stated that she felt with the current number of license holders that if more are not recruited and the annual number of license renewals keep dropping it could have a negative impact on future development. Ald. Zieno asked if requirements to sit for an exam are more restrictive here than in other areas. A. Donnison stated no, that it was pretty much the same in all cities that require licensing statewide. Which is one of the reason we have reciprocating agreements with 2 nearby cities as we have the same minimum requirements. Using a licensed electrician is only required in the City limits – no where else in Chenango County is it required. However, even in the towns an electrical inspection must still be performed. T. Mealey stated that in Oneonta license holders must also have a police background check performed.

T. Mealey stated that it is tough due to the cost on the required insurance and workers comp. D. Smith the County also requires workers compensation and liability. . T. Mealey stated he believed it is in the consumers best interest to keep licensing. Some people step over dollars to save pennies but at least with a licensed electrician you are at getting someone who has field experience.

R. Barnes acknowledge that it is often likely difficult for someone to reach a licensed electrician as they are all busy and are not sitting by the phone waiting for it to ring. R. Barnes if the city had ever received any formal written complaints about any license holders. A. Donnison stated no. D. Smith stated that should there be an emergency situation he had always been able to reach an electrician to take care of the issue immediately.

P. McNeil asked if in a project such as the school renovation if all the electrical boxes were in place and only the light fixtures needed to be connected could the property owner perform that work. A. Donnison stated no as it isn't a repair it's part of an overall project. T. Mealey added that the project must be completed by the license holder of record due to insurance reasons. Should there be a fire and its traced back to a fixture connection it will come back on him as performing that work. R. Barnes confirmed that with his attorney as well. P. McNeil agreed then that a more solid definition of "repair" should be added to the code. A. Donnison stated that historically it has been interpreted as fixing something that was already in place – not installing fixtures on a project that was gutted to the brick walls. Mayor Carnrike read the dictionary definition of repair. D. Smith suggested that the word "existing" be added to the definition. R. Barnes stated the ICC definition would work as well but A. Donnison will gather some additional info on what other communities define as repair as well as what the NEC defines it as and have it available for the next meeting.

R. Barnes handed out photos of homeowner electrical work that was performed on a property here in the city which clearly showed some huge violations. The house had a fire in it. R. Barnes worked with the insurance company to correct the violations.

A. Donnison stated that there is a new licensed plumber and electrician on site on another building, however the same electrical inspector/agency must be used for the entire project per the electrical code. T. Jensen stated the reason for this is that it is a liability issue for an inspector to sign off for a final when he hasn't followed the project to be aware of items that have been noted to change.

R. Barnes stated that there should possibly be added to the code fines for work that is done illegally. At

this time there are no penalties for a person who performs work illegally.

Ald. Zieno asked what the red "x" signs on building indicate. Chief J. Papelino stated that an "X" tells the firefighters if they are called to the scene for a fire that the building is empty and is structurally unsound and to not enter unless they receive specific information there is a life in danger in the building.

R. Barnes stated that NYSEG requires an electrical inspector to sign off on the service connection to a property where the electric has been off for 2 or more years. Does the city go inside and perform any inspections if it has been vacant for 2 or more years. D. Smith stated no. We can not go into any single family owner occupied home unless invited to inspect internal electrical wiring. A. Donnison confirmed and stated rental dwellings we do go into at each change of tenancy.

Summary of items to be reviewed at the next meeting: Testing requirements of other cities to confirm we are in line. Penalty verbiage for those performing work illegally. NEC definition of "repair" as well as what other cities have for definition.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 12th, 2019 at 8am at the Norwich Fire Station.

Meeting adjourned by T. Jensen, seconded by R. Barnes at 9:45am. Ayes all.