

COMMON COUNCIL
Work Session

September 11, 2007

Mayor Joseph Maiurano presided at the work session of the Common Council held at 7:00 PM on September 11, 2007, in the Common Council Chambers at One Court Plaza.

Present:

Mayor Joseph Maiurano
Ald. A. Anthony Abraham
Ald. Terry Bresina
Ald. Suzanne Williams
Ald. Walter Schermerhorn
Ald. Paul Laughlin
Ald. Robert Jeffrey

Also:

Clerk/Director of Finance William Roberts
Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest
Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence
EMO A. Jones
Deputy Clerk Brian Drake
Department of Public Works Superintendent Carl Ivarson
Planning & Community Dev. Specialist Todd Dreyer
Ward Supervisor James McNeil
Media Representative Jessica Lewis

Absent: None

Call to Order

The work session of the Common Council was called to order by Mayor Maiurano at 7:03 p.m.

Comments

Mayor Maiurano asked those present to remember the lives lost during the September 11, 2001 tragedy.

Open Forum

Mary Coe, 5 Waite Street, asked if the City's plans for the Restore New York Round 2 Grant Program included the property at 7 Waite Street. The Mayor responded that they did. Ms. Coe asked who would be attending to yard maintenance and snow removal in the interim, and mentioned that she had been taking care of snow removal herself. The Mayor replied that Code Enforcement would ensure that the owners would maintain the property until it was acquired by the City. Ms. Coe thanked the City.

Proclamation

Mayor Maiurano issued the following proclamation:

P R O C L A M A T I O N

**Norwich Garden Club Day
September 13, 2007**

WHEREAS, the Norwich Garden Club was established as the Garden Department of the Ladies Village Improvement Association in 1932; and

WHEREAS, the Norwich Garden Club has worked through the years to promote the art of gardening, to encourage civic planting, and to beautify the City of Norwich; and

WHEREAS, the Norwich Garden Club celebrates its 75th Anniversary on September 13, 2007;
now

THEREFORE, I, Joseph P. Maiurano, Mayor of the City of Norwich, New York, do hereby proclaim September 13, 2007, as Norwich Garden Club Day in the City of Norwich.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City to be affixed this 11th day of September, 2007.

Mayor

Committee Chair Reports

Finance/Personnel Committee of September 4, 2007

Ald. Schermerhorn reported that the Finance/Personnel Committee recommended Council approval of the purchase of EMS Heart Monitors, transfers to cover recent retirement costs, hose and supplemental equipment for the new fire truck, street paving costs, replacement of the bed of a DPW dump truck, and updated banking resolutions.

The Committee heard a presentation from Tom Fisher of Otego, a contractor who, with a local backer, plans to purchase and renovate three properties at Silver and Mitchell Streets. The Committee was encouraging to Mr. Fisher and looks forward to hearing more concerning his proposed project.

Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer reported to the Committee on the most promising source of funds for a renovation of the restrooms in Weiler Park. Discussion followed about the viability of renovation if the restrooms were likely to be vandalized again, or the preferability of moving the restrooms to an area that is less secluded.

T. Dreyer also presented to the Committee an update on the Restore New York Round 2 grant application, discussing plans for four properties to be acquired (or already owned) by the City, demolishing the existing structures, if any, and erecting modular homes that would then be offered to qualified moderate-income families with a profit to the Community Development Fund of the City of from \$30,000 to \$60,000 per property.

Superintendent of Public Works Carl Ivarson presented to the Committee proposed 2008 budgets for Water/Waste Water, Parks, and Public Works. He explained that he had increased amounts for Repairs and Maintenance to include proposed repairs of the East Main Street parking lot, for a new street sweeper, and for resurfacing of park tennis courts.

Ald. Abraham asked for assurance that the Committee "will be checking all the economic and community development loans that will be reviewed for next month's meeting." Ald. Jeffrey said that was correct and that the Committee had reviewed the loans informally during Executive Session. Director of Finance William Roberts mentioned that the report would be presented to Council.

Discussion

Ald. Williams asked if Mr. Fisher should speak to the Planning Commission or the Zoning Board before proceeding with his plans. Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence and the Mayor explained that Mr. Fisher had already spoken to the Planning Commission and the Codes Department and was familiar with Norwich City Codes, and that his plans would probably not require any variances.

Public Works/Safety Committee of August 23, 2007

Ald. Bresina reported that the relevant above-referenced motions referred to the Finance/Personnel Committee had been unanimously recommended by the Public Safety/Public Works Committee. He further reported that the Committee had received proposed draft 2008 budgets for the Police and Fire Departments and discussed proposed changes in the Plumbing Code, mostly involving the testing procedures for licensing. Currently the City schedules tests and hires proctors. The new plan would involve contracting with an outside company. This would allow candidates to schedule tests at their convenience and would cost the City nothing.

C. Ivarson addressed the Committee regarding concerns about openings in the department. Ald. Bresina said that filling the lead operator position was especially important, but that this was a long-term problem because of the difficulty of maintaining on available salaries persons who are qualified. This is a widespread problem for many communities. Another problem is filling a Parks position, which requires a number of certifications, but that many candidates do not have these certifications or are unable to pass the required tests. He mentioned that C. Ivarson had said he would fill all open positions if funds were available.

C. Ivarson also reported that the street paving project was successful. Regarding the request for a new bed for a DPW dump truck, Ald. Bresina commented that a new truck would cost approximately \$80,000, but that the truck was mechanically sound and replacing the bed would only cost \$12,500. He further remarked that the DPW's budgeting

for a new street sweeper, while expensive, was vital to keeping the City streets clean. He confirmed that work was completed on Beebe Avenue.

Emergency Management Officer A. Jones reported that three stream gauges were going to be placed in and around the City.

Discussion

T. Dreyer presented another update on the Restore New York Round 2 grant application, and requested a public hearing be held at the Common Council regular meeting. He reported that he had met with Chenango Valley Home, which had agreed to sell the Rice House on their property to the City for \$8,000 for removal to one of the properties proposed for the grant program. Chenango Valley Home would bear the costs of filling the foundation and removing trees, so the City would have no expense except for the purchase and moving of the house. He then mentioned that the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation had communicated with him requesting alternatives for the moving of the Rice House before they would issue a letter of support. T. Dreyer informed them that the house would be demolished if not moved, and is awaiting their response.

T. Dreyer then presented to the Council two resolutions Authorizing SEQRA Determination Concerning Restore NY Round 2 Grant Application and Specifying the City's Financial Contribution to the Second Round of the Restore NY Grant Program, and a Negative Declaration, to be approved at next week's Council session. He mentioned that the resolutions distributed would require some slight modifications before being voted on at the next Council session. Ald. Jeffrey asked if letters of support had been received. T. Dreyer replied that he had been aggressive in seeking letters of support and had already received five, one from Sen. Schumer. Several were expected from Senators Clinton, Libous, and Assemblyman Crouch, as well as from the OFC and Norwich Housing Authority. He reiterated that the new houses would be sold to moderate-income families, which for a family of four in Chenango County is defined as \$68,500. He noted that the City of Norwich currently has about 2,000 rental units, and so has a large pool of potential buyers to work from. Ald. Jeffrey asked when the letters of support were needed. T. Dreyer replied that the application will be submitted on September 25 or 26, and letters would be needed before then. The Mayor remarked that Sen. Crouch had visited the properties with the Mayor, and that Sen. Libous was planning to visit within the next two weeks. Letters of support are also expected from Richard Decker, Chairman of the Chenango County Board of Supervisors, and City Supervisor Linda Natoli. He also requested a letter from City Supervisor Jim McNeil. Ald. Williams asked when grants would be awarded. T. Dreyer responded that awards should be announced by the end of the year. The Mayor commented that this grant would be very important for the City, and thanked Mr. Dreyer for his presentation.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to set a public hearing for September 18, 2007, to receive public comments relative to the City of Norwich's application to the Empire State Development Corporation for grant funding under Round 2 of the Restore NY Communities Initiative. Seconded by Ald. Williams, duly approved ayes all.

Motions / (Correspondence)

None.

Resolutions

None.

Development of Agenda for Regular Common Council Meeting of September 18, 2007

- 1) *Call To Order*
- 2) *Pledge of Allegiance*
- 3) *Invocation*
- 4) *Approval of minutes of the regular meeting of August 21, 2007, and the work session of September 11, 2007.*
- 5) *Open Forum*
- 6) *Correspondence*
 - ◆ *Norwich YMCA – Annual Halloween Parade, October 27, 2007*
 - ◆ *Norwich Pumpkin Festival, October 26-27, 2007*
 - ◆ *Renewal of Liquor License – The Bohemian Moon*

- 7) *Department, Board and Commission Reports*
 - ◆ *Parks Commission minutes of July 9, 2007*
 - ◆ *Parks Commission minutes of August 13, 2007*
 - ◆ *Water Commission minutes of*
 - ◆ *Water Commission minutes of*
 - ◆ *Youth Board Meeting September 5, 2007*
 - ◆ *Youth Bureau Report July/August 2007*
 - ◆ *Zoning Board of Appeals minutes for August 20, 2007*
- 8) *Ward and Committee Reports*
 - ◆ *Finance / Personnel Committee meeting of September 4, 2007*
 - ◆ *Public Safety / Public Works Committee meeting of August 23, 2007*
- 9) *Old Business*
- 10) *New Business*
 - ◆ *Shared Municipal Services Initiative Grant Program*

Motions

- ◆ *Set Public Hearing for Revised Plumbing Code*

Resolutions

- ◆ *Supporting Tobacco Point of Purchase*
- ◆ *Authorizing SEQRA Determination Concerning Restore NY Round 2 Grant Application*
- ◆ *Specifying the City's Financial Contribution to the Second Round of the Restore NY Grant Program*
- ◆ *Authorizing Transfer of Funds from Employee Benefits Reserves*
- ◆ *Authorizing Purchase of EMS Heart Monitors*
- ◆ *Authorizing Capital Reserves Transfer – Hose & Supplemental Equipment*
- ◆ *Authorizing Transfer – Street Paving Costs*
- ◆ *Authorizing Capital Reserves Transfer – Replacement of Bed in DPW Dump Truck*
- ◆ *Authorizing Signatories and Depository Transactions With Partners Trust Bank*
- ◆ *Authorizing Signatories and Depository Agreements With JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.*
- ◆ *Authorizing ACH Originator Agreement and Changes in Authorized Signatures for Banking Transactions with NBT Bank, N.A.*

- 13) *Payment of Bills*
- 14) *Executive Session (if needed)*
- 15) *Adjournment*

Proposed September 18, 2007 Agenda Additions or Deletions

Ald. Jeffrey requested that an executive session be added to discuss the financial and credit histories of particular corporations.

Executive Session

None.

Discussion

Ald. Laughlin expressed concerns about the current City Code because it allows certain grasses for lawns that he considers unsightly, and because it allows for the keeping of certain livestock within the City limits, adding that he was informed a goat was being kept in his ward. He felt that perhaps changes in the Code should be contemplated. The Mayor remarked that if the animal became a nuisance it could be dealt with under other laws, but if it were not a nuisance no action need be taken.

Adjournment

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to adjourn at 7:48 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin and duly adopted ayes all.