

REGULAR WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2013
6:00 P.M.

The Regular Work Session of the City Council of the City of Vineland was called to order by the President, Anthony R. Fanucci.

The following members were present at roll call:

Councilwoman Angela Calakos
Councilwoman Maritza Gonzalez
Councilman John A. Procopio
Councilman Paul F. Spinelli
President Anthony R. Fanucci

Also present were: Denise Monaco, Business Administrator
Richard P. Tonetta, Solicitor (*arrived at 6:05 P.M.*)

President Fanucci led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Municipal Clerk stated Public Notice of this meeting, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, has been given on January 15, 2013 by the City Clerk in the following manner:

1. Posting written notice on the official bulletin board in the lobby of the City Hall on;
2. Providing written notice to the offices of The Daily Journal and The Press of Atlantic City;
3. Filing written notice in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Vineland.

President Fanucci asked if anyone from the public wished to comment.

Steve Lewis does not favor reducing the time permitted for public comment at meetings from 15 minutes per person to 5 minutes per person. He suggested that Council wait a year to gauge the situation first. He referenced a recent article in *The Daily Journal* about the Industrial Park superfund site and suggested requiring businesses that have the potential of environmental harm to post a bond. He also again reiterated his suggestion that Council members include their name and contact number on the agendas. Solicitor Tonetta responded that the NJDEP does require companies to post a bond and the city cannot impose another. Council members also agreed to include their contact numbers on future agendas.

David Mazur asked for an update on the flooding issue at Brewster Road and Oak Road. Solicitor Tonetta explained that the matter is currently in litigation and there is nothing to report at this time.

Robert Larrieu stated that a local Spanish radio station reported about Council's consideration of reducing the time for public comment and he was concerned it was because of his lengthy comment period two weeks ago. Mr. Larrieu also reiterated his concerns about the revaluation. President Fanucci assured Mr. Larrieu that the idea to reduce the comment time was not directed at him, but rather follows what many other local governments do and it will permit more people to be heard, improving efficiency. He further explained that it is always under the jurisdiction of Council to extend the comment time in a case-by-case basis. President Fanucci offered to discuss the matter himself on the Spanish radio station and thought that perhaps Mr. Larrieu would be his translator. President Fanucci explained that everyone at this table is a taxpayer and concerned about the revaluation implications, so Council members are not adversaries.

Bob Mole also noted his concerns about the revaluations and questioned what is going to happen.

Bob Haars advised that his family-owned business has been around a long time and the revaluation is a scary situation, especially the vagueness of the approach used by the company. He described some issues involving his property, noting that the front portion is commercial and the rear portion is residential, yet the revaluation company based their figures on the entire property being commercial.

Russ Swanson stated that his main concern about the revaluation is with commercial property. He indicated he owns 9 properties. He also related the situation he encountered when he arrived for a scheduled appointment with the revaluation company, after having spent many hours preparing with comparisons and other research, only to be told they didn't have his paperwork because they said his appointment was the day before. He said the company needs to re-do the revaluation. Councilman Spinelli asked Solicitor Tonetta to research what the city can do at this point.

Carmen Triscitta described the competition he encounters in his automotive parts business and the difficulties with keeping tenants in rental properties. He doesn't believe the revaluation company understands the Vineland market.

Robert Scarpa inquired about how the revaluation relates to Governor Christie's 2% tax cap. It was explained that the tax rate hasn't been struck yet.

Joseph Isabella, Director of Municipal Utilities was present with Water Utility Superintendent Mike Lawler. He used a PowerPoint presentation to explain the need for a water utility rate increase. The utility serves approximately 14,000 customers and includes 12 wells, 8 elevated tanks and extensive distribution lines.

He explained that the previous Council authorized two 10% rate increases a few years ago, but the 2012 revenues were \$232,000 less than projected and the expenses were \$190,047 more than actual revenues. He added that radium removal media replacement is ongoing and expensive. There was some discussion about including a “chemical” adjustment on the customer bills, similar to the fuel adjustment on electric bills. The utility is requesting an increase of 10% to be effective in April. He shared a comparison of Vineland water rates (average 8,419 gallon/month user) which is \$22.22, compared to the average of our 6 nearby municipalities, which is \$33.80, and the average for investor-owned utilities, which is \$58.60.

Mr. Isabella and Mr. Lawler also referenced a resolution on the agenda to oppose legislation proposed by Senator Bob Smith that would require a “use fee” of 40-cents per thousand gallons of water. It appears to be an attempt to fund open space acquisition in North Jersey.

The Clerk reviewed the agenda.

Councilman Spinelli requested that a resume or summary of qualifications be included for Mayoral appointments when City Council is required to ratify and confirm them. He said it is the same the Mayor has asked City Council to provide to him for Council appointments. President Fanucci will discuss the matter with Mayor Bermudez.

Solicitor Tonetta explained that he was involved in meetings with a company, Tradebe Environmental Services, interested in purchasing the Pure Earth facility in the Industrial Park. This property has been the focus of much discussion and environmental attention because of the superfund status. He explained that the company asked that Council’s resolution be amended to not oppose the NJDEP licensing. He said the company agreed to keep the public more aware of what they are doing and planning. Council requested that Solicitor Tonetta get their agreement in writing.

Director of Economic Development, Sandy Forosisky, explained that effort is still be exerted to get the former Newcomb Hospital building active. There is now a proposal to convert a portion of the property into an assisted living facility. There also remains hope for long-range development to include a medical school branch from the Rowan University/Cooper Hospital partnership. President Fanucci directed Mrs. Forosisky to ask the owners of the former Newcomb Hospital to address security issues that have been brought to his attention. Mrs. Forosisky acknowledged an issue with gang activity there.

Mrs. Forosisky also noted the change order that will add landscaping to the new Industrial Park entry signage. The change order is for an increase of \$2,400.

President Fanucci invited Robert Greco to make comments. Mr. Greco expressed his concern about the Tradebe proposal. He explained that this company is a processor of hazardous waste and all Vinelanders should be concerned about the implications.

The President entertained a motion by Councilman Spinelli, and seconded by Councilman Procopio, to adjourn the meeting. The Clerk called the roll: YEAS:

- Councilwoman Calakos
- Councilwoman Gonzalez
- Councilman Procopio
- Councilman Spinelli
- President Fanucci

Anthony R. Fanucci
President of Council

ATTEST:

Keith Petrosky, RMC
Municipal Clerk