

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING: MASSAGE PARLORS
JULY 26, 2012**

COMMITTEE: R. Paoletto, Co-Chair; W. Blunt, Co-Chair; M. McCarthy; T. McCarthy, Council President; R. Bonney; L. Martinez; R. Curwen

NON COMMITTEE: A. Vizzo-Paniccia; L. Colon; M. Ayala; C. Silva; J. Olson; A. Baker; S. Brannelly

Public Hearing was opened at 6:35 p.m.

68-11 Re: Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances amend Chapter 5.12 Massage Establishments and Massage Therapists.

Co-Chair Paoletto stated the purpose of this Public Hearing is to hear comments from the public on the ordinance dealing with Massage Establishments and Massage Therapists. This committee will not be hearing comments on issues with Sexually Oriented Businesses in Bridgeport.

He then asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of this ordinance.

1. State Senator Auden Grogins, 129th Assembly District came forward to speak. She thanked the Committee for their efforts with regards to putting this ordinance together and said this will address quality of life and economic development issues in the City of Bridgeport. She also thanked Council Members S. Brannelly and M. McCarthy for spearheading this effort on the local and state level to once and for all get rid of illegal massage parlors in the city.

She said getting rid of these establishments will remove one more barrier to economic development. This year she worked on a state law, signed by the Governor in June of this year, to make it illegal to hire non-licensed massage therapists, and offer massage therapy services without a license. This city ordinance is critical to cleaning up the city and eliminating these businesses which are fronts for prostitution. She restated her support of this ordinance and urged the Committee and Council to pass this tonight.

2. Linda Bluestein came forward to speak in support of this ordinance. She is a new resident of Bridgeport having moved here 9 weeks ago. She said she has a dream of Bridgeport being known for their beautiful parks, wonderful schools and safe neighborhoods. She feels this ordinance is a good first step towards that dream.
3. Sabina Cantine (sp?) came forward. She is a licensed massage therapist, is 33 years old and a resident of Bridgeport. She said she operates her business in Southport and felt she could not base her business in Bridgeport because of the negative connotation of this city. She said it is hard enough to be a female business owner offering therapeutic massage services without adding the stigma that comes with operating in the city of Bridgeport. She supports passage of this ordinance.
4. Stephanie Barnes, resident of Black Rock came forward in support. She said she has been monitoring websites for massage parlors in Bridgeport. She then read some very graphic reviews of massage parlor employees written by 'customers' of these establishments.
5. Maxine Greenberg came forward. She is a resident of Black Rock moving here from Fairfield 15 years ago. She said she has some concerns about who runs the City and how decisions are made here in trying to make Bridgeport a better place. Feels that this is a really important step forward. Wanted to thank Sue Brannelly and others for their hard work.
6. Jerry Manning, Black Rock resident, Chair of the Black Rock NRZ and Member of the Black Rock Historic Commission came forward to speak. He stated that it is very difficult to attract legitimate businesses to come in to the city and position themselves next to one of the undesirable businesses. They must be eliminated in order to promote economic development, reduce taxes and improved schools.
7. Don Greenberg, resident of Black Rock came forward to add his support. He stated he has heard many substantive and solid reasons to support this ordinance. He has not ever heard any substantive or solid reasons to oppose this. He has every confidence this committee will do the right thing and approve.
8. Daryl Manning came forward to throw her support behind this bill and to thank Auden Grogins and everyone who has worked on this to make Bridgeport a better place to live.

9. Christine Samuel came forward to support this ordinance. She and her husband moved from Fairfield to Black Rock four years ago primarily because they love the community and wanted to champion Bridgeport. They started to notice some of these businesses and wondered why they were allowed to proliferate. She said this is a unique opportunity to do something good for the city and thanked everyone for all of their hard work on this issue. She said she has a 3 year old daughter and she dreads the day when her daughter asks her what goes in those places. She urged the committee to make the right decision.

Chair Paoletto then asked if there was anyone who wished to speak against.

Seeing none the public hearing was closed.

** COUNCIL MEMBER BONNEY MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN

** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN SECONDED

** VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS IN FAVOR.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Kuzmich
Telesco Secretarial Services