

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MARCH 11, 2022**

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

**ATTENDANCE:** Marcus Brown, Co-chair; Rosalina Roman-Christy, Co-chair; Aikeem Boyd, Jorge Cruz, Michelle Lyons, Ernest Newton

**OTHERS:** Council Member(s): M. Pereira & M. Small; Thomas Gaudett, Mayor's Office; Atty. M. Anastasi, Police Lt. M. Cotto, Police Dept.; 203-445-1859, 203-673-7218

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Brown called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m. A quorum was present.

**33-21 Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, amend Chapter 10.32 – The Operation or Use of Dirt Bikes, All-Terrain Vehicles, Snowmobiles, Motor-Driven Cycles, or Mini Cycles.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOVED AGENDA ITEM 33-21 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, AMEND CHAPTER 10.32 – THE OPERATION OR USE OF DIRT BIKES, ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES, SNOWMOBILES, MOTOR-DRIVEN CYCLES, OR MINI CYCLES.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira thanked Council Member Roman-Christy and Council Member Brown for scheduling the meeting. She said that she was seeing ATVs and dirt bikes everywhere. She said that she had raised the issue with Acting Chief Garcia. The gas stations should be held accountable.

Chief Garcia said that the Police Department would be responsible for enforcing the rules. There is a fine on the books already, but she reminded everyone that the police are prohibited from chasing the ATV and dirt bike riders.

Council Member Pereira pointed out that the gas stations are lottery ticket agents or cigarette vendors and they are fined for selling the items to underaged patrons. If the ATV vehicle is not properly hitched on a trailer, they should be fined. The Police Department needs to have this additional tool.

Council Member Brown asked Lt. Cotto if he wished to add any information. Lt. Cotto said that it was a community problem and doesn't just affect Bridgeport.

Council Member Newton asked how a police officer would know if the gas station was selling gas to an ATV or dirt bike. Lt. Cotto said that they do have mobile cameras that can be placed at hot spots. The violations will be more of an “on site” situation. Discussion followed.

Council Member Lyons said she and Council Member Small wished to be listed as sponsors on this ordinance. Weekend afternoons are the times when there is the most activity. She said often, the ATV riders cluster in an area before they start riding, which is when the police could stop them.

Council Member Lyons said that they had also spoken to the State Legislature about this. Council Member Brown reminded everyone that a request for statewide ban on selling gas to the ATVs had been made.

Council Member Cruz said he thought a gas ban would take a while to implement, but the riders should be held accountable. He suggested that they find a location where the ATVs can ride rather than having them ride on the street. In Milford, they have a location for them to ride. He requested that his colleagues support this measure.

Council Member Brown said that the main criticism was that they had no place to ride. If they build a park, riders will be coming from all over the state. He said that they won’t be bringing the bikes in on trailers.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that there was a lot of activity behind Trumbull Gardens and there have been many complaints, even in the wintertime. She wished to know how they would know if a gas station sold gas to an ATV owner. Lt. Cotto said that it would need to be an on-site violation. He explained that while the gas prices are high, the owners do not make much in terms of profit. A fine will hurt them. The first step will be educating the public and the gas station owners.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that she would like to be included as a sponsor on the bill.

Council Member Pereira said that she had some questions about the language, which Atty. Anastasi reviewed with the Committee. Atty. Anastasi said that he would check into whether the ordinance should include the word “owner”.

Atty. Anastasi pointed out that there are also concerns about the riders carrying a filled gas can on an ATV.

Council Member Pereira said that she had adapted wording from the language that was already in the ordinance, which is not a perfect solution. One gas station owner told her they would not sell to people who filled up gas cans, but there is no way to know if it was for a lawn mower, leaf blower or ATV.

Atty. Anastasi asked if the police could stop someone who was pushing an ATV or dirt bike on the City streets. Lt. Cotto replied that they can stop someone pushing a bike on the street and that

the riders usually smell like gas or smoke. This ordinance will make it just a little bit harder for the riders to get the gas.

The discussion moved to Section G on page 5 and whether a recorded video of someone getting gas would be admissible evidence. Lt. Cotto said that there were statutes of limitations and this would rank at the bottom of the call priority list.

Council Member Pereira asked about who would be responsible for providing and distributing a poster about this to gas station owners. Atty. Anastasi said that he did not know which department would be the appropriate department. Council Member Pereira stated that Zoning already handles some of these permit issues. Atty. Anastasi said that he would research this.

Council Member Pereira said that time was of the essence because they want to inform the gas station owners.

Atty. Anastasi said that there were people who have ATVs that they used as snowplows.

Council Member Newton said that it appears that this bill is not ready for the Council to vote on. He suggested that the attorneys sit down with the sponsors to discuss it. Atty. Anastasi suggested that the Committee schedule a Committee public hearing and then present it to the full Council in April. He suggested that the Committee set up the public hearing while the attorneys work on the language. Discussion followed about the various people who utilize gas containers, like landscapers and those who have generators.

Council Member Cruz suggested tabling the item, holding a public hearing followed by a special meeting to bring it to the full Council.

Council Member Lyons said that she was in favor of this and everyone should work together as a team.

Lt. Cotto recommended that the City prepare the sign and designate a particular color for it so the customers will know it is a City ordinance.

Council Member Brown said that the next scheduled meeting was on the 22nd and he said that they could hold the public hearing before the scheduled meeting.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 33-21 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, AMEND CHAPTER 10.32 – THE OPERATION OR USE OF DIRT BIKES, ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES, SNOWMOBILES, MOTOR-DRIVEN CYCLES, OR MINI CYCLES.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING AT 5 P.M. IN PERSON ON MARCH 22, 2022 REGARDING AGENDA ITEM**

**33-21 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES,  
AMEND CHAPTER 10.32 – THE OPERATION OR USE OF DIRT BIKES, ALL-  
TERRAIN VEHICLES, SNOWMOBILES, MOTOR-DRIVEN CYCLES, OR MINI  
CYCLES.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services