

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 23, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Tyler Mack, Co-chair; Rosalina Roman-Christy, Co-chair; Aikeem Boyd, Jorge Cruz, Ernest Newton, Maria Valle

OTHERS: Council Member(s): S. Burns & M. Pereira; Thomas Gaudett, Deputy Chief of Staff; Associate City Atty. James Maye; Police Captain Manuel Cotto; Sumit Sharma, Acting Health Director; Call in User 1; 203-880-5666

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Mack called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES:

- **March 28, 2023 (Regular Meeting)**
- **April 3, 2023 (Public Hearing)**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:**

- **MARCH 28, 2023 (REGULAR MEETING)**
- **APRIL 3, 2023 (PUBLIC HEARING)**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN CHRISTY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

65-22 Proposed Amendment to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, amend Chapter 8.81 – Sexually Oriented Business Ordinance.

Mr. Sharma, the Acting Health Director, came forward and explained that revisions had been started on the ordinance which involved changes of definitions for adult businesses. He reviewed the details.

Council Member Pereira had some questions about the 45 day period for qualifications should include pandemics or a national or state health emergency. Mr. Sharma said that he would include the phrase “Public Health Emergencies”.

Council Member Pereira noted a spelling error in the last line under bullet 5 on page 5. Mr. Sharma made a note of this error.

Council Member Pereira said that on page 8 in Section D, there is a requirement for the Police to issue a permit within 45 days and had some questions about the details. She noted that it states that 45 days were considered “unreasonable” and said that it should be changed. Atty. Maye said that this was an oversight. Mr. Sharma suggested a 90 day period.

Council Member Pereira said that there was a problem with the pagination on page 9 where there was supposed to be a bracket. Mr. Sharma said that Sections D, E, F and G were coming out. Council Member Pereira recommended that brackets be used around each section.

Council Member Pereira indicated where there was a run-on sentence that needed to be clarified and also included a mention of the 45 day period.

Council Member Newton asked to confirm that they were just changing the time period from 45 to 90 days. Council Member Pereira listed the corrections she was suggesting:

- the change of 45 days to 90 days in subsection E
- the inclusion of brackets around each sections that will be removed.
- the addition of a sentence for clarification in subsection E
- the use of the phrase “Public Health Emergencies” rather than pandemics in
The definition of Excusable Delay
- the correction of the grammatical error on page 5 from “complexity” to “completely”

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 65-22 PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, AMEND CHAPTER 8.81 – SEXUALLY ORIENTED BUSINESS ORDINANCE AS CORRECTED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira said that once a correction was made, the Police Chief and Health Director needed to notify people that a license was being issued within 48 hours. Atty. Maye suggested that the time period be 96 hours. Council Member Mack said that they could change the length on the floor. Council Member Pereira said that it would be better to have it stated as five business days. Mr. Sharma agreed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON WITHDREW HIS MOTION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ WITHDREW HIS SECOND.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 65-22 PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, AMEND CHAPTER 8.81 – SEXUALLY ORIENTED BUSINESS ORDINANCE AS AMENDED WITH THE CHANGES THAT WERE DISCUSSED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira asked for a clean draft of the documentation.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

66-22 Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 10.16 – Parking, amend Section(s): 10.16.010 – Definitions; 10.16.020 – Designation of Traffic Authority and 10.16.040 – Designation of Parking Division.

Council Member Mack said that the Council had wanted to have the Parking Division separate and located in Public Facilities. Mr. Gaudett reviewed the details and displayed the document on screen. Atty. Maye said that the City Attorney was fine with the changes.

Council Member Newton said that he supports this because the Police Department was short staffed and they need every officer they have. He had previously supported it being located in the Police Department.

Council Member Pereira said that she understood why they don't want to have it in the Police Department, but according to State Law, the enforcement was done by Police Officers. The Parking Enforcement staff only has control over municipal lots.

Mr. Gaudett said that he had researched the statutes and there were two different questions involved. He said that a department could designate a different department other than the Police to be a Parking Division. This would include authority to enforce parking regulations.

He noted that it was not clear as to what extent that the Parking Authority could enforce parking regulation throughout the City. He referenced CGS 7-203 which says that any municipality can create a Parking Authority or a Parking Division. 7-204 lists an ability to enforce parking regulations in a municipality that has adopted an ordinance under Section 7-204 in accordance with the terms of that ordinance. He reviewed the details with the Committee members. Discussion followed.

Council Member Pereira said that she felt that only the Bridgeport Police Department had control over right of ways and the Parking Authority staff only had authority in municipal lots.

Council Member Cruz said that he supported this move 100%.

Council Member Newton said that when the Parking Authority was under Public Facilities before, the staff was going out and tagging cars. However, there was a problem because there were some issues with people tagging cars of Council Members and their family members. There is a history there.

Council Member Burns asked whether it was a request from Chief Porter or it was a concession. Mr. Gaudett said that he believed that Chief Porter wanted the move.

Council Member Burns asked for clarification on one of the definitions and whether it would include scooters parked on the street. Discussion followed about whether the scooters were included.

Council Member Pereira said that the Parking Enforcement staff should not be called “brown shirts” because it was offensive.

Council Member Pereira repeated her earlier statement that only the Police have the authority to ticket on right of ways.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE 66-22 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 10.16 – PARKING, AMEND SECTION(S): 10.16.010 – DEFINITIONS; 10.16.020 – DESIGNATION OF TRAFFIC AUTHORITY AND 10.16.040 – DESIGNATION OF PARKING DIVISION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

67-22 Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2.94 – Fair Rent Commission, amend Section(s): 2.94.030 – Membership, 2.94.040 – Members’ Terms and 2.94.060 – Quorum and Procedures.

Council Member Mack said that this was possibly the last step that the Council had to take on this issue. He said that the Commission will have 7 members and they may have a tenant and a landlord on the Commission.

Council Member Newton thanked the individuals that worked on this. He said if this passes, their constituents will have a place to go if they feel they are being taken advantage of by the landlord.

Council Member Pereira said that they had originally removed the alternates but the word “alternates” was used throughout the document. She then listed a number of places where this occurred. Discussion followed.

Council Member Burns said that he would like to applaud the Council Members who worked on this.

Council Member Pereira asked whether this was a Committee of the Council. Council Member Mack said that it was a Commission of the City and the Mayor had the authority to appoint members. The Council President has the authority also to appoint. Council Member Pereira said that this was different from all the other Commissioners.

Council Member Newton said that often there are vacancies on the Board and Commission for years because of the lengthy appointment process and they were hoping that having the Mayor appoint people to the Commission. Discussion followed.

Council Member Pereira asked about the fact that there were only two Boards that had budgets, the BOE and the Library. She wanted to know how the Commission could decide to add staff as listed in the document. This is problematic since the Commission has the right to hire staff. No other Commission made up of volunteers has this ability.

Council Member Pereira then spoke about the section where the Commission could call meetings and another section dealing with those who are delinquent on their rent. Council Member Mack said that he believe that the portion regarding delinquent renters was a State statute.

Mr. Gaudett said that after reading the ordinance, the Council cannot delegate its own authority to budget or take away the Mayor's power in the budgeting process. That language should be removed from ordinance. Discussion followed.

Council Member Cruz left the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 67-22 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 2.94 – FAIR RENT COMMISSION, AMEND SECTION(S): 2.94.030 – MEMBERSHIP, 2.94.040 – MEMBERS' TERMS AND 2.94.060 – QUORUM AND PROCEDURES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.**

Mr. Gaudett said that the Council Members have been working very hard on this item and the goal was to get the Commission up and running by August or September. Mr. Gaudett said that this was originally intended to be a tweak to the number of Commissioners.

Council Member Newton said that he believed that the tweaks could be worked out before the item is presented at Council. This ordinance has been on the books for a long time and not functioning but is definitely something that is needed in the City.

Mr. Gaudett said that administration had received an email from the State saying that all municipalities needed to have a Fair Rent Commission by July 1st.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY RESCINDED HER MOTION TO TABLE.**

Council Member Roman-Christy said that she would vote against this if the updated ordinance did not meet with her approval.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 67-22 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 2.94 – FAIR RENT COMMISSION, AMEND SECTION(S): 2.94.030 – MEMBERSHIP, 2.94.040 – MEMBERS' TERMS AND 2.94.060 – QUORUM AND PROCEDURES WITH THE TECHNICAL CHANGES THAT NEED TO BE MADE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR AGENDA ITEMS 65-22, 66-22 AND 67-22 ON JUNE 5 AT 6:00 P.M.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD SECONDED.**

Council Member Roman-Christy asked why the public hearings could not be held during the Council meeting. Mr. Gaudett said that the Committee does not have the authority to schedule public hearings for the full Council.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services