

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
COMMUNITY RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2014 – 6:30 P.M.

JOAN WILLIAMSON ALDERMANIC CHAMBERS

MINUTES

Chairman Arthur T. Gerckens called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. All rose and pledged allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call

Present: Arthur T. Gerckens, Ronald M. Sill, Carmen T. DiCenso (Alternate)

Absent: Peter M. Olenoski

Also Present: The Honorable Mayor Anita Dugatto
Alderman David Anroman
James Butler, Chair, BOAT
Keith A. McLiverty, City Treasurer
Steve Nankano, Director, Housing Authority
Joseph Romano, Chairman, Housing Authority
Thomas Welch, Corporation Counsel

PUBLIC PORTION

Mayor Anita Dugatto, 1 Elizabeth Street, Derby, CT

I received an email today – a proposal for an idea – from the Valley Arts Council. I just wanted to hand it out to the committee to get your thoughts on it.

Mr. Gerckens asked if this would be for the Cultural Commission. Mayor Dugatto said it is from the Valley Arts Council, who is a 501 C3 organization. They have a small storefront on Elizabeth Street and they also occupy a City-owned building on Caroline Street. Mr. Gerckens said the committee will review this but will take no action tonight as they just received this.

Mr. Gerckens asked if anyone else wished to address the subcommittee. Hearing no one wishing to speak Mr. Gerckens declared the Public Portion closed.

APPROVAL OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2014

A MOTION was made by Mr. Sill with a second by Mr. DiCenso to approve the Minutes of the September 9, 2014 as presented. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Gerckens indicated that the members of the Housing Authority are present and he would like to request that we go out of order with the agenda and discuss #8 next.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Gerckens with a second by Mr. Sill to go out of order and move to item #8 – Report on Stygar Terrace issues brought to the full Board of Aldermen. **Motion carried.**

REPORT ON STYGAR TERRACE ISSUES BROUGHT TO THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN.

DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

Mr. Gerckens said the reason this is on the agenda – and he noted that he is treading carefully since the Board of Aldermen have no jurisdiction over the Housing Authority – is that several aldermen have received calls regarding issues at Stygar Terrace.

Joseph Romano the Chairman of the Derby Housing Authority Board and Steven Nankano the Executive Director of the Derby Housing Authority are present this evening to address any issues. Mr. Romano said the issue is on-going. It is based on politics, real life – there is a lot of stuff in the housing industry. One of the latest is elderly-young disabled (not elderly) living together in the same complex. Mr. Romano said they had to devise a system as to how we call people off our waiting list to get into these housing projects. What we do is strictly time stamp – stamp an application the day it comes in – it doesn't matter if they're elderly or handicapped to us because we're under a mandate to let whoever applies out of those two categories to show them an apartment. Mr. Romano said we have to grade them – they do a background check and several other things in order to apply. He said there were some non-elderly handicapped people this week who were rejected this week due to Police records and various other things that did not allow them to qualify. Mr. Romano stated that these two groups don't live well together. Historically we have not had problems but with the housing crunch we are now becoming a target for out of City people who want to move here. We have a lot of handicapped non-elderly who are now living with the elderly.

Mr. Romano said on top of that you get some real characters that really want to take advantage of their rights – so they're calling everyone. He said they address every problem. They have a Residence Service Coordinator. There is a lot of gossip, hearsay. Mr. Romano said they've been having issues with people opening the traps that are set up to capture and release raccoons to another area. Mr. Romano said he doesn't want to blame the Mayor; however since she's been going to meetings there once a month they feel empowered to call the Mayor's Office, Rosa DeLauro's Office, etc...

Mr. Romano said they have discussed security guards, cameras, etc... We are doing the best that we can. He said if you receive a call just refer it back to the Housing Authority. He said in the future they have are hoping to eventually acquire the Barron Block, which would alleviate a lot of the problems.

Mayor Dugatto said when she has the monthly meeting she tries to find a solution to some of the issues. She said she is the President of Hallocks Landing – and there is a 40 year term where you can only have seniors renting after that time it is considered public housing and open to people who need housing. She encourages them to use the Public Room. The residents that have been there are trying to protect themselves against the people who are just arriving.

Mr. Geckens said he has gotten numerous calls and he appreciates the challenges that you're up against. Mr. Sill asked if they are going to the meetings. Mr. Nankano said they are. The Aldermen thanked the Housing Authority officials for coming to the meeting this evening. They told the Housing Authority officials to get in touch with them if they could be of any assistance.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Gerckens with a second by Mr. Sill to re-open the Public Portion. **Motion carried.**

Gloria Norini – 15 Joyce Avenue, Derby, CT 06418

This is kind of an off the cuff idea. We were talking to Mayor Anita last week about what we can do to bring more people into the City, bring a little excitement to the City. Something more to do for the citizens of Derby. I know last year or two years ago when were part of the cultural commission we tossed around the idea of having a First Night Derby, which we really never pursued. But then talking with Mayor Anita we thought we would bring back the idea of having a First Night Derby. So we're in October so it's something that we would have to pull together pretty quickly. We would like to start off on a smaller scale – not a lot of mass advertising. So we're not overwhelmed with what we're going to do. But basically as you can see from the proposal we want to try to get to community groups – have signing at the churches – so four different groups at the churches at different times throughout the Green and get the Boy Scouts involved to do that. It's the Elks 100th Birthday – we want to partner with the Elks to do some things. We already talked to one of the local vendors who are willing to bring in an activity for some of the kids to do. So the idea is to start it earlier in the evening – start out with kids activities and as the evening progresses your activities will be more suitable for an older person ending with a countdown at the Opera House where the idea is to devise not a countdown for the ball to drop but a count up with an electric show going up the outside of the Opera House culminating with 2015. Our interest is to try to get a lot of the local people involved. We would love to have the townspeople and merchants involved – maybe have a decorating contest for their windows. So that would help us along with what's the best dressed holiday window. It doesn't have to be a Christmas theme. It could be a winter theme – it could be whatever they want – even a birthday theme for the Elks and offer a prize to get them in the mood and have a First Night Derby. I would love to see some of our local bands – like maybe your friend's band who had played for us in the past and they have some local people around and see if we can pull it together. See if we can bring some excitement into Derby.

Mr. Sill and Mr. Geckens both said it sounds like a great idea. Mr. Gerckens asked if there is going to be any vendors. Ms. Norini said they were thinking of inviting food vendors – they haven't had a formal meeting yet. She did say that they weren't looking to have something like a "Winter Derby Day." Ms. Norini said they would like to see the area businesses to stay open and get involved. Mr. Sill noted that a lot of towns started small and it has grown into something very big. Ms. Norini said the Cultural Commission has two funds and they would need to perhaps use some money from one of the funds. She said they may charge a small fee. Mr. Gerckens said it sounds like more work definitely needs to be done. He suggested that they report back after they have met and have more details.

Mr. Gerckens asked three times if anyone else wished to speak. Hearing no one...

A MOTION was made by Mr. Gerckens with a second by Mr. DiCenso to close the public portion. **Motion carried.**

DRAFT ORDINANCE FOR BOAT RAMP PERMIT AND FEE STRUCTURE. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

Mr. Gerckens stated that this has been kicked around over the past several years. It was discussed last December and he would like to bring it up again. He said there has been discussion about establishing a fee for the use with Derby residents not having to pay. Non-residents would pay a fee of \$100.00 per vessel annually. There would be no charge for non-motorized vessels. Mr. Gerckens noted that many items need to be reviewed – this is the first step. One item brought up was to possibly waive the permit fee for Veterans. Mr. Sill said he feels this is off to a very good start. Mr. Gerckens agreed and said he would like to continue the dialogue.

REPORT CONCERNING VAGRANT SITUATION BEHIND PERSHING DRIVE. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

Mr. Gerckens said this was addressed at last month's meeting and today a memo was received from Sgt. Scott Boulton of the Derby Police Department, which he read into the record:

TO: Community Relations Sub-Committee
FROM: SGT. Scott Boulton
SUBJECT: Vagrants on City Property
DATE: 14 OCT 14

On September 12, 2014, I was directed by LT Stanko to conduct a sweep of the property behind BJ's for vagrants living on City property. I contacted DPW Commissioner Anthony DeFala and together we drove to the area in question. Commissioner DeFala and I conducted numerous checks by foot of the area including locations where tents had previously been discovered. Finding nothing, we conducted checks along the greenway including the area of the former fire school. During this sweep, no tents, sites or vagrants were found.

Scott M. Boulton
Sergeant,
Patrol Supervisor
Derby Police Department

Cc: LT Justin Stanko

Mr. Gerckens said last month we requested a report and he thanked the Police Department for doing this. He would like to comment regarding this issue and noted that he took a few hits on social media and through the grapevine about why are the aldermen sticking their noses into police issues. Mr. Gerckens said that is not the case at all. He said an alderman asked him to place this on the agenda and that alderman

received that request from an area businessperson since that person's business was broken into and vandalized. The businessperson's surveillance cameras displayed the people who did the damage and he recognized the person(s) who broke in as people who had been in the area. Mr. Gerckens said last month he read a letter into the record from another alderman – personally I didn't feel the letter belonged in the Community Relations Subcommittee but I read the letter – the alderman asked me and I read the letter. Item 8 on tonight's agenda dealt with the Housing Authority issue that we really don't have jurisdiction over; however complaints have been received by several aldermen and the Mayor so the issue made it to our agenda. So I take representing the citizens of Derby very seriously and I will continue to represent them whenever I am requested to do so.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Mr. Sill with a second by Mr. DiCenso to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Finn
Recording Secretary

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN COMMUNITY RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE AT THEIR NEXT MEETING.