



John L. Salomone
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR STEPHEN WOODS

MINUTES

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS – TOWN HALL

6:55 P.M.

JANUARY 10, 2012

Mayor Woods called the Public Hearing to order to provide an opportunity for interested individuals to express their views regarding the proposed amendments to Newington Code of Ordinances Chapter 182, Blighted Premises Code.

I PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II ROLL CALL – Councilors Present

Councilor Borjeson
Councilor Bottalico
Councilor Castelle
Councilor Cohen
Councilor McBride
Councilor Nagel
Mayor Woods

Councilor DelBuono - absent
Councilor Klett - absent

III PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Phillip Block – 58 Fleetwood Road: He expressed his concern over the proposed ordinance and stated that the difference between the old ordinance and the current proposal was it would cover occupied residential properties. Mr. Block wondered where the data was that called for the need for a new requirement for residential property. He questioned the application of the present ordinance and what the enforcement rate has been over the years. Mr. Block stated that to create an ordinance for a presumed need would burden the Town and the citizens unnecessarily. He said that he had written a letter to John Salomone in September 2011 that analyzed information from the draft and gave a copy to the Clerk of Council to include in the Council's considerations. Enforcing these ordinances are flawed he stated. Mr. Block questioned about enforcing it evenly to agricultural or industrial property and there should be no exceptions. Mr. Block questioned the standards to be applied since there already exists a blight ordinance. He referenced his letter to Mr. Salomone regarding the first notice a citizen would get would

be an order which the citizen could not object to. The citizen is then put in the position of being in violation of an order subjecting the citizen to a penalty without having the opportunity to state the ordinance was not properly applied. He further stated that blight is usually a visual defect and questioned the physical defects mentioned such as defective hand railing, torn screens, or hatchway. These items would only be seen if a person is physically on the citizen's property. Mr. Block concluded by stating that if there was a real need for adding residential property to the Blight Ordinance, agricultural and industrial properties should be included and Council members should review the standards as if they were applied to their personal properties.

Louis Pomeroy, 214 Candlewood Drive: Mrs. Pomeroy liked the idea of the new amended Blight Code which would apply to occupied residential properties since it would protect all citizens equally. She inquired if the ordinance would include leaves in a yard because of a neighbor using their backyard as a dumping ground for unwanted vegetation for years. The yard is currently unsightly and Mrs. Pomeroy felt a deterrent to the value of her property. Mrs. Pomeroy had complained to the old Health Director, Mr. Cosgrove, who was unable to do anything about it since it was only vegetation. The current ordinance only allows for a letter to be sent to the neighbor regarding the vegetation problem. Mrs. Pomeroy wanted to ensure that the new ordinance would include all types of vegetation.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Road: Mrs. Lyons stated she had been following this Blight Ordinance for several years and wanted to know if the current proposal had been reviewed by the Town Attorney, Police and or Fire Departments. She had discussions with the Zoning Enforcement Officer about a particular property who stated it was difficult to enforce the current rules. Mrs. Lyons wondered about the vagueness of a torn screen, how big the hole had to be for it to be considered blight and asked that the Town and the State of Connecticut be held to the same standard as individual property owners.

Mayor Woods stated that the Planning and Zoning Committee would be meeting on January 11, 2012 and hoped to have their input on the Blight Ordinance shortly. He said that the ordinance would be on the next agenda for the Council and the citizens would have at least one more meeting to comment on the issue.

IV ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Bottalico motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

SECONDED BY: Councilor Castelle

VOTE: 7 – 0 (Councilors DelBuono and Klett-absent)

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Irish-Simpson
Clerk of the Council

Cc: T. Lane, Town Clerk