



City Council Minutes March 16, 2004

The City of Cortland, New York

COUNCIL MEETING #6

March 16, 2004

Regular Business Meeting

City Hall

7:00PM

PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Gallagher
Alderman Faraoni, Terwilliger, Morey, Guido, Quail, Partigianoni, Feiszli, and
Michales

Staff present: Director of Admin. & Finance Andrew Damiano. Corporation Counsel Lawrence
Knickerbocker, City Clerk, John O. Reagan.

Mayor Gallagher calls the Common Council meeting to order at 7:00PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one to speak.

MINUTES of the March 2, 2004 meeting.

RESOLUTION #32 of 2004 – Approve the minutes of March2, 2004.

By: Alderman Quail
Seconded: Alderman Faraoni

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

BILLS

Bills are reviewed and received.

MAYOR'S REPORT as submitted by Mayor Gallagher

- Attended round table at college for presentation and update of River Trail Project
- Hosted Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton for Town Meeting at City Hall. She spent over two hours talking about several issues, including the smoking ban in restaurants

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and bars. Representatives of the Cortland Hotel and Restaurant Association attended to express their concerns on how to cope with the loss of business.

- Facilitated a forum for childcare providers and the ongoing problems of providing adequate childcare to residents of Cortland County. Senator Seward and a representative from Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton's office provided input from the Senate and Assembly
- Met with Cable Commission to review and discuss the upcoming contract with Time Warner. Tom Isabella will attend the next meeting to provide input for negotiations.
- Toured several locations in the City with Stearns & Wheeler, DPW, Administration and Finance and Common Council members to view infiltration of ground water into the sewer system.
- Met with Thoma Development, DPW, Public Safety, Tim Buhl and Administration and Finance to review progress on the refurbishing of Groton Avenue parking lot.
- Attended meeting at the Sheriff's Department with representatives from N.I.C. to discuss capability and restrictions of the County Jail.
- Attended luncheon at SUNY, hosted by Erik Bitterbaum, along with members of Common Council. Board representatives for the Community Sports Council presented a power point presentation on the viability of marketing the new stadium – sports complex and other local facilities to enhance tourism in the County.
- Attended the Business Showcase – very proud to report the City booth was presented best of show for non-profit organization. Many thanks to the City Fire and Police Departments and Youth Bureau for their time and effort.
- I will be attending a regional mayor's conference in Elmira on March 23rd. Continued discussion on reimbursement by communities to the State Pension Fund shortfall.

The Mayor notes the Cortland Rotary Breakfast Club will be having a spring cleanup for seniors. They can call 753-5060. They will rake lawns, prune shrubs, take down storm windows, clean gutters and other manageable tasks.

The Mayor reads a proclamation declaring April as Fair Housing Month in the City of Cortland.

WARD REPORTS

Ward 1 –Alderman Faraoni

He and his wife attended the St. Joseph's dinner dance. It was excellent, the food and music were good. He attended the Landscape and Design Commission meeting. Not only do they work on trees, but they want to beautify the City in many ways. He would like to get an account to help them. Andy comments that it will have to be funneled through another department because they are not an administrative department of government. We can get them some money for their purposes.

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Ward 2 – Alderman Terwilliger

She has had numerous complaints with regard to the proposed transformation of the County Office Building gymnasium into office space. People are not happy about that. They feel it is too valuable of a resource for the County and the City to be transformed into office space. The owners of 87 Maple Ave. have brought to her attention that the retaining wall for Otter Creek that runs through their property has badly deteriorated and is falling into the creek.

Ward 3 – Alderman Morey

She attended the sports council's luncheon hosted by President Bitterbaum. The group is very enthusiastic and it was a good presentation about sharing our County, College, City Sports venue and attracting different sporting events. She had a ward meeting and the topics were the James St. parking issue and she has contacted Mike Preston and he has agreed to walk the street. The first step is moving the "no parking" signs. She has also met with Chief Nichols who gave her different types of options which she presented to the group. Legislature Carol Tytler and Alderman Morey are meeting again with NiMo to look at Glenn St. She will be having a ward meeting in April to talk about the clean up of Glenn St.

She has had some complaints about the garbage on Otter Creek. She has had complaints about the flooding on Floral Ave. The catch basins are not big enough on that street and they are looking into some funding.

She recently took her cat to the SPCA for the spay/neuter clinic. It is well worth it. Its \$35.00 for all their shots and ear mite treatment.

Ward 4 – Alderman Guido

Alderman Guido had two calls with concerns regarding parking on Tompkins St. near the college. There is visibility problems especially in the afternoon. Things are quiet in the 4th ward.

Ward 5 – Alderman Quail

He attended the business showcase. It is a real showcase in the County and the City. His ward meeting is Thursday, March 25th at the Moose Club at 6:30PM. Chief Nichols will be in attendance. He is also trying to get the County Legislature representative for the 5th ward Tamara Wyant and also Sheriff Price to attend. The focus will be on the speeding and loud exhaust down South Main St. and Owego Street. We have a lot of complaints in that area with regard to motorcycles. He attended the SUNY Cortland meeting of the Cortland Regional Sports Commission. There is tremendous opportunity that would give us more tourism and also increased business opportunity within the City. He has some thoughts on the Winter Festival and still wants to pursue and have something planned for next winter. He attended the Cortland Bowling Hall of Fame. He congratulates the new members.

He wants to add an agenda item for discussion. It is the well head protection ordinance for the Town of Cortlandville.

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Ward 6 – Alderman Feiszli

On March 9th she went on a tour of the Cities sewer system. Craig from Stearns & Wheeler was very informative and explained the whole process with regard to the City sewers, infiltration, and actually looking at the clear water it is understandable why the sewage treatment plant is getting more gallons per day than they are suppose to be getting. They are anxious to get the results back from the study and also the cost of repairing lines and manholes. Alderman Feiszli attended the Fireboard meeting on March 11th. It was very interesting. There was a person there that had an issue with regard to parking as a code violation. She was impressed at how well the board approached these women with tact and understanding.

She attended the meeting at the college with President Bitterbaum. It was very interesting. They are looking for ideas to get the college and City involved with upcoming events. She attended the business showcase. It is a great opportunity for businesses and organizations to do networking. Last night she received a call from a women who was ticketed for walking her iguana on the street. Alderman Faraoni explains the Animal Committee is involved and you need to contact Chris Farkas at CAPCO. There are applications for it and they are illegal to have without a permit. The permit is \$25.00.

Ward 7 – Alderman Partigianoni

Alderman Partigianoni also toured the manholes. He believes the Wastewater Treatment Plant treats 9 million gallons of water per day but is currently treating 12 million gallons because of the ground water seeping in. It is going to cost a considerable amount of money but we can do it in stages. He attended the DPW meeting. The discussion was about the water leaks. They received a \$400,000. grant but that was only for the study. The bricks are our responsibility. There was a planning commission meeting this afternoon. They unanimously agreed to purchase 42 Crandall St. so that problem is on the way to being solved. Farrell cats are also a problem in the City. The St. Joseph's dinner dance was a good time and is for a worthy cause. They raised \$2,200. He met with Carol DeLoff with regard to the senior citizens exemption. Alderman Partigianoni does not want to see the gym at the County Office Building converted. He thinks it is a terrible idea.

Ward 8 - Alderman Michales

He attended the Access to Independence meeting on March 5th. They discussed regulations regarding access for the disabled. He attended the meeting at the college along with the Mayor and other council members. The presentation went well and he looks forward to being a part of this joint venture. He had a call recently with regard to practicing for drivers licenses at the motor vehicle test area. This has been as issue in his ward for several years now. The permit states on page 13 that you are not able to practice in the test area. When the permit is given there is a sticker provided that gives the test areas. This sticker was not attached to the permit and therefore people were not aware of this designated area. He wants to make the public aware of this area so they do not practice here. This area goes from Main St. to Central Ave. to Pendleton St. and Huntington St. Included in these areas are Randall, Cedar, Greenbush, Williams and Church St. He reminds all residents when they walk their dog to be courteous and pick up the waste.

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GUEST SPEAKER

Bernie Thoma from Thoma Development addresses the Council. He has been working with the City for many years. Thomas Development is located at 34 Tompkins St. in the City. They were found in 1980. Their first customer was the City of Cortland. They are consultants in the area of housing, community development and economic development. Their customers are municipalities. They do grant preparation and grant management. They deal with a lot of different sources. Most of the municipal work is with the State and Federal government. They do planning and market feasibility analysis. They have actually been the Office of Community Development for the City since 1980.

Mr. Thoma displays a slide presentation. They work under two specific types of contracts. There is a comprehensive contract or specific project based contracts. Mr. Thoma explains the various contracts. He defines program income, misc. revenue, various programs, grants, HUD, etc.

Alderman Morey would like to know what the costs are. She notes we are allocating \$115,000.00 and Thomas is going to manage the money but we have no idea where it is going to. Mr. Thoma notes this just establishes a budget. It doesn't give it to anybody or allow it to be spent on anything. If the City gets the grant, then the state will approve it and you can spend up to that amount in those categories. There will be a process each one of these projects. We will have to hire an administrator and it may not be Thoma Development. Dir. Damiano clarifies that we will take proposals from various companies and in the proposals they will designate what they need for professional services to run the programs. We could actually end up spending \$80,000 or \$90,000 of that. The rest of the money can be reappropriated to the rest of the program.

AGENDA

RESOLUTION #33 of 2004 – That the City of Cortland is hereby authorized and directed to file an application for funds from the New York State Governor's Office for Small Cities under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Block Grant Program for Fiscal Year 2004, in an amount not to exceed \$650,000. to authorize the Mayor of the City of Cortland to sign said application on behalf of the City, and upon approval of said request to enter into and execute a project agreement with the State for such financial assistance to the City of Cortland.

By: Alderman Faraoni
Seconded: Alderman Terwilliger

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Item No. 3 – Consideration of a request submitted by Douglas Withey and Matthew Wethje of the Water Department to attend the New York Rural Water Association Conference.

By: Alderman Morey
Seconded: Alderman Faraoni

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Alderman Guido asks about the attachment. It will be a three day conference in Monticello. Alderman Guido knows that people that work for the City have to travel and keep current with training. He feels the food and lodging prices are very excessive. We brought this up with the NYCOM conference. Do the City employees have to stay at the four star hotels they stay in?

Motion amended.

RESOLUTION #34 of 2004 – To table Item No. 3 (Water Department training) until the April 6th meeting in order to receive more information.

By: Alderman Morey
Seconded: Alderman Quail

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

RESOLUTION #35 of 2004 – Authorize the acquisition of the property located at 42 Crandall St. for the sum of \$1.00.

By: Alderman Partigianoni
Seconded: Alderman Guido

Alderman Quail understands the desire to improve the property but he is concerned we are continuing to acquire property in the City. What are we going to do with all of this property?

Dir. Damiano notes we cannot discuss acquiring the property on Port Watson St. because it potentially could involve a project. With this particular property, the intent is to immediately advertise it for the purpose of renovating or rehabbing the house located at 42 Crandall St. There are two parties who have contacted us that have an interest in buying the property and renovating it. We will open it up to the general public by sealed bid. There will be stringent requirements. With the current owner we have absolutely no opportunity to get the tax dollars.

Alderman Michales asked if he could have more history on this property and what we plan on doing with it. He noticed we have acquired other property and we are still sitting on it. Dir. Damiano notes if this is in regard to the Port Watson St. property, we have not acquired it yet. There has not been a closing. Dir. Damiano notes the City has been taking care of the Crandall St. property by shoveling the snow, mowing the grass, boarding it up, and paying the school taxes.

On the question.

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays - 0

Item No. 5 – Discussion regarding a proposal to increase the income limits for qualifying for a senior citizen tax exemption from \$18,700 to \$20,000 (Alderman Partigianoni).

Alderman Quail asks what the County portion is. Dir. Damiano notes we are higher than the County. Alderman Quail is not opposed to giving senior citizens more of a tax break but he is

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not sure he is ready to do it yet. He is all in favor of giving them an advantage to putting back into their property rather than paying taxes but we are already above the County. Alderman Morey feels seniors in this community are an asset. She encourages seniors to move into the City. They shop in the City. They are loyal to the City. They are on a fixed income. This is a tax break for them. Alderman Partigianoni feels it is a poor yardstick to measure this against the County taxes. If you want to go to Onondaga, Tompkins, and Broome we are very low at \$18,700. He notes the senior citizens are on a fixed income. If we can help the two dozen seniors this will affect we should. David Briggs estimates there will be 25 property owners that will currently qualify. The impact on the average homeowner will be about \$1.50.

The Council concurs to have Corporation Counsel Knickerbocker pursue this.

Item No. 6 – Discussion regarding well-head protection.

Alderman Quail attended the November and March meeting. There is a tremendous amount of opposition against the well-head protection in its current form. He has some real concerns and feels the City should also have some concerns. He would like to ask the Council to put together a letter for the next meeting expressing our concerns with the current format. He doesn't believe the current version is enforceable. There are no standards and all the power is left in the Code Enforcement Officer's hands. Alderman Morey would like to get a copy of this. Alderman Quail thinks it is very vague. There is a lot of sentiment against this. Alderman Terwilliger feels we should be concerned as this is our water supply.

Adjournment.

By: Alderman Morey
Seconded: Alderman Terwilliger

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

I, JOHN O. REAGAN, CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF CORTLAND, NEW YORK DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT SAID RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORTLAND, HELD ON THE 16th DAY OF MARCH, 2004. I FURTHER CERTIFY THE FOREGOING RESOLUTIONS WERE PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR IN THE TIME REQUIRED.

JOHN O. REAGAN – CITY CLERK

MAYOR THOMAS GALLAGHER