

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 29, 2015**

**ATTENDANCE:** Eneida Martinez, Co-chair; Enrique Torres, Melanie Jackson, Rev. Mary McBride-Lee

**OTHERS:** John Cottell, Deputy Director of Public Facilities; Atty. Brad Mondschein, Pullman and Comely; Frank Memoli, Housing Code Enforcement; Council Member Milta Feliciano (6:16 p.m.); Bill Coleman, Neighborhood Development Director; Council Member Susan Brannelly (6:44 p.m.)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council Member E. Martinez called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. A quorum was present. She announced that Co-chair AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia was not able to attend the meeting.

**116-14 Proposed Amendment to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, amend to add new Chapter 13.12 Property Tax Exemption for Cogeneration Systems Incorporated into a Microgrid and Serving Municipal Buildings.**

Mr. Cottell distributed a letter dated June 29, 2015 regarding the municipal building microgrid from Atty. Anastasi to Ms. Frances Ortiz, Assistant City Clerk. Mr. Cottell said that this request was for a tax exemption for the microgrid to keep City Hall, Police Headquarters and the Senior Center supplied with electricity and heat, particularly if there was a major emergency.

*Council Member Feliciano joined the meeting at 6:16 p.m.*

Mr. Cottell introduced Atty. Mondschein from Pullman and Comely, who specializes in the field of energy production.

Council Member Torres asked if the system would be running continually. Mr. Cottell said that the system would be up 24/365. Council Member Torres had several questions regarding the cost of the system and the cost of the kilowatts. Mr. Cottell reviewed the details of the generation and distribution costs. He added that other than the tax exemption ordinance portion of the contract for the developer on the equipment, everything else has been approved by the Council. Mr. Cottell said that this request was for a 100% tax exempt.

Atty. Mondschein came forward and said that the tax exemption was very specific so that other co-generation systems in the City could not claim a tax exemption. Council Member Jackson asked if there were other locations where this type of tax exemption had been granted. Mr. Cottell listed a number of states and sites. Council Member Jackson said that since there was precedence, she would support this item.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 116-14 PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, AMEND TO ADD NEW CHAPTER 13.12 PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR COGENERATION SYSTEMS INCORPORATED INTO A MICROGRID AND SERVING MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS.**  
**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES:**

**June 22, 2015 (Informational Session)**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 22, 2015 INFORMATIONAL SESSION.**  
**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 22, 2015 INFORMATIONAL SESSION AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**June 23, 2015 (Regular Meeting)**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 23, 2015 REGULAR MEETING.**  
**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES SECONDED.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 23, 2015 REGULAR MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**July 6, 2015 (Public Hearing)**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 6, 2015 PUBLIC HEARING.**  
**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 6, 2015 PUBLIC HEARING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**131-14 Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 15.12 Housing Code, amend Sections: 15.12.250, 15.12.270, 15.12.280 and 15.12.320.**

Mr. Memoli, Housing Department, came forward to speak about the Changes to the Housing Code. Atty. Anastasi reviewed the Ordinance. He had several questions about the changes, which Mr. Memoli answered. Atty. Anastasi said that there were some clarifications that should be made on the item.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 131-14 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 15.12 HOUSING CODE, AMEND SECTIONS: 15.12.250, 15.12.270, 15.12.280 AND 15.12.320 PENDING A REVIEW BY THE CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE.**  
**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON SECONDED.**

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

**136-14 Proposed Amendment to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 3.28 Urban Enterprise Zone, amend Section 3.28.050 Fixing and Deferral of Assessment on Real Property within the Enterprise Zone and the Rehabilitation Areas, to include new subsection (A) (7).**

Mr. Coleman said that there were a number of enterprise zones in the City but none were located in the East End. He gave an overview of the existing enterprise zone. Mr. Coleman said he had spoken with a Bridgeport developer who said that it would be better to have Bridgeport based developers and the property should encourage homeowners. The department will need to clarify what the requirements are for a Bridgeport developer.

Mr. Coleman then said that the current program does not work because the assessments were done when property values were high.

*Council Member Brannelly joined the meeting at 6:44 p.m.*

The assessments affect overall taxation, but the assessments are slow to change. Because of this, a property could be assessed at a level that is much higher than its current market value. There needs to be a conversation with the Assessor's Office about adjusting the assessment on blighted properties.

Atty. Anastasi asked if the individual property owners could appeal the appraisals. Mr. Coleman said that this would have to be discussed.

Council Member Torres pointed out that there were many property assessments on the East Side that were out of whack and it was unfair to the property owners in the neighborhood who don't get the same break. However, one micro adjustment on a property can affect the abutting properties.

Council Member McBride-Lee pointed out that there was a house in her neighborhood that was rehabilitated by a national makeover company and the tax assessment doubled and other nearby property taxes also increased.

Mr. Coleman said that these were all issues that needed to be considered. He said that he was presenting this item to the committee for consideration but was not prepared to ask the Committee to take action on it at this time.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 136-14 PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 3.28 URBAN ENTERPRISE ZONE, AMEND SECTION 3.28.050 FIXING AND DEFERRAL OF ASSESSMENT ON REAL PROPERTY WITHIN THE ENTERPRISE ZONE AND THE REHABILITATION AREAS, TO INCLUDE NEW SUBSECTION (A) (7).**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES SECONDED.**

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

**84-14 Request that Home Foreclosure action must only be employed after consultation and approval of said action by Common Council, first through appropriate Committee and then as a Whole Council.**

Council Member Torres said that he would like to have the foreclosure process slowed down by having the potential foreclosures come before the Council for approval.

Council Member Torres said that he had spoken to other people living in other towns and the foreclosures thresholds are at a level that is much higher. One resident on the East Side is in foreclosure for the delinquency of \$1,000. With the penalties, the amount is over \$4,000. The resident will be losing her house in October.

Atty. Anastasi said that there were two ways to do this, one of which is having a dialogue with the City Tax Collector and the WPCA, or changing the Charter. The Council cannot interfere with the duties of the Tax Collector.

Council Member Torres said that the Council should create a resolution that would let the Tax Collector know that the taxes were being too aggressively collected. Atty. Anastasi disagreed and said that the best method would be to have the Council discuss this with the Tax Collector about the threshold. Discussion followed.

Council Member Jackson said that while she agreed with Council Member Torres's concerns about the foreclosures, she felt that there would need to be more than just a dialogue with the department heads. It's important to collect the taxes, but it also important to keep the residents in their homes.

Council Member McBride-Lee had several questions about the role of the WPCA. She said that she had been unaware that if a resident owed \$500 to the WPCA, the WPCA will take the resident to court. While a resident may be able to pay the \$500, by the time the interest and the court costs are added on, it can be over \$1,000. She said that she would like to have some kind of advocate for the residents at the WPCA. Many of the residents simply don't understand the process or know what to do. She said that Atty. Liskov was the only one that she had seen who acted sensibly.

Atty. Anastasi suggested that the least intrusive method was to start a dialogue. While the WPCA fees were high, but in the past the WPCA had major debt, which has been reduced to almost a million. He added that amending the Charter was not an easy task and said that he was not sure if the State statutes pre-empt the Charter language. Having the WPCA Director, the Tax Collector and the Tax Assessor in for a discussion would be more manageable.

Council Member Brannelly said that the Council does not really understand what the WPCA process and the Tax Collector process is for foreclosures. It will also be important to understand what a change on threshold would have on the taxes. However, the first step is learning what the process is. Charter change is right up there with acts of Congress, so working with the various departments would be easier.

Council Member Martinez said that she had contact with the WPCA Finance Director and he was not very helpful.

A developer said that he purchases foreclosed properties and once the process starts, the costs (i.e. attorney's fees, title search and court fees) pile up very quickly. He suggested selling the debt as a tax lien. While he benefits from the current system, he feels bad for the residents. Atty. Anastasi said that the City is not allowed to sell the WPCA liens. The developer said that with the WPCA foreclosures are usually fairly small amounts. Discussion followed.

Council Member Torres said that while it was clear that the Committee could not vote on this agenda item now, the issue needs to be codified in the future. He said that the City should send a letter to those residents listing the event timeline and costs incurred to the resident. Atty. Anastasi said that the Council could encourage the various departments to change their procedures. Council Member Torres said that he would like to talk to Atty. Anastasi about this matter. Atty. Anastasi agreed and requested Council Member Torres call his secretary to set up a meeting.

Council Member Torres suggested that the agenda items that he was responsible for be tabled at this time. This was agreeable to all.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE MOVED TO TABLE THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS:**

**84-14 REQUEST THAT HOME FORECLOSURE ACTION MUST ONLY BE EMPLOYED AFTER CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL OF SAID ACTION BY COMMON COUNCIL, FIRST THROUGH APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE AND THEN AS A WHOLE COUNCIL.**

**85-14 REQUEST THAT THE TAKING OF VEHICLES AND THE ACTION OF "BOOTING" MUST ONLY BE EMPLOYED AFTER MULTIPLE OFFENSES AND THAT A CERTIFIED LETTER BE SUBMITTED TO THE OWNERS OF VEHICLE AND THAT NOTICE IS PROVIDED TO THE APPROPRIATE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE FOR THEIR APPROVAL OF SAID ACTION.**

**86-14 REQUEST THAT LIENING OR THE TAKING OF HOMES BY FORECLOSURE ACTION BY THE WPCA OR THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT MUST ONLY BE EMPLOYED AFTER CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL OF SAID ACTION BY THE COMMON COUNCIL, FIRST THROUGH APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE AND THEN AS A WHOLE COUNCIL.**

**141-14 PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 8.56 GARBAGE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL, AMEND SECTION 8.56.170 CITY DUMPING REGULATIONS.**

**142-14 REQUEST THAT A TWO-YEAR PILOT PROGRAM BE INTRODUCED FOR THE SALE OF CITY TAX LIENS.**

**143-14 REQUEST THAT A TWO-YEAR PILOT PROGRAM BE INTRODUCED CONCERNING WPCA LIENS**

**144-14 REQUEST THAT THE APPROPRIATE CITY STAFF BE DIRECTED TO IMPLEMENT ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY WITH REGARD TO CITY REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, BUDGETS AND OTHER FISCAL MATTERS (PART 1).**

**145-14 REQUEST THAT THE APPROPRIATE CITY STAFF BE DIRECTED TO IMPLEMENT ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY WITH REGARD TO CITY REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, BUDGETS AND OTHER FISCAL MATTERS BY MAKING INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE (PART 2).**

**146-14 REQUEST THAT THE APPROPRIATE CITY STAFF BE DIRECTED TO IMPLEMENT ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY WITH REGARD TO THE CITY'S USE OF GRANT DOLLARS (PART 3).**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON SECONDED.**

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

**RECESS**

Council Member Martinez announced a recess at 7:37 p.m. She reconvened the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

**80-13 Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 12.28 Park Use Regulations, amend to add new Section 12.28.210 Regulation Banning Smoking in City Parks.**

Council Member Brannelly said that several cities have banned smoking in the parks, but because Bridgeport's parks are so large, it would not be practical. She said that the ordinance had been amended to the ball fields and the beaches. People who want to smoke at the beach would have to smoke on the sidewalk. When this was originally proposed, the Sacred Heart students brought in a large bag of cigarette butts collected from the beach to illustrate the amount of smoking that was happening.

Council Member Feliciano asked if there were outdoor cigarette butt receptacles. Council Member Brannelly said that having the ashtrays might encourage others to smoke. She said that she would ask the Parks Department about supplying these.

Atty. Anastasi said that the Parks Committee had passed a resolution that defined "smoking" as "carrying smoking, burning, inhaling or exhaling any kind of lighted pipe, cigars, cigarettes, e-cigarette, hookah, tobacco, weed, herb or any kind of smoking equipment". The police and park staff are authorized to confiscate the materials and the person can be subject to fines or arrest as appropriate.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 80-13 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 12.28 PARK USE REGULATIONS, AMEND TO ADD NEW SECTION 12.28.210 REGULATION BANNING SMOKING IN CITY PARKS.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON SECONDED.**

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

**96-14 Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 8.80 Noise Control Regulations, amend Sections 8.80.020 Definitions and 8.80.050 Prohibited Noise Activities by adding new Subsection “C” (10).**

Council Member Brannelly reviewed the proposed statutes with the Committee. She explained that the restaurants with exterior liquor permits have installed garage doors, French doors or large windows instead of front walls and the music that is played late at night.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that her Sunday evening church services often go past 10 p.m. and the music is often loud. Council Member Brannelly said that it only applied to restaurants, not churches. Atty. Anastasi cautioned everyone that this amendment to the ordinance was not in lieu of the general noise ordinance.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 96-14 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 8.80 NOISE CONTROL REGULATIONS, AMEND SECTIONS 8.80.020 DEFINITIONS AND 8.80.050 PROHIBITED NOISE ACTIVITIES BY ADDING NEW SUBSECTION “C” (10).**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON SECONDED.**

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

**154-14 Proposed Amendment to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Title 3 – Revenue and Finance, amend to add New Chapter 3.70 Campaign Public Financing.**

Council Member Martinez announced that there was no one present to present the item.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 154-14 PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, TITLE 3 – REVENUE AND FINANCE, AMEND TO ADD NEW CHAPTER 3.70 CAMPAIGN PUBLIC FINANCING.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES SECONDED.**

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON MOVED TO TABLE THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS:**

**16-13 COUNCIL REVIEW AND POSSIBLE REVISIONS TO THE CITY’S PURCHASING AND PROCUREMENT ORDINANCE, CHAPTER 3.08 CITY CONTRACT AND PURCHASING PROCEDURES.**

**34-13 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 3.08 CITY CONTRACT AND PURCHASING PROCEDURES, AMEND SECTION 3.08.070 PURCHASING PROCEDURE AND SECTION 3.08.090 DISQUALIFICATION OF VENDORS FROM DOING BUSINESS WITH THE CITY-PROCEDURE.**

**38-13 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 3.12 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTRACTORS, AMEND SECTION 3.12.130 MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM.**

**39-13 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 8.76 ANTI-BLIGHT PROGRAM, AMEND SECTION 8.76.020 DEFINITIONS, SECTION 8.76.040 ENFORCEMENT AND ADDING NEW SECTION 8.76.052 ALLOCATION OF CAPITAL GAIN.**

**79-13 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 12.28 PARK USE REGULATIONS, AMEND SECTION 12.28.090 ANIMALS PROHIBITED FROM PARKS.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON MOVED TO ADJOURN.  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services