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Stacy Gravino, CCTC
TOWN CLERK

East Haven Town Council Public Hearings

The East Haven Town Council held certain public hearings Monday, June 14, 2021 in order to transact the following:

Chairman Deko called the hearing to order at 7:06 p.m. and read the executive order into the record.

Roll call-12 Present. 3 Absent (Maltese, Ruggiero, and Ranfone)

Staff Present: Attorney Michael Luzzi, Town Clerk Stacy Gravino, Police Chief Ed Lennon, Assistant Chief Pat Tracey, and Finance Director James Keeley.

Public Hearing #1

Chairman Deko informed the council that the Capital Budget has been decreased by \$10,000.

Public Hearing #1

Vice Chairman Pacelli read the following; an ordinance entitled an "An Ordinance Making Appropriations for Various Public Improvements Aggregating \$995,134.00 for the 2021-2022 Capital Budget and Authorizing the Issuance of \$995,134.00 Bonds of the Town to Meet Said Appropriations and Pending the Issuance Thereof the Making of Temporary Borrowing for Such Purpose." This Ordinance shall be effective in accordance with the provisions of the East Haven Town Charter.

Jay Bodner, 12 Coe Avenue, East Haven, asked when the meetings will be in person.

Chairman Deko indicated the July 2021 meeting.

Chairman Deko recognized Donna Richo, 67 Charnes Drive, East Haven. Ms. Richo asked what is left from last year's Capital Improvement budget.

Mr. Keeley asked Donna to please clarify her question.

Ms. Richo asked what items were not completed from last year that were part of this new bonding.

Mr. Keeley stated that to date we have not bonded for any prior capital projects except for the \$1M for the ice rink.

Ms. Richo stated that she was a bit confused about the bonding from last year; on June 9th the council approved \$9,750,000 to refund outstanding bonds, out of the 9 million, \$4,622,052 applied to the previously approved bonding from October 6th 2020 ordinance for \$2,700,000. She believes on June 6th \$3,214,800 was bonded and then again on June 16th \$6,850,000 after the \$4M was taken out that leaves \$2,739,648 of bonding where did those funds go? She got the figures from last year's audit.

Chairman Deko stated that this is not a short answer and Mr. Keeley needs to prepare an answer after a review of that audit.

Ms. Richo further commented that the town bonded \$10M last year, why are we still bonding the budget increasing it by \$6M.

Mr. Keeley stated we haven't actually gone out to bond under the Carfora administration; all the money we received was from prior capital projects in prior years.

Ms. Richo stated that in addition to the \$6M we have another \$10M hanging out there.

Chairman Deko explained that just because we approve the bonds does not mean we pulled them so it really does not go towards our debt.

Ms. Richo further stated that we have the liability and our bond rating went from A+ to A.

Councilman Balter, how long do we have to issue approved bonding?

Mr. Keeley indicated 5 years.

Lorena Venegas, 73 George Street, East Haven, asked if \$1.25 Million is enough for the two RFP, with the report we currently have she believes the true cost is closer to \$1.3-1.6 Million.

Mr. Keeley explained that the town is not sure until the RFP is completed. At that time we will know what we need and do an RFQ so we check their qualifications to expedite the process and go out to bid, we honestly won't know the true cost. At that time we will look at how much money we have and give a qualified answer based on that information.

Ms. Venegas stated that the total bond is \$1.25M; it seems a little low because at one of the meetings it was stated that the cost would be \$1.3-1.6M.

Mr. Keeley stated in addition to the bonding money we also put in the \$300,000 through a LOCIP grant.

Ms. Venegas stated that there are some concerns with regard to the JMMS track and bleachers as to who is responsible, the town or the Board of Education. Are there any plans to repair the poor conditions of the bleachers and track?

Chairman Deko stated that he will have the Public Works Superintendent go and assess the situation and report back to the council.

Mr. Venegas said with a new Recreation Director the town should consider looking into that issue. Also, the balloon interest payment on the outstanding debt.

Mr. Keeley indicated what you are referencing is not a balloon payment after restructuring our debt. A balloon payment is when you make one large payment; basically what the town did was decrease two payments and spread them over the life of the debt. Not to have one balloon payment in one year, we

needed to get back on track after the past year with covid-19 we needed to make sure we had some flexibility. But it definitely is not a balloon payment but an increase in payments spread out over time.

Ms. Venegas stated that our payment is due in 2023 for \$3.9M and the roof on Ferrara school is covered by the previous administration bonding.

Councilwoman Hennessey logged on at 7:25 p.m.

Vice Chairman Pacelli moved to close the public hearing.

Councilwoman Parlato second the motion.

Voice vote-all in favor. None opposed. No abstentions.

Public Hearing #2

Vice Chairman Pacelli read the following: an ordinance entitled “An Ordinance to Amend Violation Types and Penalties as Outlined in Chapter 11, Article II (Stopping, Standing, and Parking), Section 11-16 and Section 11-17 and Section 11-18.” This Ordinance shall be effective in accordance with the provisions of the East Haven Town Charter.

Chairman Deko recognized Police Chief Ed Lennon and Deputy Police Chief Patrick Tracey.

Chief Lennon explained that the redlined version that the council has and what is online are a few updates and changes for this public hearing after meeting with the vendor who will be doing the monitoring of the parking enforcement program. This enforcement program will be for the entire town, at this time it will be rolled out for the shore and beach areas. The changes are being made because we are switching to a permitting program. The way the ordinance was written makes it an either-or situation. Whether one has a sticker or electronic permit as it's rolled out over the next several months. Second part of this will be rolled out later in 2021, our neighboring communities use this same vendor; New Haven and West Haven. Instead of having people come in person for an appeal or hearing this will give them the ability to go online through electronic means; a slight clean-up of the language.

Chairman Deko recognized Niki Whitehead, 11 Hilton Avenue. She stated that this is a very good idea but has some concerns. The first question is the permit issued to a person or a vehicle.

Chief Lennon stated that it would be issued to the vehicle.

Ms. Whitehead that would explain 11-16.3 Class C violation, a proper permit issued to the proper vehicle. If one owned two vehicles then they would need two permits and what does it mean to have a permit in an electronic form.

Chief Lennon stated an electronic form is specific through a smartphone or a web application and register to make sure the person has all the proper credentials. Police personnel will have the ability to either scan the license plate or through verification to assure the permit is valid. You will not see a physical sticker or permit on the vehicle.

Ms. Whitehead believes that makes sense because that distinguishes a permit that needs to be displayed. Consequently, if a person has an electronic permit it is only known by those that have the reader and that would mean every license plate would have to be scanned individually.

Chief Lennon stated that she was correct.

Ms. Whitehead asked, wouldn't that be cumbersome?

Chief Lennon stated that the department has several vehicles with readers. This summer will be the department's learning curve.

Ms. Whitehead asked if the permit could be printed and displayed because sometimes the public could report a violation but this way it is not possible.

Chief Lennon stated that they are trying to make this successful for the residents to make it less cumbersome, especially for those residents that live in that area, giving an either/or option. If we need to print every permit it would be a significant cost to the town.

Ms. Whitehead asked if you don't believe you have a deficiency in whether or not there is a violation or not.

Chief Lennon does not believe there are any deficiencies.

Chairman Deko stated to Ms. Whitehead that we have had public hearings on this ordinance; this is just for chapter 11-16 through to 11-18.

Ms. Whitehead said she would like to suggest a class parking violation provision for misuse of a permit unlawfully obtained to consider language for residents and guests with those stickers.

Chief Lennon agreed.

Ms. Whitehead stated 3b redlined language makes no sense for those parking without the required permits. Also, it makes no sense with regard to towing costs and expenses it needs to be separate because it belongs to all cases, not just that one. To contest a violation the proper terms were not used consistently.

Chairman Deko said in the future you can submit your concerns in writing for consideration.

Ms. Whitehead stated that had she known that she certainly would have.

Chairman Deko stated we do have the ability to amend any ordinance.

Chairman Deko recognized Ann Pennington, 18 Joshua Trail, who asked if the residents that park in the large lot at the corner of Coe and Cosey Beach Avenues will be able to continue to do so.

Chairman Deko stated yes but the town will be installing a gate system that will be activated upon leaving once a vehicle leaves they will not be able to re-enter.

The Clerk read a letter from resident Robert Carlo, 7 Cambridge Court with regard to parking on that road that has been designated as a fire lane.

Chairman Deko recognized Town Clerk Stacy Gravino who asked if this ordinance is a combination of the current parking ordinance and the ordinance the police department just created.

Town Attorney Michael Luzzi stated that this is to update the old ordinance with the electronic portion. The police commission updated the language to be consistent. An example is a defense that they had an electronic permit instead of a printed one, so we updated all the language.

Town Clerk Gravino further asked once the ordinance is enacted and in effect and residents call for information, which department should they be directed to.

Attorney Luzzi stated that this is an evolutionary issue and if a problem were to exist, direct them to my office. I will have a system in place to answer questions. We want the police department to implement this program without any public pressure.

Town Clerk Gravino asked if there are hours for the parking lots at the beach.

Michelle Benivegna Asst. Director of Administration and Management stated that the main lot will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.; the lot behind the Sandpiper Restaurant will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.; and the supervisors will be on duty M-Thru. 9:00 - 5:00 p.m. and Fri. Sat. & Sun. until 8:00 p.m.

Councilwoman Lesco asked what if a resident has a party or visitors, is there a maximum number of temporary permits?

Chief Lennon obviously they are not guaranteed parking space but they will be allowed to park for a short period of time.

Councilwoman Capatoro asked what is a short period of time?

Chief Lennon a 24 hour period.

Councilman Balter asked if there is a limit as to how many tickets can be issued to a vehicle in one day because if the shift changes a vehicle could possibly receive a number of violations. Also, is there any way to tie the electronic permit to residents in town.

Chief Lennon does not believe there is a limit but will look into it further.

Assistant Chief Tracey stated if there is a problematic vehicle we have the ability to tow the vehicle.

Attorney Luzzi addressed the resident question. The purpose is for those who own property in town with valid utility bills, mortgages, and a valid license to apply for a permit. Some of your concerns are carrying over to State Statute.

Councilman Balter asked if someone is a property owner in town and their car is registered here, is there a way to have them automatically on the register?

Attorney Luzzi there has to be an electronic interaction and this is still an evolution of that process.

Councilman Balter asked how does someone contest a ticket.

Chief Lennon stated the website allows for the ability to contest and have a hearing online. Additionally, they still can write it on the ticket and mail it in.

Councilwoman Hennessey asked will there be officers assigned to the beach area only or do they just ride through periodically?

Chief Lennon stated yes to both questions. There will be officers assigned to the beach and officers who will patrol that are assigned to other areas patrol the beach periodically to assist.

Councilwoman Parlato said a visitor's permit can be for overnight 24 hours.

Chief Lennon agreed.

Councilman Vollono asked if there is the potential once the vehicle is scanned for a permit to find additional infractions.

Chief Lennon indicated that there are two different databases and if that would come to light the vehicle would have to be in motion.

Councilman Pompano asked how the officer would differentiate between a register permit and a visitor's permit.

Chief Lennon stated the officer would look through the data for the vehicle.

Vice-chairman Pacelli moved that the Hearing Committee of the East Haven Town Council recommend to the Full Council adoption of both of the aforementioned ordinances and to adjourn the public hearing portion.

Councilwoman Cesare second the motion.

Roll call-all in favor. None opposed. No abstentions.

Public Hearing closed at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta A. DeLuca
Town Council Clerk