

PUBLIC SAFETY

Tuesday, July 7, 2020 – 6:15 p.m.

Council Chambers – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Witte, Vice Chairman Dougherty, Alderman Panus, Alderman Gonzalez, Alderman Crawford, Alderman DaPolito, and Alderman Anastasia. Others: Mayor William Aiello; Bob Ring, Director of Public Works; Kris Shewairy, Youth and Recreation Program Director, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Witte called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meetings (Tuesday, June 2, 2020)

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2020 meeting was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Gonzalez. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

None

4. New Referrals for Consideration

a. Discussion Items

i. COVID-19 Update (Witte)

Mayor Aiello explained that we are in Phase IV, which includes higher education, low risk outdoor and indoor arts and entertainment, and sports with no fans. He explained that the City building is now open to the public, but a mask must be worn to enter. He explained that the courts are now open for the public again, and in addition to mask restrictions, the guards are taking temperatures. He explained that we did not go to that extent, but that there are safety screens up in most offices. He noted that there is a “No Entrance” sign on the door frame of Ms. Taylor’s office since you are right in front of her desk as soon as you walk into her office. He noted that they are trying to figure out a way to put up a screen or safety shield in her office.

Mayor Aiello explained that yesterday or today was supposed to be the first day of little league, but they have cancelled. HE explained that the adult softball season started with restrictions.

Mayor Aiello explained that we have a problem right now, and we need to make a decision quickly regarding concerts in the park. He explained that there is a fifty person limit for

gatherings, and although it has been discussed, he doesn't know how this can be patrolled. Alderman Crawford asked how we have a fifty person limit for the park, and Mayor Aiello responded that is what the State and Health Department are saying. He explained that he doesn't understand, as there are two spectators allowed per player for softball, which ends up being more than 50 people. He explained that he is trying to get in touch with Lori Cornell to get more information but that the last word that he heard is that there is a fifty person limit at events. He explained that if this is the case, that it will be very difficult to patrol.

Mayor Aiello explained that Portville and Salamanca have cancelled their outdoor concerts. He explained that the Taste of Olean is now cancelled, and Alderman Gonzalez added that the New York State Fair is cancelled as well. Alderman Crawford asked if concerts can be live streamed, and Mayor Aiello responded that he does not know if they can be.

Alderman Witte asked about construction, and Mayor Aiello responded that it was allowed in Phase III. Alderman Witte asked about the hotel, and Mayor Aiello explained that it is three to four months behind because of COVID. He explained that they were having issues getting supplies because everyone was shut down.

Mayor Aiello asked if the concert series should be cancelled. He explained that he called Lori Cornell and asked what is going on, because there are all these vendors and people at the Canal Side in Buffalo, and he wondered if things have changed. Her answer was that there is still a 50 person limit. He explained that this Thursday will probably have to be cancelled unless we get word from the State that we can have them.

Alderman Witte explained that she delivered meals on wheels today, and a lot of older people that she saw now don't want to go out, and they prefer to stay at home. She explained that very few people want to go back to the Senior Center, and she feels that this mentality will limit the crowd because people want to stay home. Alderman Gonzalez agreed that it might just limit itself.

Alderman Crawford asked if we have the technology to live stream the concerts from the City's Facebook page. He wonders if there is a way to broadcast the concerts for those who don't want to go out, but who still want to partake in it. Mayor Aiello asked how you control the crowd, and Alderman Dougherty asked how you determine where the "crowd" is. He asked if someone is listening from across the street in front of the Municipal Building if they could towards the 50.

Alderman Witte asked if we can start major projects now, or if they are handicapped because we can't get supplies. Mr. Ring explained that construction was allowed during the previous phase, and Washington Street may start next week. He explained that Walkable Olean – Phase II should start in two weeks, and there is a preconstruction meeting next week for the Stardust

Project. The Fluorination Project will begin in the next several weeks. Alderman Witte asked if he was waiting on companies or supplies, and Mr. Ring responded that although that was a small part of it, the larger issue is that State agencies were being very careful, and Albany did not move into later phases as soon as we did so they were working from home and it was more difficult to get a hold of them.

Alderman Witte explained that she was in Vermont this past weekend, and each restaurant had social distancing in addition to a place to leave a name and phone number for contact tracing purposes. He explained that you are contacted if there is a positive case reported within 48 hours of being at an establishment.

Alderman Anastasia explained that he feels that we need to keep concerts in the park because the public has paid for them, and we should advise that people should social distance and wear masks, and see how many people actually come. Mayor Aiello explained that we don't have any staff at the concerts, so he is asking if the Council wants him to staff them to have people there to limit the crowd. Alderman Panus asked who will break up the crowd if there is more than fifty people, and Alderman Crawford asked who shuts down the gym that continues to operate. Mayor Aiello explained that the Police Department investigates when a complaint is received, and then it is turned over to the Emergency Operations Center in Little Valley, who is supposed to relay the issue to the Health Department. He noted that they have not been shut down yet. Alderman Crawford asked, then, why the City can't have a concert, and Alderman Gonzalez explained that in the meantime, honest businesses suffer.

Alderman Panus explained that he doesn't think that it is a big deal, and that if people are at risk, they are going to self-regulate where they go. Mayor Aiello explained that he feels that the Council is asking him to go against the Executive Order of the Governor. Alderman Crawford explained that he is not asking him to break the law, and if only 50 people are allowed, that there should be a way to come up with a solution to only have fifty people there. He asked if we have someone at Franchot making sure there are only 50 people. Mayor Aiello explained that this is different because it is an enclosed facility, and we can make sure to limit people. He asked if the Council wants Lincoln Park to be fenced off, and only let so many people in. Alderman Crawford responded that we could.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that the City could use landscaping spray paint to mark out the park, and tell people that they have to stay in their area. HE explained that most people are going to do what they are supposed to do, and Alderman Witte asked what we are supposed to do if they don't. Alderman Gonzalez explained that there will be plenty of people out there to tell them what they think of it. Alderman Witte explained that we will let the Mayor get back to Ms. Cornell.

ii. Summer Recreation Program Safety Plan (Witte)

Mr. Shewairy explained that he has just completed the fourth day of the Recreation Program, and the sixth day of Franchot being open. He explained that at the pool, it used to be open noon until five but not it is open those hours, but broken into three sessions with a maximum of fifty people per session and half hour breaks in between for sanitizing anything that might have been touched by the public. He explained that there is a face mask requirement, and that it has to be worn whenever someone is not in the pool. Mr. Shewairy explained that he has had fairly decent cooperation with the new rules, and although a few people had to be reminded, it seems to be going pretty well. He explained that additional signage has been posted with the new safety protocol and additional staff members have been added to count patrons at the gate and to enforce social distancing. He explained that he is pleasantly surprised so far.

Alderman Gonzalez asked if they are at maximum capacity at every session, and Mr. Shewairy explained that they have been close, but so far they have not had to turn anyone away. He explained that they will stay open as long as they can depending on the lifeguards, since they will have to go back to school. Alderman Crawford asked what the maximum capacity is, and Mr. Shewairy explained that it is 50 people per session. Alderman Witte asked about the parents outside of the fence, and Mr. Shewairy explained that they are not counted in the 50, and they have had no issues with that so far.

Mr. Shewairy explained that there are a number of protocols in place for the summer recreation program. He explained that they are breaking it up into smaller groups of kids, and they are staying with the same recreation leaders for the entire two hours. The kids temperatures are checked in the morning and afternoon, and contact information is kept in the case it is needed for contract tracing. He explained that the program is using the outdoors, and they haven't had to go into the recreation center as they are putting as many activities as possible outside. HE explained that everything is sanitized by the staff and recorded that it is done, and everything is at War Vets Park with the exception of the tennis clinic at the middle school and the baseball clinic at Forness Park.

Mr. Shewairy explained that there has been a fairly decent turnout at the housing courts, and field trips have been eliminated to keep kids and staff safe. He explained that the staff is doing very well following protocols and kid are actually having a lot of fun. Alderman Witte thanked him for all he has done for the pool and summer program, and explained that it sounds like he is really going above and beyond to keep everyone safe.

Mayor Aiello noted that at the John Ash Community Building, they are still working on a plan on how to bring the senior program back safely. It is still not open.

iii. Town Hall Meeting Update (Witte)

Alderman Witte explained that the next Town Hall Meeting is Thursday night. Mayor Aiello explained that he sent a reminder out on the City's Facebook page about the meeting, as well as a request to contact his office to be put on the list because there is a limit on the number of people that can be in the building. Alderman Witte asked if there is a 25 person limit, and Mayor Aiello explained that the limit per the State is 50, but only 45 or 46 can fit safely with seating 6 feet apart.

iv. Drainage Issue – Carolina Street (Gonzalez)

Alderman Gonzalez explained that he brought these next two items forward, and that there is not a lot of discussion to be had at this point but he wanted to introduce them to the Council to have on their radar. He explained that this is specifically for this issue.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that the situation with drainage is almost identical to the issue that Alderman Crawford brought forward on Ninth Street. He explained that there is no curbing and limited access to a storm drain, so when it rains it pools at the bottom of driveways. He explained that this is something that he wanted to bring before the Council to give Mr. Ring instruction to have his staff go out and look at the situation to determine an estimated cost involved, and see what we can do to fix the situation so it stops. He explained that there is a storm drain in the area. He doesn't expect a lot of feedback now but if Mr. Ring could have his staff go out to look at the situation, he would appreciate it. HE explained that hopefully this is not as expensive as the Ninth Street issue, but it is definitely an issue.

Alderman Crawford explained that he sent out an email a week or two ago regarding a drainage issue on Kingston Drive, and asked if Mr. Ring had a chance to look at it. Mr. Ring replied that he didn't. Alderman Crawford explained that everything is blacktop up there, even the curbing. HE explained that it looks bad and will get worse, especially with heavy rainfall. He is sure that it is just a patch job. Mr. Ring explained that he did a work order and will probably just put blacktop back. It won't last forever, but it will patch the issue. It will get taken out by plows in the winter.

v. Drinking Fountain on Allegheny River Trail (Gonzalez)

Alderman Gonzalez explained that a lot of people park by St. Bonaventure at the tennis courts and go on the trail, and it would make sense to him if at about a midway point in the loop that a drinking fountain be installed like the one in Lincoln Park. HE explained that it should be in a place where it is not hidden to be vandalized, and he recommends where the trail crosses West State Street by Little Caesar's. Alderman Panus asked if this is the field across from Hamlin Bank, and Alderman Gonzalez responded that it is. Mr. Ring explained that this could become a trail head, with a charging station for mobility equipment. Mayor Aiello explained that they were looking for a place for the charging station, and the fountain could go in along with that.

Alderman Crawford asked how we would put a charging station in there if we don't own the property, and Mr. Ring responded that we have an easement, and Mayor Aiello added that there is a right of way there. He explained that this is a good spot to look at because a power source and water run through the area. Alderman Gonzalez noted that he is not married to this location.

Alderman Witte asked if an air pump could be put in for those riding their bikes, and Mr. Ring explained that they have these in other cities. He explained that they are not expensive, and they have air as well as bike tools attached. Alderman Gonzalez explained that anything that we can do, little things that aren't massive scale projects. He explained that when he was doing marathon training he would do the loop and would always pass that spot thinking that it would be great to have a fountain there.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that he thinks that there is a lot to be said, and a lot of potential for what we want to do with Walkable Olean Phase II and III, and East State Street and Front Street, with a multi-use loop around the City. He feels that long term we should look at a way to connect the River Trail to the downtown trail. He explained that in the next five years, or so, and that it would be hugely beneficial and hugely used.

Alderman Witte explained that she was impressed when she visited Vermont, that there was a bike trail right beside the railroad. There was a dog park and a park for the kids, and everything was centrally located. So many cities are doing more and more of that.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that because of COVID and gyms closing there is a nationwide bike shortage, and the only bikes you can get right now are super expensive.

Mr. Ring explained that people that walk and bike tend to spend money, and places in every ward can be tied together like spokes to the downtown. Alderman Witte noted that people really love cross country skiing on the trail in the winter, and it is really all season.

vi. Miscellaneous

Alderman Anastasia explained that he has been getting complaints, and he wants to know if we still maintain the road that leads to Gargoyle Park. It is in horrible condition. Mayor Aiello explained that it is our responsibility. Mr. Ring explained that we will be using our zipper to mill the road and add millings in. He explained that it won't be perfect, but it will help for this year.

5. Approval of Committee Reports

None

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Crawford. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:55 p.m.