

CITY OF READING, OHIO
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – REGULAR SESSION
August 3, 2021 – 7:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER

President of Council Mr. Christopher Nesbitt called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Nesbitt led those in attendance in a prayer and then the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Council Members Present: Mr. Powell, Mr. Albrinck, Mr. Lindeman, Mr. Fischesser & Mrs. Eadicicco. Motion made by Mr. Fischesser, seconded by Mr. Powell to excuse Mr. Gertz & Mr. Lynd. Motion carried by voice vote.

OTHER CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Mayor Bo Bemmes, Law Director Dave Stevenson, Auditor Sabrina Smith & Clerk of Council Carla Kacher.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: NONE

COMMUNICATIONS –

Comments from Don Lykins:

Council,

Has anyone investigated getting the landlord info from the tax department – this could be allowed by a new city ordinance see email below?

If not, Tony Gertz came up with another idea, that is: pass an ordinance which allows Reading to enforce the Ohio Law (5323.02) which mandates all landlords file with the county. This way landlords don't have to provide the same information 3x. It'll give teeth to Reading with enforcement of an existing law.

Please do not pass Katie's ordinance and if you don't want to get the info from the tax department, pass Tony Gertz's ordinance.

Letter from Peggy Tegeder

August 2, 2021

Dear Council,

Good Evening! My name is Peg Tegeder. My family and I reside at 17 Gahl Terrace. For some time now, the house at 19 Gahl Terrace has been the topic of conversation. This home is the reason we are in strong support of the Rental Registration Mrs. Eadicicco is trying to implement. I would like to lay out some of the situations, and unpleasanties we dealt with while trying to contact Vinebrook, the company that owns the home.

Many, if not all of you on council are aware of the unsightly display at 19 Gahl Terrace. Starting with the front of the home. Typically, the lessee is responsible for the lawn maintenance, and general upkeep of the outside of the home. The lessee did not maintain the lawn on a regular basis. In fact, I can count on one hand how many times in the two-year span that the lawn was cut. The lack of lawn maintenance made the house drab and was unpleasant to look at. Not to mention what could be living in the tall grass. Sadly, as the neighbor to 19 Gahl Terrace, more was to come.

As time continued to pass, and one of the lessee's began to be more distant, it left the other lessee there alone. It was apparent that the female lessee struggled with her mental health. The tall grass became the normal for this home. As the female lessee became more unstable, her behaviors were reflected in the shape of the home. On one of her many rampages, the lessee threw an object from the inside of the house, through the bay window. Glass shattered everywhere, including our yard! She left it lay where it landed. My husband had to go out to pick up the glass from our yard. The glass would remain in her yard for several more months. In addition to the glass that shattered in both yards, the window remained as is. Day in and day out, we were left to wonder when the window would be repaired. In frustration, and concern, we attempted to reach out to Vinebrook to report the unsightly situation. After jumping through hoops, we contacted an accounting associate for Vinebrook. We were sent to the manager for this area and left a voicemail. We left a detailed message stating the current conditions of the house, and our names and number that we could be reached at. Vinebrook never responded to our message. The window sat, busted out for months to come. When winter came, black garbage bags went up in the

window. Finally, the busted window was covered, but still an eyesore. Why did a window sit for months upon months with nothing covering it, and then garbage bags? Would you be okay living next to a house that is unsightly?

Unfortunately, the broken-out window wasn't where the lessee stopped. We had many things thrown at our house, such as; empty liquor bottles, plastic plates (thrown from her upstairs window) that landed in our gutters, buckets of urine and fecal matter (yes, that is how she would rid the house of her bodily waste when her water was shut off) dumped down the side of the house from the upstairs window), and so much more.

As time continued to go on, the condition of the home worsened. Many folks from Eagleview would slow down in disbelief and horror. The overgrown grass and busted out window would become the norm for the lessee. We attempted many times more to contact Vinebrook, all of which were unsuccessful. My husband and I began to reach out to Patrick Ross, and Mrs. Eadicicco to determine the best possible way to get this situation rectified, but not before things became even more outrageous. In fact, the fine folks that reside up the hill in the Eagleview neighborhood were an incredible help in our voices being heard.

The lessee kept her car filled with things, and she would take those things in and out of the car. Those belongings would end up on the telephone pole at the apron of her driveway. In another episode, the lessee spray painted her car, and the garage door! In that same fit of rage and instability, the lessee busted out her glass storm door. Then, the front door was taken off its hinges to keep the house completely open. During or around this rampage, the police responded to a non-emergency call made by us. We asked that they check on her because of what had recently happened, and we didn't see her for quite some time after the episode. Upon entering the home, the police officers quickly found her home to be in deplorable conditions. The police officers did not go into much detail+ but did say the lessee left the burners of the stove on and unattended. Let me repeat that, **THE LESSEE LEFT THE BURNERS OF THE STOVE ON WHILE UNATTENDED!** Couple that with the deplorable conditions, and the fact that she left the house completely opened, and we could have had a serious issue on our hands. The house could have caught fire due to the burners being on, and something very easily could have dropped on the burners igniting what could have been a devastating situation, not only for her, but for my family!

Why did it take an abundance of non-emergency phone calls, police checking out the situation, and many unhappy residents in the Eagleview neighborhood to get any action on this property? We have lived in misery, disgust with the wafting stench of an unkempt home, and worry that at any moment we could be waking to a serious emergency at the hands of the lessee.

I ask that you truly think about how you would feel to live next to a neighbor that doesn't maintain the home in which they reside. Also, I ask that you take into consideration what Mrs. Eadicicco is trying to accomplish with the Rental Registration. If there is a rental registration in place imagine the possibilities. We would not have to wait through the disgust, frustration, and unsanitary conditions in which we dealt with. The landlord or company would be notified, and get the situation taken care of. If the lessee isn't going to be held responsible, it is due time to hold the landlord/company responsible for the property. Remember, a lot of resources and man hours were used to contact Vinebrook in regard to this lessee. I can only imagine the time, money, and frustration that would be saved if the rental registration would be implemented, especially because Vinebrook isn't the only rental company scooping up homes in the area. Remember, there is another company that has bought several houses in the area and will be renting them out. The landlords/companies aren't always worried about the properties and how they are maintained, but more worried about their bottom dollar. It is imperative that a rental registration be born. Expectations need to be set, and owners of rental properties need to be held to those expectations. People are banging down doors to live in the great City of Reading. It would be devastating to see this great city turn to rubbish because the owners of the rental properties aren't being held responsible for the maintenance of their homes.

I thank you for your time and pray that all of you take the time to seriously understand how wonderful it would be to have the rental registration available. We need to keep moving this great city forward.

Sincerely,

Peggy Tegeder

GUEST SPEAKER – NONE

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

(1) Tim Schmidt (PFT Enterprises: 8633 & 8643 Reading Road; 424 & 426 Jefferson Avenue)

Does not think Katie Eadicicco's Residential Registration Ordinance should be passed. He is in favor of Mr. Gertz's proposed ordinance that requires residential property owners to abide by O.R.C 5323.02. He also pointed out that the Hamilton County Auditor's office has all of this information and it can be found there. He asked if this ordinance passes if the residential property owners will have to fill it out again?

Mr. Powell added that the City of Reading has attempted to collect and review this information at the Hamilton County

Auditor's office and the information is both incorrect and incomplete.

Mr. Bemmes clarified that the ordinance is just an attempt in our City to respond to the blatant offenders. Sometimes we, as a City, must take things into our own hands to get those who do not abide by the Hamilton County laws.

Mr. Albrinck asked if it will be necessary to include Business owners in this ordinance? Asked what staffing needs will be able to be met to carry out the ordinance? Asked what the penalty is if the residential property owners don't comply?

It was pointed out that Katie Eadicicco's ordinance refers to a "civil" fine where Tony Gertz's ordinance references a "criminal fine." Mayor Bemmes clarified that point in the ordinance.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE: Anthony Gertz

- No Report (Absent)

UTILITIES, LANDS & BUILDINGS: Don Lindeman.

- Committee met on Tuesday, July 13 and discussed improvements that can be made to the Bridal District. Such items that came up were: Repairing/replacing pavers, clean up utility wiring & possibly install a fountain in the future.

- Community Garden: Spoke with Carla Belcher Community Gardens and also visited Wyoming's Community Garden which was amazing and would love to see something like this in the future. Sabrina Smith is helping us with a grant for "Keeping the City Safe & Green." There is a lot of opportunity in Reading to improve the "lands" and improving our community with a Community Garden.

ZONING, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT: Dave Powell

- My committee met prior to our last meeting to discuss a potential ordinance to deal with unsolicited written materials becoming litter. We also discuss zoning information for Little Libraries. I hope to bring something to the floor for each of these at our next meeting.

Something else that has come to my attention is that FEMA is rolling out a new methodology for rating flood insurance policies called Risk Rating 2.0. It is my understanding that beginning on October 1, 2021 all new policies will be rated according to the new methodology along with existing policies up for renewal. All remaining policies renewing on or after April 1, 2022 will be subject to the new rating methodology. I would encourage all residents with Flood Insurance policies to contact their agents to see how this new rating methodology is going to affect their premiums.

I would also like to see our administration explore what it would take to join FEMA's Community Rating System. Participation in this system could lead to substantial discounts on Flood Insurance for policy holders depending on how the City would score on the rating system.

LAWS AND CONTRACTS: Katie Eadicicco

- I sent out the revised version of the rental registration ordinance striking the requirement for listing tenants.

Mr. Gertz also sent out an alternative ordinance, and while I wish that this was discussed in our committee first before it was sent out, with all this new information I would like to table both ordinances and move them into the Laws and Contracts committee for discussion. I'd like to work on a combination of the two. I do like the idea of the enforcement and I want to make sure we state why such an ordinance is needed.

Do we need a vote to move Mr. Gertz's ordinance into committee? I would like to set up a time for a committee meeting to go over this. Looking at Monday, August 16 at 6:30 if that works.

Motion made by Mr. Albrinck, seconded by Mr. Fischesser to table the Residential Registration Ordinance and put back into committee.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY: Randy Fischesser

- Mr. Powell and Mr. Fischesser will be going door to door on Dottie Ct this Saturday, August 7 in the morning (starting around 10:30 a.m.) to discuss parking issues.

SERVICE: Dennis Albrinck

- 1-ton dump truck is finally in. There will be a need for another one very soon.

- Test for the Mechanic took place last Saturday so hopefully we'll have a new Mechanic soon
- Will need to purchase a mini-excavator for the Service Department in the near future.
- City water crew have done several dig ups for curb box on throughout the City.
- City crew was out patching potholes in the streets.
- The mulcher has been out collecting branches.
- City crews has been cleaning catch basins.
- City street sweeper has been out.
- City crew has been painting the soccer fields.
- City crew have been out grinding up tree stumps throughout the city.
- City crews have been out painting curb lines and streets.
- City crew trimmed trees at Hilltop Park and on Reading Road in the alleyway between Vine and Pearl St. at Mill St. and a tree on Hunt at Fuhrman Rd. and cut down tree on Krylon.
- City crews have been repairing catch basins throughout the City on Reading Rd., Illinois Ave.
- City crew repaired a water leak at City Hall.
- City had to call in A All Valley plumbing to unclog a drain in the second floor restrooms.

RECREATION: Tom Lynd

- No Report (Absent)

NEW BUSINESS

REPORTS OF OFFICIALS

MAYOR: Robert "Bo" Bemmes

Our Excellent Schools will be opening their doors this month so please SLOW DOWN as you drive and keep an eye out for our young students as they make their way to and from school. Patrick and I with input from our department heads and information given to us from our Schools and We Thrive will be submitting a grant early next year to seek grant dollars to make safety improvements to our roads and sidewalks leading to our schools. Please support our young athletes this fall. RHS, MND, Saints Peter and Paul Academy, Reading Youth Football and Reading Youth Soccer always have talented teams that deserve our support

A lot of great events continue to go on in our City. The National Night Out happened today at Koenig Park allowing everyone an opportunity to get to know our Police and Fire/EMS personnel better. Community oriented Policing has always been a top priority for me and today residents got to meet many of our Officers and got to see some of the things they do for us every day.

On August 28 our American Legions ladies Auxiliary will host an event at Koenig Park from noon till 11pm featuring great food from establishments in our city and live music with performances by our RHS band and dance team, SPPA's dance team and live bands as well.

Our outstanding annual Antique car show will be on September 12 at the Pool/Haffey Fieldhouse parking lot

Our Lady of the Valleys (formerly Saints Peter and Paul) Septemberfest will be on September 18 and 19

Our reading Bridal Districts annual Fall in Love event on Benson Street will be on September 22 with Benson street being closed from 5pm till midnight

Our Reading Historical Society will have their Settlement day dinner on October 22 at the Haffey Fieldhouse recognizing Don and Rose Lindeman, Burchy Schulte, Derrick Leach and Jim Lichtenberg and Cindy Roth.

Please come out to our Farmers Market from 4-7pm every Friday

Several major road projects are going on in our City including, improvements to South Reading RD, a new bridge on North Reading RD, Thurnridge Drive improvements including new 8" in diameter water main, all new sidewalks, widen entire street 3 feet, five speed humps will be installed to slow traffic down, all new curbs and aprons, (\$1 million grant & \$1 million loan), Benson Street (CDBG Grant) will be repaved using approx. \$120,000 in CDBG grant dollars (Jefferson to Mill Creek), North Street will get major work (\$566,000 total \$283,000 of this is in SCIP Grant dollars) and the new 6'X12' box culvert (\$880,000 total with close to \$400,000 of this in Grant Dollars) on Hunt Road is finally finished. Patrick told me

council has already decided on proposals for the next round of CDBG using half of the grant for paving and ½ to address dilapidated property

We are working with the Port Authority to secure the former DOW Chemical Property. We should thank God every day that the Port Authority decided to become involved, knowing that they were looking at up to \$7 million in demolition and remediation work on the old former Dow/Rohm and Haas/PMC chemical plants that handled very dangerous materials. This property could have sat for years dilapidated and underutilized and now plans are being completed to build new buildings to bring new jobs to our city that will bring substantial new revenue for our City and our Reading Community Schools. LSR, Patrick & I worked very hard with the Port Authority to get them involved as wonderful partners with us and we promised them our support.

It is my very strong recommendation that we set aside most of any additional monies we receive from the American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery funds in a fund to protect payroll as tough economic times could be ahead.

The Following is a list of some improvements I feel we should discuss, get price estimates on, prioritize, and should move forward on as funds become available.

- * Replace/update existing facilities - police/fire/general offices/ building dept/parking lots/park shelters
- * Cameras in city parks
- * Update pool and field house
- * Fire Hydrant replacement (144 unserviceable)
- * Water mains with road projects
- * Body cameras for Police Department
- * Transition to online forms/scheduling (pool, parks, etc)
- * Building Dept (Exterior Property Maintenance) improvements
- * Update streetscape on Benson
- * Additional park employee & hire a Full Time City clerk to replace one Part Time clerk
- * New track
- * Remodel Bleachers and locker rooms at Veterans Memorial Stadium
- * New lights at Koenig ballfields & ballfields improvements
- * ALL parks need attention

As always please get to know your neighbors and look out for them and call our police at 733-4122 if you see any suspicious or illegal activity

Please slow down as you drive.

I again want to thank the many people who do wonderful things through-out our city every day.

SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR: Patrick Ross

- No Report (Absent)

LAW DIRECTOR: Dave Stevenson

- No Report.

TREASURER: Mel Gertz (Report given by Clerk of Council, Carla Kacher)

- As of today, we've collected \$633,613.00 for the month of July (-26.8% behind 2020).
- Year to date we have collected \$5,245,214.00 (14.7% ahead of 2020)

AUDITOR: Sabrina Smith

- Sent out Monthly reports for July. All should be received.
- 5 months left with expenditures closing December 3.
- National Night Out at Koenig Park tonight was a huge success thanks to our Police Department! Thank you to all involved!

OTHER BUSINESS

READING OF RESOLUTIONS - NONE

READING OF ORDINANCES

(1) AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A REGISTRATION SYSTEM FOR RESIDENTIAL RENTAL PROPERTY AND ADULT TENANTS AND OCCUPANTS THEREOF. (Updated Ordinance)

Ordinance was tabled and put back in to the Laws & Contracts Committee.

(2) AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE READING CODE OF ORDINANCES THAT ADDRESS COUNCIL MEETINGS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY (Third Reading)

Motion made by Mr. Fischesser, seconded by Mrs. Eadicicco to adopt the ordinance.

Motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote.

ORDINANCE ADOPTED

ORDINANCE NUMBER 2021-24

(3) AN ORDINANCE REQUIRING RESIDENTIAL RENTAL PROPERTY OWNERS TO PROPERLY ABIDE BY O.R.C. 5323.02 AND ESTABLISHING PENALTIES ACCORDINGLY TO LAW AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Ordinance was tabled and put back in to committee.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was declared adjourned at 8:47 pm.

X_____
CARLA KACHER
Clerk of Council

X_____
CRIS NESBITT
President of Council