



City of Middletown
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL
245 deKoven Drive
Middletown, CT 06457-1300
TEL: (860) 638-4820 FAX: (860) 638-1920
TDD: (860) 344-3521

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TOWN CLERK
MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

Minutes

Regular Meeting of February 11, 2021
Code Enforcement Committee

Committee Members Present: Dean Lisitano, Chief Building Official; Nick Puorro, Police Officer; Gary Gessaro, Fire Marshal; James Mastroianni, Fire Marshal; Art Higgins, Fire Marshal; Jennifer Sparks, Acting Public Health Manager; Christopher Holden, Deputy Director of Public Works; Joseph Samolis, Director of Planning, Conservation and Development; Bobbye Knoll Peterson, Chief of Staff (arrived 9:03 a.m.); and Christopher J. Forte, Assistant General Counsel.

Members of the Public: None

1. Call to Order By Staff

Assistant General Counsel Forte called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

A. Review and approval of the minutes of the January 28, 2021 special meeting.

MOTION: Chief Building Official Lisitano made a motion to approve the January 28, 2021 minutes. Officer Puorro seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously at 9:01 am. Chief of Staff Peterson was absent for the vote.

3. Public Session- No members of the public present.

4. New Business

A. Public Works.

- 1) Update from the Public Works Department. Public Works has been inspecting and citing homeowners for their failure to remove snow and ice from sidewalks within the time allowed under the City of Middletown's ordinance.

B. Health Department.

- 1) Update from the Health Department. The Health Department has been working with CHC, Wesleyan, and NEAT to come up with a solution to the “community refrigerator” that has appeared at 33 Ferry Street. The refrigerator purports to contain food for the neighborhood, but the City has received reports that the food contained therein is bad and spoiled. The City will continue to work to render the situation safe. Will continue to monitor.

C. Planning, Conservation and Development.

- 1) Update from the Planning, Conservation and Development Department.
No updates.

D. Building Department.

- 1) Update from the Building Department. No updates.

E. Police Department.

- 1) Update from the Police Department. No updates.

F. City Fire.

- 1) Update from City Fire. No updates.

G. South Fire District.

- 1) Update from South Fire District. No updates.

H. Westfield Fire District.

- 1) Update from the Westfield Fire District. No updates.

I. Office of the General Counsel.

- 1) Update from the Office of the General Counsel. No updates.
- 2) Review of Code Enforcement Liens: No updates.
- 3) Catherine Street (Former Untouchable Towing): The Office of the General Counsel received a complaint from a neighbor that the former owner of Untouchable Towing was running an illegal business out of his residence. The Planning, Conservation and Development Department reached out to the complainant and further allegations of illegal work being done in the owner’s garage on the property. PCD will inspect and follow up.

5. Old Business

- A. Public Works.** No updates.

- 1) Camp Street. Reports of tires that are improperly stored on the premises. Public Works inspected and the violations were remediated. No further action needed.

B. Planning, Conservation and Development. No updates.

- 1) 212 Sisk Street: The Planning, Conservation and Development Office was made aware that this property was in a state of disrepair, including having a hole in the roof, and junk located in the back of the property. Zoning and Wetlands Enforcement Officer Baia has issued blight and zoning orders against the property, and the violations have not been remediated. ZEO Baia will follow up with a Citation. Committee will continue to monitor.
- 2) 520 East Main Street: A hole in the roof exists on this property. The Zoning Enforcement Office issued blight orders on the property. The owner is working with the ZEO and Building Department to remediate the violations. For now, the owner has installed a tarp on the roof. Will continue to monitor in case further action is required.
- 3) 311 Main Street Extension. Auto parts store located on property on East Main Street burned down. The South Fire Marshals have completed their investigation, and the Chief Building Official is working with the owners and their insurance company to remove the structure on the property. The Building Department was made aware that the owner of the property passed away recently, which has slowed down the process for obtaining a demolition permit.

ZEO Baia issued a blight order on December 11 against the owners of the property for blight violations as a result of the building burning down. The owner is attempting to work with their attorney and the insurance company to demolish the building. Will continue to monitor in case further action is required.

C. Health Department.

- 1) 26B Saybrook Road: The Health Department condemned the property as a result of exposed electrical wires that posed an imminent danger to human life, and has issued other orders on the property regarding damage to the roof, violations regarding the bathroom, among others. The owner of the property failed to cure the violations within the time set forth in the order. The Health Department referred the matter to the States Attorney's Office. The owner is working on achieving compliance. The majority of the violations have been rectified. The Health Department will continue to monitor for compliance.

- 2) 37 Park Place: The City was made aware of reports of garbage located on the property, and a missing window on the third floor, and a missing basement door. The Health Department, Building Official and Zoning Enforcement Officer inspected the property, and conducted a follow up inspection this past month. The ZEO issued a blight order against the property owner for debris, mattress and furniture located on the premises. Health Department inspected and found that the owner was cleaning up the property. The snowfall has made inspection difficult, but once the snow melts the Health Department will re-inspect and continue to monitor.
- 3) 23 Atkins Street. The Health Department condemned the building and relocated the owners of the building pursuant to the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act. Since last month the probate court has appointed a conservator over the owners, who is working to remediate the violations on the property. The Fire and Building departments will conduct follow up inspections once the property is cleaned out, and will need to be re-inspected before the condemnation order can be lifted. Will continue to monitor.

D. Building Department.

- 1) 980 Arbutus Street. The City's Building Department was made aware that the building on the property was being occupied without a certificate of occupancy, which is in violation of the Building Code. The Building Department and Office of the General Counsel will follow up and work to achieve compliance and schedule an inspection. Will continue to monitor.

E. Police Department.

- 1) Washington Street Plazas (Illegal Dumping Issues). The Middletown Police Department has been investigating illegal dumping of junk, and various furniture. The violations have been remediated and the Police Department will continue to work with the property owner to monitor for further violations. No further action needed.

F. City Fire.

- 1) 52 North Main Street. The Health Department forwarded this to City Fire, there are reports of illegal gatherings on the premises in violation of COVID-19 guidelines. City Fire inspected the premises and found numerous Fire Code violations, including potentially people living in the building. The Health, Building and Planning, Conservation and Development departments will schedule inspections. Will continue to monitor

G. Westfield Fire District. Absent.

- 1) 218 Smith Street (Westfield Pizza). Owner pulled permits for expansion, but project is on hold due to weather and structural issues. Will continue to monitor.

H. Office of the General Counsel.

- 1) Middlesex Pool and Tennis Club (432 Laurel Grove). In 2019, the clubhouse located on the property burned down. The Building Department, in conjunction with Fire, Planning, Conservation and Development, and the Office of the General Counsel have been working with the owner to have the structure removed. The structure has now been taken down, and the pool still remains. The Building Official and Health Department issued orders to fix the fence and to drain the pool. The property owners failed to comply, and the Office of the General Counsel issued a notice of abatement to the property owner. Since then, the City of Middletown is working to acquire title to the property, so code enforcement activities have been put on hold for time being. Will continue to monitor.

6. Adjournment

MOTION: Chief Building Official Lisitano made a motion to adjourn. Fire Marshal Gessaro seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously at 9:23 am.

The Committee adjourned at 9:23 a.m.

cc: Hon. Benjamin Florsheim, Mayor
Code Enforcement Committee Members
OGC Personnel