

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
and PUBLIC HEARING
JANUARY 4, 2010**

The Ordinance Committee of the Board of Aldermen held a meeting and public hearing on Monday, January 4, 2010. Chairman Giannattasio called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and proceeded to read the public notice as it appeared in the New Haven Register on December 30, 2009.

MEMBERS PRESENT

A. Giannattasio, Chairman
P. Staneski, Vice Chairman
N. Veccharelli
P. Smith
J. Patterson

ALSO PRESENT

Mayor James L. Richetelli, Jr.
Matthew B. Woods, Trial Counsel

Chairman Giannattasio opened the public session of the Ordinance Committee at 7:05 p.m. regarding the following Ordinances:

1. An Ordinance repealing and substituting §6-6 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Milford (Demolition Delay).

Speakers in Favor:

R. Platt – 132 Platt Lane – stated this Ordinance was before the Committee tonight at his request. He stated he had requested this change before when this Ordinance was first passed back in September. He also commented regarding the 2002 Ordinance. He went on to explain how this Ordinance came about and that it was modeled after the Westport Ordinance. He explained Westport is different in that they have an established list which Milford does not. He expressed his hope that process would begin shortly here in Milford and that we would have that list soon.

D. Damicis – 64 Beach Avenue – stated she strongly agrees no demolition should be allowed without the proper waiting period and permits. She also spoke regarding the blight Ordinance and expressed her hope we would not lose any more buildings this way.

B. Genovese – 19 Belmont Street – thanked the Ordinance Committee for listening to the Preservation Trust Committee and other committees and considering this amendment.

Speakers in Opposition – none.

2. An Ordinance establishing Article VIII of Chapter 2 §§2-110 through 2-112 of the Milford Code of Ordinances (City Historian).

Speakers in Favor – none.

Speakers in Opposition:

R. Platt – 132 Platt Lane – stated his first reaction to this Ordinance was the three-year term, but that he was willing to live with it. He stated after more thought he stated he believed it would leave the position open to politicization. He commented every city in the State of Connecticut who has a historian; they are in office for an indefinite amount of time. He stated he believes this Ordinance is unnecessary. He also stated he did not know this was going to be on the agenda until late last week and that he had to go to the City Clerk's office to get a copy of it. He stated he should have been told this was going to be on the agenda.

A. Maher – 44 Prospect Street – stated she was speaking in support of City Historian, Richard Platt. She stated he has been here for so many years and that she was surprised by this job description. She stated Milford is lucky to have Mr. Platt and that someone down the road may not do the job as well. Ms. Maher commented Mr. Platt serves the City with courtesy and civility and that his impact has been vital.

A. Damicis – 64 Beach Avenue – stated she agreed with the comments made by Mr. Platt and Ms. Maher. She added Mr. Platt knows so much about Milford and its history and she would not want to see his have to have tie limits.

B. Genovese – 19 Belmont Street – stated she is here tonight to support Mr. Platt. She stated he is an honorable man who does everything by the book. He also pointed out former mayor Lisman put him in the position of City Historian 11 years ago and that he has done it well and that he should be thanked for his work.

T. Chaucer – 104 Hawley Avenue – stated the Ordinance Committee should have copies of the Ordinance available at the meetings and noted he has asked this before. He stated he had concern with the language beginning “at the direction of the mayor. . .” and questioned what that meant. He stated he agreed with Mr. Platt that the language seemed somewhat ambiguous. He suggested the language be looked at or removed.

P. Fulco – 10 Kendall Green – spoke regarding the duties of the historian and that Mr. Platt had no knowledge this was coming. He stated there is no one better to work on the duties of the City Historian than Mr. Platt. Mr. Fulco also stated there is no date as to when the term begins and questioned that. He suggested the Committee take a step back and sit down with Mr. Platt and discuss when the term would be begin and other aspects of the Ordinance.

C. Martin – 14 Roswell Street – expressed concern that suddenly this would be an appointed position and concern with the balance of powers. She stated Mr. Platt volunteered for this position and that he would take a lot of searching to find some as qualified as him.

Mr. Platt addressed the Committee stating this Ordinance was not about him specifically. He stated it applies to the current city historian and any future historian.

Chairman Giannattasio declared the public session closed at 7:23 p.m.

Ald. P. Smith and Ald. Patterson made and seconded a motion to forward to the full Board with a favorable recommendation an Ordinance repealing and substituting §6-6 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Milford (Demolition Delay).

Ald. Staneski spoke as to the importance of moving forward with the historical committee and coming together as a body and looking at the work to be done and working with the Commission going forward and being open to any future amendments.

Chairman Giannattasio commented this Ordinance has been in place since September and that it is getting better and better and time goes on. He expressed his appreciation for the public coming out to speak concerning the Ordinance.

Motion carried unanimously.

Ald. Staneski and Ald. P. Smith made and seconded a motion to forward to the full Board with a favorable recommendation an Ordinance establishing Article VIII of Chapter 2 §§2-110 through 2-112 of the Milford Code of Ordinances (City Historian).

Ald. Patterson stated he had serious concerns with this Ordinance as drafted. He stated he believed the language limited the work of the City Historian and that the language was seemingly at the behest of the mayor; and that there was the potential to see a new City Historian with every new mayor. He also stated there is no start time as to when this would commence. He stated he also had concern with the length of the term.

Mayor Richetelli pointed out it was this Committee that asked to have a City Historian Ordinance drafted. He noted there was very little statutory guidance on the City Historian in the statutes. He also pointed out the misconception with the Ordinance. Mayor Richetelli explained the Ordinance does state the City Historian is appointed with the approval of the Board of Aldermen, so there is a sufficient check in place. He explained as to the length of the term it is what is already in place in the City with other Boards and Commissions, which is two and three year terms. With regard to duties and compensation, Mayor Richetelli explained this has always been volunteer; and that the Ordinance states the City Historian will perform such duties as conferred by law and the City Charter and at the direction of the Mayor. He stated the mayor does not have authority to approve one dollar. He reiterated the duties are as conferred by law unless directed by this Board. He stated if this Ordinance is passed, it would be like any other Ordinance that takes effect 10 days after the notice has been posted. He stated this Ordinance is no different. Mayor Richetelli stated there are safeguards to de-politicize this.

Chairman Giannattasio stated for clarification it was his understanding Mr. Platt was appointed by former mayor Lisman and that up to this point this position has always been appointed by the Mayor.

Mayor Richetelli responded he was corrected. He went on to explain the first City Historian was Ms. Brockett who was appointed by former mayor Jagoe and then Mr. Platt was appointed by former mayor Lisman.

Ald. Staneski stated she understood Ald. Patterson's concerns about the timeframe and that she would not be opposed to changing that to 5, 6 or even an 8 year term. She stated she also wished to comment for the record that this was not directed at the current City Historian, but to codify the position. She stated it also speaks to future city historians. She also reiterated she was not opposed to extending the years of service.

Ald. Veccharelli stated the Ordinance is very vague and doesn't spell out too much. He also stated it leaves a bi-partisan position more of a partisan position. He stated up to now the City Historian has been a-political and

no we are saying he will serve three years with no pay and be appointed by the Mayor and under the direction of the Mayor. Ald. Veccharelli stated three years is a short period of time. He also stated there are many other positions that are more than three years. He reiterated three years is short. He also noted the 8-9 people who voiced their opinions against this and that no one spoke in favor of the Ordinance. He also stated there was no input from the City Historian. Ald. Veccharelli suggested the Mayor could put together a group of people to come up with something. He also stated what was most concerning to him was the fact the historian would be at the direction of the Mayor. He stated he did not want to bring up old wounds, but stated the Cadley property caused a big brouhaha between the Mayor and the City Historian and that perhaps things would have been done differently. Ald Veccharelli stated this position needed to be most bi-partisan. He also reiterated the language was just too vague, adding there was no “meat & potatoes”. He stated he would like to suggest the Committee table this and have a new committee get together with the City Historian to come up with a more comprehensive Ordinance that is more thought out. He stated he was making that in the form of a motion.

Ald. Patterson seconded the motion to table the matter. Motion carried unanimously.

Being no further business, Ald. Patterson and Ald. Veccharelli moved to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber
Recording Secretary