

REGULAR WORK SESSION  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2022  
6:00 P.M.

The Regular Work Session of the City Council of the City of Vineland was called to order by the President, Dr. Elizabeth A. Arthur.

The following members were present at roll call:

Councilman Ronald J. Franceschini, Jr.  
Councilman Albert Vargas  
President Dr. Elizabeth A. Arthur

Councilman David Acosta was absent.  
Councilman Paul F. Spinelli was absent.

Also present were: Richard P. Tonetta, Esq., City Solicitor  
Greg Gallo, Business Administration Staff  
Edwin Alicea, Director of Public Safety  
Sandy Forosisky, Director of Economic Development  
Aaron Melnick, Community Development Director

The President led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Municipal Clerk stated Public Notice of this meeting, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, has been given on December 15, 2021 by the City Clerk in the following manner:

1. Posting written notice on the official bulletin board in the lobby of the City Hall;
2. Providing written notice to the offices of The Daily Journal and The Press of Atlantic City;
3. Filing written notice in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Vineland.

The President asked if anyone from the public would like to comment.

Steve Lewis referenced last week's discussion about the Code Blue facility and the idea promoted by Councilman Franceschini to establish a 1,000 foot buffer from cannabis businesses to residential areas. Mr. Lewis predicted that cannabis businesses will ruin Vineland. He also suggested that Code Blue discussion and decisions should be made in the summer to allow proper time to prepare. He also stated that this is not the first Council to deal with Code Blue.

Carlos Mercado stated he owns property on Gilmore Street, where he grew up and his parents still reside. He is concerned about a proposal for a Code Blue facility near that property. He briefly noted his involvement and experience with Code Blue and claimed the clients frequently have mental health issues, along with frequent alcohol and drug abuse. He expressed concern for the neighborhood and was upset that no written notification or survey was provided to property owners.

Solicitor Tonetta explained that the proposal is for the city to purchase the building to be used for projects like the Health Department vaccination clinics, and other municipal uses. Code Blue will only be necessary approximately 45 days of the year.

Delfin Cuevas, Jr. stated this area is a residential area with a lot of children. He believes the neighborhood can't handle this type of facility. He suggested a long-vacant building on Main Road as an alternative site.

There being no other comment from the public, the President invited Community Development Director Aaron Melnick and Economic Development Director Sandy Forosisky to the table. Mr. Melnick addressed and commented upon the statements made earlier. He explained that the building is being proposed for purchase using 100% grant funding.

Solicitor Tonetta explained that a variance would likely be required from the Zoning Board, which would include a public hearing.

President Arthur asked for a committee to be formed to evaluate the entire proposal and report back to the governing body.

There being no one further to be heard, the Clerk reviewed the agenda.

Solicitor Tonetta stated that he was still working on the cannabis ordinance, including the host-community agreement. When he finishes the draft ordinance he will distribute it to Council member for review and comment. Assuming this is accomplished in the next few days, the Clerk said if Council wishes the ordinance could be added to the agenda as a first reading on Monday.

Councilman Franceschini questioned the status of the animal shelter alternatives. Solicitor Tonetta indicated he has more concerns about the County-wide concept. We may have to explore doing it ourselves, but for 2023 we have to keep the SPCA as the provider.

The Clerk noted the pending re-appointment of Michael Green and the appointment of Iris Acosta-Jimenez to the Housing Authority. Council members authorized the resolutions to be added to the agenda.

Councilman Franceschini reported his attendance at a County-wide meeting of OEM personnel, adding it was a very good meeting. He also noted the Covid-19 vaccination clinic scheduled for tomorrow.

Councilman Vargas reported from the Recreation Commission that 84 wrestlers are registered for that program and approximately 300 for the basketball program. There is a coaching shortage which will limit participation. He also reported on the upcoming PAL Christmas party.

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Solicitor Tonetta revisited the cannabis issue, noting that Principal Planner, Kathleen Hicks, needs some direction. Apparently, if the city pursues a 1,000 foot buffer between cannabis businesses and residential areas, no cannabis facilities could be located here. He also needs clarification if Council wishes a buffer from a cannabis business to a residential zone, or to a residence. Obviously, more discussion will be needed to clarify this matter.

Dr. Arthur stated that Dane Barse School students are scheduled to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at next Tuesday's meeting.

The President entertained a motion by Councilman Franceschini, and seconded by Councilman Vargas, to adjourn the meeting. The Clerk called the roll: YEAS: Councilman Franceschini  
Councilman Vargas  
President Arthur

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Dr. Elizabeth A. Arthur  
President of Council

ATTEST:

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Keith Petrosky, RMC  
Municipal Clerk