

Cuyahoga Falls City Council
Minutes of the Public Affairs Committee Meeting
January 17, 2006

Members: Debbie Ritzinger, Chair
Diana Colavecchio
Doug Flinn

Mrs. Ritzinger called the meeting to order at 8:31 p.m. All members were present.

The minutes of the January 3, 2006 meeting were approved as submitted.

Legislation Considered:

Temp. Ord. B-175

An ordinance amending Sections 1309.26 and 1309.30 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Cuyahoga Falls, and declaring an emergency.

Discussion:

Mrs. Ritzinger read B-175 (second reading). Mrs. Carr said she wanted to mention several more items not included in her email to Council members. One is the additional fee charged for after-hours inspections. Under the AFSCME contract, the City is allowed to vary scheduling of inspectors. She will look into finding ways to better serve the public. The other issue is fencing (i.e., where it will be placed). People get approval of location from Planning & Zoning, then the City just checks the actual physical structure. She will look into the possibility of having the resident or someone else mark the property line so there is no question as to location.

Mrs. Hummel said she is concerned about Section A under Special fees. Is there a rationale for the increase in fees for additional inspections? Mr. Bell said \$65 is the cost of keeping an inspector in the field. Rarely is anyone charged \$100 or \$200.

Mrs. Klinger said she is concerned about raising fees without justification. Residents who require after-hours service shouldn't be penalized for making improvements to their home. The City should be flexible in accommodating residents.

Mrs. Pyke asked what would happen legally if a contractor's workmanship met the City's code but wasn't up to par or didn't meet a resident's expectations.

Mr. Arrington said the City isn't liable for poor workmanship and is also immune from liability for inspection services. Mrs. Carr added that although the City doesn't grade workmanship, we can provide documentation which supports any problems noted by the inspector.

The Committee recommended bringing out Temp. Ord. B-175 for approval.

Mrs. Ritzinger said that Gene Nixon, Executive Director of the Summit County Health District, was in attendance to address Council. Also in attendance are people from the Summit County Tobacco Prevention Coalition who would like to speak.

Gene Nixon presented a review of the SCHD, its operations and various services provided to the local community. He provided written materials to Mrs. Ritzinger for distribution to Council members.

Linda Emore, Director of Child Advocacy at Akron Children's Hospital, gave a powerpoint presentation to make a case for a smoke-free ordinance in Cuyahoga Falls. Summit County has passed the Clean Indoor Air ordinance which takes effect Feb. 28, 2006. Due to a conflict between city and county ordinances, however, the residents of Cuyahoga Falls will not be protected by this law. The Coalition urges Cuyahoga Falls to pass its own ordinance.

Michael Johnson (816 Arcadia, Cuy. Falls) urged Council to pass its own smoke-free law.

Mayor Robart said that City Hall became smoke-free a decade ago, and the entire campus became smoke-free a year ago. As of January 2005, it was decided that the City would no longer hire smokers. The state already has enough signatures to put the smoke-free issue on the ballot, so we have chosen to wait for the voters to decide the issue in November.

Jill Oldham, Project Director for the Summit County Tobacco Prevention Coalition, said that while the issue may go to ballot, the tobacco lobby will work hard against it. It would be in the best interest of Cuyahoga Falls to enact its own smoke-free legislation.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.