

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

of July 20, 2020

Municipal Council of the City of Vermilion
Municipal Complex, 685 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio 44089

In Attendance: **Vermilion City Council:**

Steve Herron, President of Council; Monica Stark, Council at Large; Emily Skahen, Ward One; Frank Loucka, Ward Two; Steve Holovacs, Ward Three; Brian Holmes, Ward Five; Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk; Barb Brady, Ward Four

Administration:

Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Amy Hendricks, Finance Director; Tony Valerius, Service Director

Call to Order:

Monica Stark, Chairwoman, RESOLVED THAT this Legislative Committee comprised of the committee of the whole does now come to order.

TOPIC ONE: **Chapter 618.01 Dogs and Other Animals Running at Large; Dangerous and Vicious Dogs**

Chief Hartung noted that Council was sent an email on this issue from Attorney Susan Anderson. He said there was language issues and he felt Attorney Anderson did an excellent job of breaking down everything. He said it would be up to Council on what they would like to do on this issue.

F. Loucka said one item noted in the email is that per ordinance it does not require a leash off the property and to him a dog should be leashed if they are off the property. There have been several cases where dogs take off. S. Herron asked if Frank is saying that it should be an absolute prohibition of letting your dog run at large. Frank said if you are on your own property and it is fenced in then you do not need to leash them, but the current ordinance says it does not require a leash off the property. S. Herron agreed they should consider this because dogs do not care if they are on private property when they do what they do. They just had an incident and understands no owner wants anyone to be hurt. Emily Skahen asked if they are talking about changing the wording 'at large'. She said if they wait until a dog is vicious or dangerous it is usually after the fact, so if all them need to be leashed she thinks this will help prevent the attacks they have seen.

B. Holmes advised Council of an incident on Metro Parks property off Parkview and noted the Parks District has a leash law where they have to be leashed with a 6' leash and it can't be a retractable leash. He said the owners of the dogs acted terribly to the Parks employee when they were told to put the dogs on a leash. He said vicious or not he thinks every dog should be leashed as dogs can freak out when they see somebody in uniform. They can be the nicest dog, but as soon as

their situation or comfort zone changes the dog can freak out. He thinks all dogs should be leashed outside of their own property, especially in the city limits. He said the Parks Board approves a dog event down at the beach and they would probably have to request a special permit or okay for this event to happen to allow the dogs off their leash. He said this is something else they will need to consider on the beach when people take their dogs off the leash when throwing sticks for them to retrieve. He thinks they need to educate the public through public safety announcements as they would be helpful. S. Holovacs said they could have a calm great dog when walking on the street with a leash, but how they react to someone's else's dog on a leash could be different, so it's important to have them on a leash. He has had situations where labs go crazy and he has had to separate them, so he totally understands the leash law.

S. Herron MOVED; S. Holovacs seconded to authorize Attorney Susan Anderson to prepare legislation. Roll Call Vote 7 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

TOPIC TWO:Transient Rentals

M. Stark conveyed that on June 18 a subcommittee consisting of Bill DiFucci, Building Inspector; Former Councilman John Gabriel; Steve Herron, President of Council, herself and two community members gathered to discuss the city's transient accommodations ordinance. After much great conversation, they all agreed the current ordinance is not sufficient. They need to move forward to get something better on the books for the community. First and foremost, this ordinance is being revised for safety reasons for all involved. She explained that across the community current owners will need to apply for a conditional use permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals. If owners sell their property and the new owners would want to continue with the rental, then they would need a new permit. The residents who are getting a permit for their property would need to have signage displayed during the permit process of which B. DiFucci will provide, so that if any neighbors want to have a voice in the permit process, then they can attend the Zoning meeting. She said they would also have signage posted in a window that will be given by the city when you are renting out your residence, which is for safety reasons. For example, if her neighbor rented out their place and she starts seeing all these strange people at her house and she isn't seeing her neighbor around, it might be good to have a sign in the window stating they're renting it out. This is just to let everybody know. Additionally, before the permit process starts, they will need a safety inspection performed by the building department. In addition, there will be an allowance per square footage on how many guests can stay. The building department will also look at how much parking is available as to giving a permit and how many can stay. She said the building inspector has a nice detailed list of things he will be looking at, which will be given to the clerk so everyone can review it. She said the city can revoke a permit if the rules are not followed. She said at the next meeting they can have legislation prepared for a first reading. G. Fisher suggested reviewing draft legislation at the

next committee meeting in case anyone wants to add or make changes to the legislation before it goes in final form.

B. Brady asked if each individual unit would need to apply for a permit, so the rules apply to each one. M. Stark noted the building inspector would need to inspect each unit and be able to say how many occupants can stay at each unit. B. Brady asked if there will be an application fee and M. Stark said yes. B. Brady thought the fee should apply to each unit. M. Stark agreed. She said the subcommittee looked at legislation from other communities. She said this would be a two-year permit and after the permit expires the owner would need to reapply and would need another safety inspection.

This matter was referred to the August 10 Legislative meeting for further review.

After no further discussion came before the committee, M. Stark adjourned the meeting.

Next meeting: August 10, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m. at the Vermilion Municipal Complex,
687 Decatur Street, Vermilion
Municipal Clerk (CMC) Gwen Fisher, Certified