

MINUTES

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CITY COUNCIL & WPCA

PUBLIC HEARING: CH. 158 "PEDDLING & SOLICITING" REGARDING FOOD TRUCKS

CITY HALL AUDITORIUM/ZOOM

JUNE 6, 2022

A **PUBLIC HEARING** was held by the City Council & WPCA of the City of Torrington on June 6, 2022, to solicit citizen input regarding the proposed changes to Chapter 158 "Peddling and Soliciting", regarding Food Trucks.

Attendance was by ZOOM and in person. Present at City Hall were Mayor Elinor Carbone, City Councilors Paul Cavagnero, Anne Ruwet, and Armand Maniccia. City Councilors Drake Waldron and Keri Hoehne were absent. City Councilor David Oliver participated via Zoom, as did Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell and City Comptroller Robin Stanziale. Also present in person were Personnel Director Attorney Jaime LaMere, Police Chief William Baldwin, Deputy Fire Chief David Tripp, Treasurer Dan Farley, Public Works Director Ray Drew, Economic Development Director Rista Malanca, and WPCA Administrator Ed Tousey.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m.

City Clerk Carol Anderson read the legal notice.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ryan Batchelder, a Torrington resident, and Food Truck owner, asked for a list of acceptable definitions of moral character, listing what they can and can't do. Also, he is looking for a list of crimes that could possibly revoke the food vending license. He also wanted to know why restaurants are not held to the same accountability as food trucks, such as having background checks. He stated that if food trucks are held to this standard then restaurants should also be held to the same standards.

Nick Whiteway, a Torrington resident, stated that it's not fair to attack just the food trucks and not the brick-and-mortar restaurants. He read the definition of moral character for the record. He also said that state law prohibits discrimination based on prior police records.

Sharon Waagner, a Torrington resident, stated that she doesn't necessarily agree with every person having a background check, if you are bringing a food truck to a fair or festival and need extra help for a day it would be too much. She also shared that the fee structure should be reviewed and possibly renewable every year. She thinks that instead of each employee having a badge, the food truck should display a list of who is working that day along with the proper permits.

Donna Fortier, a Torrington resident, wanted to know why it was fair to single out food trucks and not restaurants or other businesses in the City. She went on to ask why the Chief of Police needed to investigate each employee and why he can determine the moral character of each employee.

Kurt Johnson, a Torrington resident, and Food Truck owner, said that he agrees with most of the rules, especially staying away from other local restaurants that sell the same food. However, he doesn't agree with every employee getting a badge, he said that if he has the permit and someone is questioning who he is then they can ask for his license, which clearly identifies who he is. He also mentioned that in all the years that he has been doing this, he has never heard of an issue with Food Trucks and criminal behavior.

Nick Zabbara, a Torrington resident, defended the food truck owners, as they are also small business owners, just mobile. He asked why they should be singled out just because they are mobile. He stated that the integrity of the food truck owners shows in the food and the cleanliness of the trucks. He said that he believes that the Police would never go into a small business or any other business unless there was something going on.

Tyler Reginato, a Food Truck owner, shared his experience with getting his food truck permitted for the Goshen Stampede. He stated his concerns with having all employees on an approved list. He asked what happens if someone calls out and their replacement isn't on that list, do you have to close for the day?

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Mayor Carbone declared the public hearing closed at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Heather Abraham, Asst. City Clerk

ATTEST: 
CAROL L. ANDERSON, CITY CLERK