

Public Safety Committee
Council Chambers
October 17, 2018
7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilor David Walker
Councilor Robert Gates
Councilor Geoff Hamann
Councilor Jeremy Hutchinson
Councilor Peter Lachapelle

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael Bezanson, PE, City Engineer
Gary Boudreau, Deputy Police Chief
Dan Camara, GIS/Asset Mgmt. Technician
Mark Klose, Fire Department
Paul Vatcher, 55 Temple Drive
Dale Officer, 23 Temple Drive
Melinda Caldwell, 23 Blair Drive
Paul Benoit, 46 Temple Drive
Bill Braithwaite, 70 Temple Drive
John Elwell, 52 Temple Drive
Ronald Hilfiker, 24 Temple Drive
Jon Copp, 7 Hiltons Lane
Lillian Hurn, 9 Hiltons Lane
Karen Parolin, Autumn Street

Minutes

Councilor Walker brought the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Gauthier Farm-Gunfire Concerns

The Gauthier Farm- Gunfire Concerns went first on the agenda due to the amount of people present regarding the issue. Paul Vatcher of 55 Temple Drive in Tara Estates was present to talk about the gunfire issues. He stated he has been there since 2004. He said in the summertime the gunfire was going off at 1:00 am in the morning. He likes hearing the whippoorwills not the multiple gunshots; he said it sounds like bombs going off. Someone could get hurt walking in the woods. Councilor Walker asked what time the gunshots were going off. Mr. Vatcher said he did not know exactly what time in the morning but he said late at night some around 11:00 pm as well. Councilor Walker said that this item was set to be on the September Public Safety Agenda but was taken off, Doug Lachance sent an email to him saying that this was being handled

amicably with the owners and that a sign was put up saying "No shooting before 7 am to after dark". It is private property and the City cannot do anything about private property. The police went to the property to check the area out. Deputy Chief Boudreau said the range is safely placed and the proper backstop is in place and is below grade. Councilor Lachapelle asked Deputy Chief Boudreau if they could do anything on private property. He said only if there is an issue with disturbing the peace. Dale Officer lives at 23 Temple Drive. He said the Gauthier family voluntarily put up a sign that reads "No shooting until further notice". The area has not been taken care of and there has been some vandalism. Melinda Caldwell of 23 Blair Drive said she has been in Tara Estates since this past July. She said there is no monitoring; there are thousands of rounds of gunfire that go off. She said there is a little pond there and hardly any signage. She said there are 300 hundred homes being impacted, they are shooting towards Tara Estates. Councilor Walker said that it is private property and the city cannot do anything, it is legal. John Elwell of 52 Temple Drive stated that he found a bullet on his porch; he called the park manager and the police department. He said he gave the police a month and he called them. Nothing was done, and the bullet was destroyed. Bill Braithwaite of 70 Temple Drive said there was a rock that had been hit several times it looks like a meteor it has been hit so much. He said there is conservation land there and he does not know how that works, but it is an accident waiting to happen. Councilor Walker said they are more than 300 feet from the house, no law being is being broken. Ron Hilfiker of 24 Temple Drive said he agreed with everything that was said and that they had a couple of meetings last winter and one last Wednesday night at the clubhouse and that Councilor Varney was at the one last Wednesday. Councilor Varney was going to ask the city attorney if there was anything that could be done legally then he was going to get back to the residents of Tara Estates. Mr. Hilfiker said he had done some research regarding ordinances dealing with issues like this. In the Union Leader in 2015, an ordinance was passed in Londonderry. It limits what is going on. It can only be used during open season for deer and turkey and must have a NH Fish and Game license. They were having similar issues to what is going on here. Councilor Walker said Rochester has no laws or ordinances in place at this time for this matter. He said they could explore the language in the easement. Councilor Lachapelle said to have the city attorney look in to it. Mr. Hilfiker said that is what Councilor Varney was going to do and give them feedback. Councilor Lachapelle said he wants a legal opinion and if something can be done it will, however if it's private property they have rights. Paul Benoit of 46 Temple Drive wanted to thank the Gauthier's for putting the sign up but if it is taken, down it will go back to the way it was. He

understands the homeowners have rights. The Committee will investigate the Londonderry ordinance and will send to the Codes and Ordinances Committee.

2. Public Input

15 Hiltons Lane-Open Foundation Issue

Jon Copp from 7 Hiltons Lane was present to talk about the safety issue at 15 Hiltons Lane. He said there are currently 4 houses on the street and it's a cul-de-sac with lots of children in the area. New Style Homes owns # 15 Hiltons Lane. In late June they broke ground there and there is an open foundation with a one car garage. There is a portable toilet there, people who are walking would stop and use it. Mr. Copp is concerned because of the dangers of having the open foundation with all the people that walk the area. It has been like that for a 3-month span, so he thinks there may be some other issues there. He does not want to see a child die. He contacted the BZLS Department, but has not received a call back yet. Councilor Walker said they would follow up with the BZLS Department.

Sidewalk Concerns-Autumn Street

Lillian Hurn and Karen Parolin were present to talk about the lack of a sidewalk on Autumn Street. Ms. Hurn said she is a bicyclist and there is a lot of traffic, and drivers use this area as a cut-through to Maine. She said it is dangerous without a sidewalk in the area. Ms. Parolin said the speed limit is 30 mph and there are a lot of people with carriages and a lot of the vehicles are going 45 mph. Councilor Walker referred this request to the Public Works and Buildings Committee to evaluate and get a cost analysis of this area.

3. 721 Salmon Falls Road-Blind Drive Concerns-Mirror Install

Councilor Walker summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson reported that DPW crews had completed roadside clearing in the area and had heard back from the owner at 721 Salmon Falls Road; they are apparently satisfied with the line-of-sight now that the clearing is completed. They are no longer requesting a mirror for this location. No action taken.

4. Blackwater Road-Sharp Turn Sign Request

Councilor Walker summarized the issue. Councilor Hamann asked if the current sign should be moved and whether the sign should designate a driveway as well. Councilor Lachapelle said he thinks it should be moved back. Councilor Walker said the signs could be swapped. Mr. Bezanson stated that on the westbound approach the Chevron sign and the Curve Ahead sign depicted in the Google Streetview imagery have been swapped since the imagery was captured, which corrects the locations according to MUTCD. A current photo shows graffiti on the Curve Ahead sign, which will be corrected by DPW. On the eastbound approach DPW will move the Curve Ahead sign back a little on the approach to the curve. Mr. Bezanson will also check into the painting of the white fog lines in this area. DPW will also look into updating the School Bus Stop Ahead sign. Councilor Walker said the placement of signs will be at the discretion of DPW. No action from the Committee is needed.

5. Other

Norway Plains and Rangeway-Safety Concerns

Councilor Gates received an email from a constituent regarding safety concerns on Rangeway and Millers Farm Drive. There are speeding issues and her 2 year old almost got hit; there are many children and pets in this area. Multiple car break-ins happen in the area; she is a military wife and does not want to worry while her husband is deployed. Councilor Walker said they will contact the Planning Department regarding the site plan. Mr. Bezanson said portions of these roadways are approved City streets. There are poles out there for the streetlights and the developer has been contacted regarding installation of the lights. Councilor Walker said 20 mph is not possible and “children at play” signs are not recognized signs. Deputy Chief Boudreau said they frequent this area for activity on Norway Plains Road. ***Councilor Gates made a motion to deny speed limit signs on Norway Plains Road and in the Millers Farm Drive/ Rangeway Drive neighborhood because of regulations already existing. Motion was seconded by Councilor Hamann. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.***

Ela Court Structure Fire

Chief Klose said there was a building fire at 9 Ela Court on Saturday. Off duty mutual aid was called. It was a kitchen fire that went to a second room. There were 16 people that were displaced, The Red Cross was on hand and the apartment management company will help place the 16 people. The utilities and gas were shut down and Unitil red tagged the gas service. There was no injury to firefighters or civilians, but there were loss of pets.

Hazard Mitigation Plan

Chief Klose said that the Hazard Mitigation Plan is in it's final review with the Homeland Security Management and should be ready to go to the City Council in November.

Squamanagonic Recreation Area Update

Chief Boudreau met with Chris Bowlen and there is no lease associated with the disc golf course; it is managed by the Recreation Department as a City park. Chief Boudreau said there was a suspected over dose in this area. Councilor Walker asked if the gate was still operational. Deputy Chief Boudreau said he thought so.

E911 Update

Deputy Chief Boudreau said they met today and they are working to set up the public hearing dates: one in Gonic likely at Gonic School, and one in East Rochester likely at East Rochester School.

Sherman Street-Speed Issue Update

Deputy Chief Boudreau said that the speed trailer was out there for 4 days with a total of 715 vehicles passing through. The highest speed was 44 mph and the average speed was 13.18 mph.

Bickford Road Update

Mr. Bezanson said the stop sign would be installed soon. Also, DPW crews removed some trees along the right-of-way to address line-of-sight issues.

Collins Circle Streetlight Update

Mr. Bezanson said that the Collins Circle streetlight was installed yesterday.

Councilor Walker stated that the Council approved the removal of the crosswalk signs downtown, but they have not been removed yet. Mr. Bezanson said it would happen soon. Mr. Bezanson wanted clarification: DPW installed new signs on Union Street and took down the old ones; if they take the new ones down, there will be no signage there. Councilor Walker said take the signs down on North Main Street for now.

Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 PM. Councilor Gates seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Laura Miller, Secretary II.