

## **Building/Zoning Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, May 8, 2019 9:00 a.m.**

**PRESENT:** Schloss, Porter, Hocevar, Romanowski

Schloss introduced new business and asked Hocevar for an update of the three to four problem homes in the Village. He reported that there was no response from three of the residents and one asked him to call them. Hocevar further relayed that more complaints have been coming in daily.

Regarding 304 Hazelwood, the certified letter was returned from the Post Office unaccepted. Hocevar asked what the next step would be. Schloss stated that the resident was living in the home. Hocevar verified the letter was also sent regular mail, and Porter advised that the resident then had been notified and the matter would be referred to the prosecutor. Schloss agreed.

Hocevar stated that another home, possibly 153 Lakeview Lane, was sent a certified letter last week. Porter stated if the letter had not been picked up then a regular letter should be sent. Hocevar stated the yard is a mess with a treehouse, trash, toys, tractors, etc.

Hocevar addressed the hours he has been putting in with the Village currently and advised that they were not enough to address all the issues. He worked until 5:00 p.m. the previous evening. Hocevar stated he could not donate or give enough hours to address issues. He stated that the residents deserve more, in particular they deserve a Building/Zoning Department. Hocevar receives phone calls at night but does not charge the Village.

Hocevar stated the Clemans Nelson Audit was a joke and not accurate. Porter stated he knew Hocevar was not billing every hour, and that in the report Hocevar and Wilson said the Building Department should be full-time. Clemans Nelson recommended it be part-time, but Porter was uncertain the Village could find a part-time inspector.

Hocevar stated that a problem he had seen with municipalities letting go of their building departments and then finding that they could not get them back. He spent a day in Streetsboro because they closed their Building Department and could not find anybody. Streetsboro is booming and the contractors have to wait for five days and are complaining to the Department of Commerce. He felt it was not fair to the residents and contractors there because they are paying big permit fees. There are people waiting to move in and can't get occupancy permits for two weeks. He did not want to see South Russell eliminate the Building Department.

Schloss stated that this was not even a thought. Porter stated there had been this thought in the past by various members of Council over the years. He thought the Clemans Nelson recommendation of a part-time building official was fine and if the Village found there was more of a demand it could transition to full-time. He did not think the Building Department should be closed, and that an ad should be placed to find a part-time building official over the summer. He added that Hocevar had committed for the rest of the year. He added that he was grateful and noted that the work has not been going down.

Hocevar stated he is falling behind on the maintenance issues in the Village and had no time to do them because he is committed to other places. He stated he would like to advertise the part-time building official in the Building Officials Conference of North East Ohio (BOCONEO) Newsletter. Hocevar stated he knows 90% of the people who would apply for the job. He asked to be part of the interview process.

Regarding Hocevar staying on for the remainder of the year, Hocevar stated he did not want to commit for the remainder of the year. He said he was overwhelmed by all his commitments. If he saw that the process was heading in the right direction, he would continue. He suggested his contract go month to month.

Schloss stated that in the meantime, Hocevar thought the Village should advertise for a part-time building official with a Building Official Certification, Residential Plumbing, Electrical Safety Inspector if possible, and have zoning experience.

Hocevar stated that he had a resume that he did not share from a person the Village may want to consider. He had not seen the individual in years, but the person had sent Hocevar his resume in January or February and he forgot about it. The Fiscal Officer advised that this individual provided it to her as well and added that he has been inquiring monthly about the opening.

Hocevar stated that there were no guarantees about what the Geauga County Building Department would be doing and speculated they might be downsizing. He added that they do not do the quantity of inspections South Russell does because they are overwhelmed. Porter pointed out that they are dealing with Chardon and other places, and what South Russell has are rehabs and not so much new construction. Hocevar added that Geauga County is more lax about permits.

Porter stated that for the May 13, 2019 Council meeting, the Building Committee should recommend the Village advertise for a part-time Building Official with the qualifications mentioned by Hocevar. The Committee would collect and review resumes. Input by Hocevar, the Fiscal Officer, as well as the Mayor would be desired. Ultimately, interviews would be conducted, and recommendations provided to Council.

The Fiscal Officer stated that the Human Resources Committee would be recommending going to a part-time building and zoning department and get approval for an ad to be placed May 14th for a Building/Zoning Inspector. Hocevar asked if he could work on the ad with the Fiscal Officer, and she agreed. He wanted it to be advertised in the BOCONEO newsletter as well. Fiscal Officer stated that was the intent of the Human Resource Committee as well.

The Fiscal Officer stated that Hocevar's contract, which expires at the end of May, would also be on the agenda for the May 13<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Porter suggested going month to month. Hocevar said he would never stick it to the Village because the Village had been good to him.

Hocevar also stated that owners of the bowling alley lots had recently come into the Building Department asking to divide their lots and sell them for a development. He added that it is a conservation district and the zoning is complex. Porter added that no one ever thought the property on which the Lantern was built would ever be built on because of water. He said that it

was too expensive to bring a water line from Bainbridge to the facility, but now the Village has the Lantern which has its own wells. He saw the same thing being possible with the 30 acres on the east edge of the Village.

Porter stated that money wise, he did not know whether it would be a wash with what a part-time building official would be paid being offset by the permit fees. Hocevar pointed out that the Village could raise the fees, and that Chagrin Falls charges eight times as much for commercial permits.

Schloss stated he spoke to the Solicitor about proposed legislation for trailers on properties, and the suggestion by Council members was that it was too harsh. Porter stated that the change to the ordinance basically banned trailers, and he thought it was a good idea. The difficulty he perceived was with the existing trailers and the issue of telling these residents to move the trailers once the ordinance was changed. He said an argument might be that they were grandfathered, but it was an ordinance and not zoning, so the counterargument would be that it was a new ordinance and the residents must comply. He thought if the ordinance was changed and the Village then tried to enforce it, there might be some contentious litigation. He said if it appeared the Village were targeting individuals with the ordinance, that this would not play well in court. It had no criminal penalties, and he thought the ordinance could be changed and then the residents advised that they could no longer park their trailers where they were visible from the street.

Porter said he would address it at the next Council meeting and advised against waiving readings. Giving it the three readings would allow as much public input as necessary. It could also be put in an eblast and appear in the newsletter to enable residents to address concerns with Council. The Fiscal Officer asked if the ordinance was already written and Porter explained that the Solicitor had sent it to the Committee. She asked for a copy for Council Packets and asked if Porter planned to introduce it. Porter said he did not think the Solicitor wrote out the formal amendment but sent two versions; the existing ordinance and then the change to the ordinance. He suspected there would be debate about the language and what the Village was trying to accomplish. Porter stated the Village did not want to target residents. Schloss agreed and added that the Village also did not want the problem to continue. Hocevar speculated that the Village would find more people for the change than against it. Porter stated he would let the Solicitor know the Committee needed the ordinance to consider at the May 13 Council meeting.

Porter stated that residents should not antagonize their neighbors, and addressed a previous problem with a resident with an RV.

Hocevar asked whether they agreed about sending the letters out by regular mail, certified mail and then moving forward with the courts. Porter advised that this demonstrated that the Village provided official notification when the case went to court. Hocevar stated that the Village was not looking for small issues.

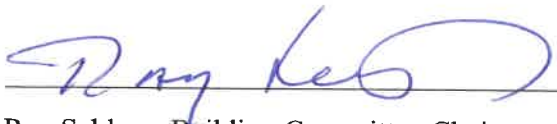
Hocevar addressed the issue of the Building Secretary, Kris Wilson, not wanting to continue with having the Board Secretary responsibilities because they are overwhelming to her. She did not want to have to attend the evening meetings and then do the minutes from the meetings. The

Fiscal Officer stated that the HR Committee planned to go with the Clemans Nelson recommendation to combine the two positions as one part-time position. The idea was that the Village would hire a part-time Building/Zoning Inspector and have the Building Secretary position be responsible for the Boards and the Building Department secretary duties. Schloss stated that if Wilson could not do this, the Village would have to advertise to fill the position. Porter stated the problem in the past was that the boards don't consistently meet, and the workload varied. He felt the position needed to be filled by a retired or "at home" person who could commit to being available when the boards met at night and then doing the minutes after. Schloss asked whether the Village could advertise for this. The Fiscal Officer clarified that the thought process of the HR Committee was if Council combined the two positions into one, that the new position would be first offered to Wilson. If she declined, then the Village would advertise. Porter stated he did not like the idea, unless Council made the combined position full time. He thought it was better to find someone part-time who would come when needed to fill the Board Secretary position. Schloss stated that for every hour Wilson spent in a board meeting, she would then spend two and a half hours writing up the minutes, and Schloss said Wilson said she was not capable of doing this and was overwhelmed.

Hocevar stated that Wilson said she would leave if the position was combined. He said she did not mind working part time and did not mind working in the Building Department and learning some zoning but did not want to take on both jobs. Schloss added that Wilson is currently looking for other employment and Porter asked if she were full-time, would this change the picture. Hocevar said he did not know. Hocevar asked the Committee to look at this issue. He added the two of them had some issues, but she has made progress. Hocevar added that she has a college degree and speaks three languages. He did not think the Village wanted to lose her because then the Village would have to retrain a new secretary. Porter stated that possibly Schloss would want to recommend the part-time board secretary independent of Building Department. Hocevar recommended Porter speak with Wilson.

Schloss stated Wilson would be on vacation for a week. Hocevar stated Wilson suggested forwarding calls to Hocevar. The Fiscal Officer had offered to have the emails and voicemails forwarded to her and she would notify Hocevar of any inspections. Hocevar preferred to have the calls forwarded directly to him. Porter agreed.

Porter adjourned the meeting at 9:43 a.m.



Ray Schloss, Building Committee Chairman