

CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE

JOURNAL/MINUTES – SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

THURSDAY, MAY 6, 2021

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 P.M.

145 TAUNTON AVENUE-CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
EAST PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

NO EXECUTIVE SESSION SCHEDULED FOR THIS MEETING

City Council:

Council President, Robert Britto - Ward 1

Council Vice-President: Bob Rodericks - At Large

Councilwoman Anna Sousa - Ward 2

Councilman Nate Cahoon - Ward 3

Councilman Ricardo Mourato - Ward 4

Assistant City Solicitor, Dylan Conley

City Clerk, Samantha Burnett

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting can be attended in person or virtually, through an application called, "Zoom".

IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE VIRTUALLY, USE THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

By phone: Call the toll free number: 1-877-853-5247 (audio only) and enter the following information:

MEETING ID: 993-0796-0324 NO PASSCODE NEEDED

By computer or smartphone (this is the audio and video option):

To participate visually (with audio) you will need to log into the following from your computer or smartphone, go to: www.zoom.us

Enter the following information when prompted: MEETING ID: 993-0796-0324

NO PASSCODE NEEDED

Once entered, you will be able to join the meeting. At the appropriate time for public comment the moderator will allow you to provide comment at the meeting.

The meeting will also be available live on our city website, located at: http://www.clerkbase.com/RI_EastProvidence_Live_CityCouncil.html

REGARDING PUBLIC COMMENT

In addition, written public comment on any agenda item can be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 6, 2021 in the following delivery methods:

Email the City Clerk at: sburnett@eastprovidenceri.gov

Deliver your written comment in person to the City Clerk


Location: City Hall 145 Taunton Avenue East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

IF YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC COMMENT VIA ZOOM, YOU MUST USE THE "RAISE HAND" FUNCTION VIA ZOOM NO LATER THAN 7:15 P.M. TO BE RECOGNIZED BY THE MODERATOR OF THE MEETING.

I. Call to Order/Roll Call 

The Pledge was led by Council President Britto, after announcing the call to order.

Members in attendance: Council President Britto, Council Vice President Rodericks, Councilman Cahoon, Councilman Mourato, Assistant City Solicitor Dylan Conley, and City Clerk Samantha Burnett.

II. Workshop and Discussion: Short Term Rental Ordinance 

Councilman Mourato started the workshop with a presentation, provided by Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, (conducted by University of Rhode Island). Economic Impact was discussed. The pros and cons in municipalities were discussed. Locations such as San Francisco, Boston, Maui, Newport and other large, tourist driven cities provided examples of best practices including: quiet hours, house rules, and noise elements. The City's current noise ordinance was discussed and the possibility of amending it to include this element. Financial penalties and enforcements were discussed. Another term discussed is the definition of "Owner Occupied". Parking was addressed that seemed to be a complaint, specifically regarding to off street parking.

Do property owners have the right to rent their properties, both long and short term was asked by Councilman Mourato to Assistant Solicitor

Conley.

Solicitor Conley answered yes.

Can the City impose permitting process for rentals was asked by Councilman Mourato and Assistant Solicitor Conley answered yes.

At this point the floor was opened to the public to participate in the workshop, and was noted that there is dialogue allowed with the Council.

No one appeared to be online via Zoom with a request to speak.

Council Roll Call was taken by the City Clerk, Samantha Burnett at the request of Council President Britto. All were present for the exception of Councilwoman Sousa who was absent.

III. Public Comment regarding Short Term Rental Ordinance

People who participated in Public Comment were: (listed in order)

1. Sarah Smalley – spoke regarding language to ensure it states residential areas and not commercial. Ms. Smalley also discussed the “Owner Occupancy” language. The enforcement party was discussed with Councilman Mourato contributing to Ms. Smalley’s points.
2. Ruarri Miller spoke in regards to his experiences on renting Air B&B and the benefits he gained from it, including increasing development in the Riverside Square area.
3. Buck Aspirino and other gentleman (“Randy”, last name was not relayed out), but co-owners of several properties including 82 Beachpoint Drive in Riverside. They spoke regarding the issues they have with a specific neighbor.
4. Thomas Choate interacted with the Council inquiring on the complaints that have been communicated to the Council. Mr. Choate asked if there were any complaints associated with 44 Whipple Avenue. Assistant City Solicitor Conley stated there are no active enforcements at the moment.
5. Jennifer Grantham, a resident of Terrace Avenue. She spoke in support of Buck, Randy and Thomas.
6. Kristen Lund of the Bluff neighborhood and spoke out against it due to the excessive noise level and partying that kept her and her neighbors from being able to sleep most nights.

Public Comment closed at the discretion of the City Council due to closing in at the two hour mark. Closing comments were made by the Council.

IV. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilman Mourato.

Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sousa.

Motion passes 5-0. Meeting adjourns.