Committee of the Whole

July 26, 2021

Present: President King; Committee Members Baltzell, Buxton, Clausen, Fleck; Lochtefeld, Scott, and Sovinski; Safety-Service Director Hitchcock; Mayor Hazel; Auditor Strawn; Law Director Moore; Police Chief Wale.

Council President King called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:00 pm regarding the noise Ordinance.

Director Hitchcock handed out the current regulations and OSHA recommendations. He explained the OSHA regulations are in regards to workplace noise. Law Director Moore stated Council could possibly modify the decibel levels in the current ordinance, make daytime only and at all times exemptions, or allow the police department to handle complaints under current guidelines for disorderly conduct.

Police Chief Wale reported in 2020, the police department received 120 total noise complaints. Most complaints are neighbors complaining about other neighbors. The department uses reasonableness in determining how to handle each situation.

Director Hitchcock stated a night festival will be held at Lakeshore Park instead of at the pool. He explained the neighbors complained about the evening pool parties because the noise of the music and kids screaming went on until 11:00 in the evening. Since this was not considered a sanctioned event, the City made the decision to cancel the remaining evening pool parties.

Director Hitchcock stated he would prefer the police department handle all the noise complaints.

CM Sovinski stated the important factor is how the complaints are enforced. He recommended the current zoning code be used as a reference for the police department.

CM Clausen stated he believes the noise needs to be looked at over a period of time. He explained the City of Columbus has a level restriction over a sixty-minute time span.

CM Sovinski stated the noise is a problem in relation to the area of the problem. When the noise becomes a nuisance to someone else, the noise needs to be handled. If the blower at the car wash abutted a commercial area instead of a residential area, it would not be a problem. He believes the noise complaint enforcement needs to be turned over to the police department to handle. If we find it does not work, we can come back and address the issues by code.

Law Director Moore stated he believes justice would go swifter through the legal regulations through the police department than zoning regulations.

CM Sovinski recommended administration review the zoning ordinance and make changes to allow the police department to enforce noise complaints under the nuisance ordinance. He suggested the decibel level chart be removed and an administrative code regarding noise be established.

Director Hitchcock explained every department has Standard Operating Procedures. The Council does not need to officially adopt the SOP’s. He thinks it is premature to repeal the entire zoning section.

Council members agreed that the police department handle all noise complaints. It will be readdressed if they have any problems with enforcement.

President King adjourned the meeting at 6:46 pm.

Submitted by Joan S. Wurster, Clerk of Council