

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING
OF THE SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL**

February 8, 2016

The City Council Meeting was called to order by the City Council President Leesa Perazzo at 7:03 p.m. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. Perazzo asked Father Theodore Roupas from St. George Greek Orthodox Church to provide the invocation.

Ms. Perazzo then called on Carl Jackson to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Deputy City Clerk called the roll and the following members of the City Council answered to be present:

Present – Council members, Edward Kosiur, John Ferrari , Leesa Perazzo, John Polimeni, Marion Porterfield, and Vincent Riggi

Excused - Council member John Mootooveren

Also Present – Deputy City Clerk Chad Putman, Corporation Counsel Carl Falotico and Public Safety Commissioner Wayne Bennett

At this point, Ms. Perazzo asked if there were no objections, she would like to take agenda item number 23 & 24 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2016-16 – A Resolution Recognizing African American History Month. Mr. Jackson was on hand and he extended his gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

The resolution was moved by Ms. Porterfield and seconded by Mr. Riggi. The resolution passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 2016-17 – A Resolution Recognizing the Retirement of Lee DiCaprio. Mr. DiCaprio was on hand and he extended his gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

The resolution was moved by Mr. Polimeni and seconded by Mr. Ferrari. The resolution passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 25, 2016 Council meeting as submitted by the City Clerk; Mr. Kosiur made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Polimeni seconded the motion.

Communications Presented to the City Council for Monday, February 8, 2016

Official:

From the Mayor a list of appointments dated February 8, 2016

From David Fronk, Director of Operations recommending the contract award of demolition and debris removal of select vacant properties to Jackson Demolition.

General:

None

Petitions:

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Kosiur, City Development & Planning - Noted the city is selling six properties amounting to \$300,000 in sales. He added increasing home ownership is the goal. He noted additional properties on the agenda are being purchased from SURA by the city related to demolition. He also noted the city development office will host an additional public hearing related to CDBG funding allocation to take place on Tuesday, February 23 at 6:00 p.m. at 839 Albany Street. He added details related to the additional hearing were published online and in the Gazette newspaper. He then noted the Council has several committee appointments noted on the agenda. He extended his gratitude to newly appointed committee members and to those who have served.

Mr. Riggi, Claims - Noted agenda item #22 relates to a vacant property which has been unoccupied for years. He added a reduction in the assessed property value will hopefully lead to a buyer for the property. He noted the property needs a lot of work.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS)

Ms. Perazzo invited all who wished to address the Legislative Agenda to come forward:

P.D. Voorhis, Schenectady – Noted she reviewed the city personnel handbook online and she agreed with the work place violence section. She then highlighted an industrial school in South Carolina which was a recent recipient of a gift. She also noted a school in Denmark recently changed the name of the school related to a monetary gift.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady – “Item #1 - Energy loan program; you already know how I feel about this program. It's not a good one. You wanted information from the company representative. She didn't even have the same information I had. Council would fare better to do its own homework. Troy is the only city in the capital district that has this type of program. I called Troy, they wouldn't answer my question. Vote no. Item #11 - Golf course rates; this is another item that should not have made the committee agenda in its present form. A veteran is a veteran, is a veteran. When he goes off to serve, he serves the entire country not just his hometown. To offer different discount rates to veterans depending on where they live is a misguided concept. Other places don't do it. Neither should Schenectady. As for all these houses that are listed on tonight's council agenda - in the past I suggested that the names of the buyers and the costs of the properties also be listed on the agenda when council votes to sell them. There seems to be a problem with these sales. Did any city official approach those two women who were here weeping at Christmas time to ask if they were interested in a city property? I did. They were good candidates. Others who applied were denied. In the future, list the buyers and costs on the agenda so they public will know who is buying the property and what price. Thank you.”

Seeing no other speakers come forward, Ms. Perazzo declared the Privilege of the Floor on the Legislative Agenda closed.

INTRODUCTION OF AND ACTION UPON LOCAL LAWS, ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. Kosiur made a motion that Council approves the Consent Agenda and the motion was seconded by Mr. Riggi.

Consent Agenda –

- Resolution No. 2016 – 18Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 19Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 20Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 21Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 22Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 23Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 24Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 25Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 26Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 27Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 28Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 29Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 30Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 31Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 32Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 33Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 34Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 35Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – CS - 5Adopted Unanimously

A Local Law to Establish a Sustainable Energy Loan Program in the City of Schenectady.

LL-2016-02

The motion was moved by Mr. Kosiur and seconded by Ms. Porterfield.

5:1:1

Voting AYE: Kosiur, Ferrari, Perazzo, Polimeni & Porterfield

Voting NAY: Riggi

Absent: Mootoveren

Mr. Polimeni – Noted he had a number of initial concerns however after running the numbers the results indicated the program offers minimal risk to the city.

Mr. Riggi - Noted he would like to see a longer track record related to the program and that he has too many questions to support the local law at this time.

A Resolution Confirming Appointments to the Planning Commission. 2016-36

The motion was moved by Mr. Kosiur and seconded by Mr. Ferrari.

5:1:1

Voting AYE: Kosiur, Ferrari, Perazzo, Polimeni & Porterfield

Voting NAY: Riggi

Absent: Mootoveren

Mr. Riggi – Noted that he did not realize until today that Chairman Matthew Cuevas was not re-appointed to the Planning Commission, despite his unanimous support on the commission. He noted that Mr. Cuevas is interested in remaining on the commission despite receiving a dismissal letter from the mayor's office. He asked what Mr. Cuevas did wrong and added other members have conflicts of interests on the commission which they have excused themselves related to particular business. He closed by noting he doesn't get it and will not be supporting the resolution.

A Resolution Appointing Tracey Chance to the Schenectady Industrial Development Authority (IDA). 2016-37

The motion was moved by Mr. Kosiur and seconded by Mr. Ferrari.

5:1:1

Voting AYE: Kosiur, Ferrari, Perazzo, Porterfield & Riggi

Voting NAY: Polimeni

Absent: Mootooveren

Ms. Perazzo – Read the mission statement of the IDA and noted the proposed appointee's resume does not reflect relevant background or experience related to the boards responsibilities. He added someone with a background in economic development or a small business owner would be a better selection.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Ms. Perazzo then invited all who wished to address the City Council on any matter of city business to come forward. The following speakers rose to be heard and their remarks are summarized:

Joy Hall, Schenectady – Noted concerns related to vehicles parking on the street and creating barriers for garbage trucks making the rounds. She also expressed a safety issue related to the garbage trucks and suggested adding a step for personnel to use to better access the trucks. She said the additional step would help reduce potential injury.

Oroni Tucker, Schenectady – Noted he is with the Schenectady Basketball club and that he came before the City Council to extend his gratitude for the CDBG funding support the club has received. He noted the program has been around for 25 years and is open to boys and girls. He noted the program includes an academic monitoring mechanism to support the youth in their studies as well. He added the program has a number of volunteers who help facilitate the program and he noted the need for continued funding support by the Council is needed.

P.D. Voorhis, Schenectady – Noted she recognizes several appoints to the various boards live on Wendell Avenue and noted the Mayor lives on that street. She noted she is looking for answers related to trees that are being knocked down on Consaul Road. She added the chairman of the Planning Commission being removed is news to her as well. She noted another member of the Planning Commission is on Metroplex and makes a practice of excusing themselves when conflicts arise. She then noted reports indicate that crime is down in the city. However she asked how do you explain the need for additional city judges to handle the mounting caseload? She then noted people who manipulate the criminal justice system for personal benefit are akin to that of organized criminals.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady – "It is outrageous that the city would parade a General electric CEO before this community after that company took away the medical coverage from all it's retired veterans. I think the CEO wanted a new toy to play with in his retirement and he found a store keeper who gave him one. The mayor wants a wireless city but ignores the litter that is thrown on the main streets of town. Vegetation grows unchecked. Weeds on Veeder Avenue are allowed to get taller than the height of an adult. Business owners aren't required to keep their properties litter-free. Anything messy, filthy and out of control is the norm. Historic signs are installed crooked. No thought is given to whether the sign is straight. A level is never used when signs are placed in the ground. This summer I suggested that council form a beautification committee to address the problems. Two committees were formed. A parks commission and a smart-city commission. My suggestion for beautification was ignored. Proctors' CEO is another smart-city member. At a finance event he told city council that he has 1,200 volunteers. That

means he operates with free labor. Why not ask him to convert 400 of those 1,200 volunteer jobs into paying jobs? That would be smart. Schenectady Superintendent of schools is also a smart-city member. School personnel pay 16 percent for a family medical plan, 13 percent single plan and taxpayers pay 84 percent. Why can't workers pay the 84 percent? The schools would have all the money they need to operate. Recently, Mr. Phil Steck wrote in the Gazette that schools within the 110th Assembly district are average or below average wealth. Schenectady being the poorest. And council voted for a casino. How smart is that? Madam President were you and your colleagues instrumental in bringing to Schenectady all those businesses currently located in Center City and paying taxes? You all voted for the industrial heating installation to the Steinmetz Park multipurpose room that was refurbished for wedding rentals. And I will never forgive you for the way you voted to fix my street. I came to city hall four times to bring the problem to the city's attention. You fixed it your way. Hell hath no fury like a women scorned."

Kanema Haynes, Schenectady - Noted a community effort is underway related to equitable funding for the Schenectady City School district which does not receive its share of Foundation Aid. She noted the community effort includes 70 pastors and community leaders. She noted with all the issues facing youth today we can do better related to state funding. She then invited residents to sign the petition which has been started by this group to demand an increase in funding. She added public petitions available for signatures will be at the main branch of the Schenectady Library on February 27. She closed by noting the group has set a goal of collecting 50,000 signatures.

Seeing no other speakers to come before the City Council, Ms. Perazzo declared the Privilege of the floor closed regarding City Business.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

Mr. Kosiur– Noted the City Council resolutions include details related to the purchase price and purchaser of properties being sold by the city. He also added the Mayor does not live on Wendell Avenue. He then spoke on the recent ground breaking for the new River Casino which took place at Mohawk Harbor and that construction is ahead of schedule. He added the new casino will host 1,400 new jobs. He noted on February 27 the new Schenectady Public Library on State Street will host an open house and ribbon cutting. He also noted Schenectady County is hosting a civil service exam for correction officer positions and more information is available online or by calling the Affirmative Action Officer at 388-4233. He noted qualifications for the position and to take the exam include a high school diploma. He then noted the Land Bank has an additional 19 properties slated for demolition including buildings on Eastern Avenue. He then spoke on the recent release of Finding Rover which is a smart phone application. He added it's an effective tool as he reflected on the his dog which recently got loose and was found at 4:00 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Riggi – Noted the Bellevue Preservation League will host its monthly meeting on February 11th at 7:00 p.m. and will include Rich Patierne, Chair of the Recreation Admission Commission. He also spoke on the new smart phone application Finding Rover. He added it's a great tool for locating lost dogs and includes facial recognition software. He noted the application includes adoption information for available dogs and he thanked Schenectady Assistant Police Chief Jack Falvo for his work on this. He later reminded residents that March 1 is the deadline for STAR applications to be turned into the City Assessor's office.

Ms. Porterfield – Shared information about VITA Income Tax Preparation available at various sites in Schenectady including Ellis Medical Home, Union College Kenney Center and Rotterdam Senior Citizen Center. She encouraged interested residents to contact 211 to schedule

an appointment. She add the program is income-based and sponsored by the United Way and the Cash Coalition. She noted on February 10 at 10:30 a.m. Schenectady County Senior Services will host a Friendship Cafe at Apostrophe Cafe for residents who are 60 years of age or older. She added the program will provide information about services available to seniors in the community. She then noted February is Heart Health month and added Ellis will be hosting workshops on February 22 at 6:00 p.m. related to congestive heart failure. She encouraged interested residents to register for this free workshop.

Mr. Polimeni – Noted Bradely Lewis is highly qualified for the Planning Commission. He added Mr. Lewis is a full time professor at Union College and is of high moral value. He then thanked Mr. Lewis for his service. He closed by noting the Jack Falvo Foundation fundraiser held over the weekend was a success and well attended.

Ms. Perazzo – Wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day. She then noted Habitat for Humanity is hosting a fundraiser at its ReStore location on Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. She also noted Schenectady Pride will be hosting a benefit on February 13 at St. Mary's on Eastern Avenue at 6:00 p.m. She then extended her condolences to Angelo Mallozzi who lost his grandfather recently. She closed by noting the next Council Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday, February 16 due to the Presidents Day holiday on February 15th.

Adjourned:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was moved by Mr. Riggi and seconded by Mr. Ferrari and the meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

A true record



By Chad Putman

Schenectady Deputy City Clerk