

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

March 14, 2016

The City Council Meeting was called to order by the City Council President Leesa Perazzo at 7:05 p.m. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. Perazzo asked Pundit Dave Chetram of Shree Ganesh Mandir of Schenectady to provide the invocation.

Ms. Perazzo then called on Jim Scott 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 , John Mootooveren, Leesa Perazzo, John Polimeni, Marion Porterfield, and Vincent Riggi

Also Present – Deputy City Clerk Chad Putman, Corporation Counsel Carl Falotico and Mayor Gary R. McCarthy

At this point, Ms. Perazzo asked if there were no objections, she would like to take agenda item number 19, 20 & 21 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2016-46 – A Resolution Recognizing the Month of March at "Irish Heritage Month" and Recognizing the Achievements of Irish Americans on St. Patrick's Day.

Representatives were on hand from the Ancient Order of the Hibernian and they extended their gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council. The presentation of the ceremonial resolution was preempted by the annual dance performance by youth from the Farrell School of Irish Dance group.

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

Resolution No. 2016-47 – A Resolution Recognizing March at Social Work Month. Social Workers from the Schenectady City School district were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Resolution No. 2016-48 – A Resolution Supporting Fair Funding for Public Education in Schenectady. Representatives from the Fight for Education Funding were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

The resolution was moved by Mr. Mootooveren and seconded by Mr. Kosiur. The resolution passed unanimously.

At this point, Ms. Perazzo asked invited Karen Bradley, Director of Library's for Schenectady County to present on the new Phyllis Bornt Branch Library and Literacy Center located on State Street in Schenectady.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Ms. Perazzo invited all who wished to address the City Council regarding the following public hearing to come forward:

1. Regarding Names of Certain Streets at Mohawk Harbor

Jason Planck, Schenectady - Made note that the future Mohawk trail on the harbor site being named after the history of the ALCO site was a fine gesture by the county legislature. Regarding naming certain streets at Mohawk Harbor he asked about considering Native American names with historical ties to Schenectady. He added without their contributions Schenectady would not be what it is today.

Tony Buonome, Schenectady - Noted Rush Street is in Chicago and he could care less. He then referenced an article in the Gazette which called for the street names to look to the future and not the past, which he said he disagrees with. He noted the Mohawk Harbor site dates back to the 1930's and 40's and some of America's most powerful steam engines were built on the site. He added there are other historical ties to the site which should be considered and reflected in the street names as well.

Jim Salengo, Schenectady - "During my eight years as executive director of the Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation, the single most exciting thing about my job is having a front row seat to the remarkable momentum of Downtown Schenectady's rebirth led by Metroplex, our elected officials like you, and private developers like The Galesi Group. Everywhere I go, people ask me about what's happening here and are amazed by the steady stream of information about this NEW Downtown Schenectady. New buildings, new businesses, new infrastructure. The pace is truly mind-blowing. And now, with the development of Mohawk Harbor on the former Alco site, Schenectady is poised to write a brand new, future-forward chapter in its rich history. This HALF BILLION DOLLAR investment is a game changer, and is positioning Schenectady as a major new destination for living, business, recreation, and tourism. I truly understand the long and proud history of Alco on this site, and I understand the desire to honor the past. That is why I was so thrilled to hear that Schenectady County has designated the hike/bike trail along the river here as the Alco Heritage Trail, complete with plans for trail markers to educate residents and visitors on the company's transportation and military history here. This is commendable, appropriate, and a fitting tribute for the company and the many Alco workers and families. But the clean-up and re-imagining of this site – vacant and desolate for so long – is also a great tribute to Alco, and this former eyesore is now part of Schenectady's remarkable present and brilliant future. It is a NEW riverfront and entertainment destination, so it only makes sense that the streets of Mohawk Harbor represent the site's – and Schenectady's – NEW vision. Rush Street is known as an exciting destination in Chicago for dining, entertainment and nightlife. We need to believe that the Electric City is just as deserving of its own Rush Street as the Windy City. The downtown business community is extremely excited for the increased activity that will come with the NEW Mohawk Harbor and Rivers Casino & Resort...and it can't come soon enough. I urge the City Council to approve the proposed street names at this site and keep this transformational project moving forward for the benefit of downtown and the entire City of Schenectady."

Chuck Steiner, Schenectady - "I'm the President of the Chamber of Schenectady County, an affiliate of the Capital Region Chamber. Thank you for this opportunity to provide the City Council with the Chamber's perspective regarding the naming of streets located at Mohawk Harbor. The Chamber fully supports the proposal to name one of the streets at Mohawk Harbor, "Rush Street". We believe that it an entirely appropriate and fitting name. Rush Street in Chicago is a well-known destination for premier entertainment, dining and nightlife. From a marketing perspective, the Chamber believes that we can capitalize on "Rush Street" branding. "Rush Street" in Schenectady will not just be a street; it will be a destination and a marketing tool. As you well know, the Chamber was a strong supporter of bringing a casino to Schenectady. We know that this casino will promote our economy and grow jobs. From the very beginning, we have been extremely impressed and pleased with Rush Street Gaming. Rush Street Gaming is committed to the future of our community and to their longevity, here in the city. They are investing \$330 million at the Rivers Casino & Resort, with well over 1,000 jobs being created. Ladies

and gentlemen of the City Council, that commitment is all about longevity to this city and to the region. Beyond their financial commitment and job creation, Rush Street Gaming has already been an engaged and responsible member of our community. From promoting Schenectady as a prime travel destination to partnering with Northeast Career Planning, Trinity Alliance and the SEAT Center on local workforce development, they have quickly proven themselves to be a positive and valued business in the City of Schenectady. Rush Street Gaming see's what the Chamber sees. Schenectady is moving forward and has a renewed sense of civic pride. Of course, we will always embrace our past; as we should. However, we must also continue to support needed changes in order to enrich our city's future. A storied past and a promising future, what more could any city possibly hope for? While the Chamber fully appreciates, and indeed supports, the need to honor the men and women who worked at the former Alco site, we believe that the planned Alco Heritage waterfront trail and Rush Street Gaming's plans to include historic photos and references to Alco's rich history on the casino property is the most appropriate way in which to honor Alco's great contributions to our nation's transportation industry and military. The Chamber believes that while it is fitting to honor the sites historic past, it is equally important and fitting to promote and celebrate the site's incredible future. \$330 million plus and the creation of over 1,000 jobs! That level of committed investment needs to be celebrated and recognized by all of our city leadership, sending a positive message to future investors, that the City of Schenectady is the place of "choice" to invest and we welcome them. By naming one of the streets at Mohawk Harbor "Rush Street", we can make it perfectly clear that the City of Schenectady is not only looking forward to its incredible future, but is wholeheartedly embracing it. On behalf of the Chamber of Schenectady County, we encourage the City Council to support the proposed naming of one of the streets at Mohawk Harbor "Rush Street".

Gary Hughes, Schenectady - "I am a member of the Schenectady County Legislature, representing the City of Schenectady. I was pleased to sponsor a resolution that was approved unanimously by the County Legislature last week designating the county bike/hike trail that will cross the Mohawk Harbor site—the Alco Heritage Trail. It is the County's intent that this will be an interpretive trail depicting Schenectady's industrial past. There are other opportunities to recognize our past on that site including the potential to relocate our Alco locomotive, currently adjacent to Nott Terrace, to the Mohawk Harbor site. To those of you who have said the City should provide its own recognition, I assure you that the Legislature would appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with you on these efforts. Tonight, the City Council has before it a measure to approve the names Rush Street, Harborside Drive and Mohawk Harbor Way. Just as the Alco Heritage Trail speaks to the site's past, these street names speak to the future of the site. These streets will be constructed to City standards and paid for by the developers. It is common practice throughout the County and across the country, for that matter, for developers to name the streets in their developments and then deed those streets over to the municipality for on-going maintenance. Rarely do municipalities question the names of those streets for reasons other than to prevent duplication or confusion with the names of existing streets. The Rivers Casino and Mohawk Harbor are important pieces of Schenectady's re-development totaling \$480 million in private investment. The developer has conducted research on these names and believes that they are the best available choices to ensure that visitors to the casino who are not familiar with Schenectady will be able to locate the facility using GPS. But, with Rush Street Gaming preparing to pay a \$50 million licensing fee to the state later this month and with a guarantee in the state law that both the City of Schenectady and the County will each receive a \$2.5 million risk-free share of this fee before the casino even opens its door coupled with the fact that the developers are putting \$480 million of their own money into the project, it strikes me as somewhat offensive to the developers to suggest as some on this council have, that the project is too risky for the City to commit to the name Rush Street. Members of the Council need look no further than Roger Hull Place and Georgetta Dix Blvd., to learn how easy it is to rename a street in the City of Schenectady should the Council ever choose to do so. For all the reasons I have just

cited, I respectfully urge this Council to unanimously approve these names as a demonstration of our City's willingness to welcome private investment."

Mary McClaine, Schenectady - "Would Rush Street CEO Greg Carlin go to Venice, Italy and tell the Venetians not to think of their past but look to the future as the multi-tiered, modern day cruise ships float into the lagoon, dispense water and flood Saint Marco Square? This area is rich in Dutch and Indian history. If the casino is a destination, our culture should keep the visitor here longer and it needs to be promoted any way possible. As for city street names, at the present time, Schenectady doesn't have a Peter Stuyvesant Street. Why not? How does Windmill Lane sound or Rembrandt Road? And is there anything more current than Kateri's Way? Council should not "rush" into anything but take it's time to think through the naming of these streets. Our history and culture are more important than man's vanity."

Jim Standhart, Schenectady - Noted he is with the Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters and he has 11 members in attendance tonight. He added there are hundreds of others in Schenectady and collectively they support Rush Street Gaming. He added it's their choice to name the harbor streets whatever they want to name them. He closed by noting the company is employing hundreds of carpenters in the construction of the new casino on the site.

Ray Legere, Schenectady - Noted he owns property next to the Mohawk Harbor development and future casino. He noted this is the best thing to happen to the site in a while. He added he is happy to see the future Mohawk bike path has been named to reflect the industrial heritage of the site. He noted the future evolves to reflect changes including Erie Blvd being named after the Erie Canal and Edison being named after GE.

David Buicko, Schenectady - Noted he is the CEO of the Galesi Group which is the developer of the Mohawk Harbor site. He noted the project has already paid \$3.5 million to the city from the licensing fee which was not anticipated in the 2016 budget. He added the city will also be benefiting from sales tax revenue from the construction taking place on the site. Regarding the proposed street names presented to the Council for the harbor site he noted the decisions were not made in haste. He added they collected survey's and solicited public input while offering participants a variety of street name option. He also noted as the developers of the site the company is paying for the construction of the streets and the harbor will be privately held for another year. He then noted logistical issues related to the need for securing street name approval including the start of marketing materials, GPS navigation and deliveries. Regarding "Rush Street" he noted the idea was derived from the Galesi Group and not Rush Street Gaming. He added the steak house restaurant which will be located inside the casino will have a historical theme with pictures and images of the old ALCO factory which once occupied the site. He noted that he appreciates the public input, but the process also needs to move along quickly. He closed by noting the buildings are going up and the best is yet to come.

Ms. Perazzo noted three additional speakers submitted comments via email in advance of the City Council meeting regarding this public hearing. They were not able to be in attendance. Their comments can be found in "Attachment A" attached to these minutes.

Seeing no other speakers come forward, Ms. Perazzo declared the Public Hearing to be closed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 22, 2016 Council meeting as submitted by the City Clerk; Mr. Kosiur made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Mootooveren seconded the motion.

Communications Presented to the City Council for Monday, March 14, 2016

Official:

From the Mayor a list of appointments dated March 14, 2016

General:

None

Petitions:

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS)

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

Jason Planck, Schenectady - Noted concerns related to the city making payments on the bond interest and not on the principal. He added the sewer fund was federal money and the city is not paying the \$900,000 and should have done so already. He then noted the Affirmative Action Officer cut and paste goals from other documents in relation to a report from her office. He noted the goals should be specific and after six years the goals are not being achieved. He added if the city is looking to hire people they should go to the Department of Social Services where they will find 3,000 people who are looking for jobs. He closed by reflecting on the impact social workers have had on persons with disabilities. He noted social workers are often the advocate and the unsung hero to those in the disabled community.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady - "Agenda item #5 - I don't recall the new council member campaigning on a platform to give blanket recognition to the city's workforce. Exactly, who does the councilman have in mind for recognition, members of the engineering department who made a mess of my street and after 9 months have yet to clean it? Or the employees who install the crooked historic signs throughout the city? Maybe he means the workers who painted the parking lines on one side of Jay Street and left the worn out lines on the other side undone? How about the person who inspected the building on Jay Street that burned down the next day and now the city is left with multiple law suits? Or the employee who carved an apartment for his relative in his G.E. house plot and is now in code violation? Quality input deserves recognition and that is done on an individual basis not a blanket program. I would prefer to see more city employees in attendance at neighborhood meetings and volunteerism from them. Item #5 - is not a good idea. Individual recognition, yes. Not a formal structured program for all employees. Vote no. Item #2 - the city should not enter into this agreement with the city's fire fighter's union. It's a joke and an insult to the Schenectady taxpayer. The agreement pads the retiring fireman's pension package. It doesn't help the rest of us. Vote no. Agenda item #19 - on the surface, "Fair Funding for Education" sounds wonderful but by signing a petition, the taxpayer is willing to pay 84 percent of the school's employees medical coverage. They are not pulling their weight. This item needs more attention. There are other sources of funding. Go get them."

Bob Harvey, Schenectady - Noted most items on the agenda improve the city in some way. He noted as a neighborhood person he is active in his own way. He reflected on the impact of the school's reputation, the business community and the need for an expanding tax base. With regards to securing employment he noted the Gazette featured an ad related to a civil service test position which comes with a salary of \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year. He noted the deadline for applicants is April 2nd and a high

school diploma and divers license were listed as employment criteria. He asked others to help spread the word.

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. Mootoveren.

Consent Agenda –

- Ordinance No. 2016 – 04.....Adopted Unanimously
- Ordinance No. 2016 – 05.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 49Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 50Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 51Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 52Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 53Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 54Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 55Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 56Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 57Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 58Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 59Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 60Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 61Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 62Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 63Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 64Adopted Unanimously

A Resolution Confirming Mitchell Miller's Appointment to the Planning Commission. 2016-65

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

6:1:0

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

Voting NAY: Riggi

Mr. Polimeni – Noted Mr. Miller is highly qualified. He added the city is fortunate to have a number of community members willing to volunteer their time and talents to fill vacancies on the various city boards and commissions.

Mr. Riggi - Noted he questions the process of appointing Mr. Miller to the commission and not his qualifications. He added the individual that Mr. Miller will be replacing is still interested in maintaining a seat of the commission.

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:

Anthony Carota, Schenectady – Extended his praise to the Schenectady Fire department on their response to a recent house fire which took place earlier this month. He then noted the mayor has expressed concerns related to addressing crime in the city and added that his office is open to the public. He added he has personally participated in take back the night events and he is looking for evidence that the mayor is really concerned about the victims of crime in the city. He then spoke about the recent memorial held for the Jay Street fire victims. He noted he was there and the mayor was not. He noted the city used tax payer money to demolish the building and repair the sidewalk. He noted only two city council members, Assembly member Santabarbara and Congressman Tonko were there. He asked again and again where the mayor was.

Jason Planck, Schenectady – Noted concerns related to affirmative action and referenced an earlier event which included the labor union leader asking the members in attendance to raise their hands, all of which he said, were white males. He then noted the billion dollars of investment and millions of dollars in tax exemptions are going to one developer. He added there is a minority majority in the area. He added this is corporate welfare and the city gets nothing. He added if downtown is so great why is the council lowering property assessments. He closed by stating minorities need jobs and curb cuts need to be installed for the disabled.

Joy Hall, Schenectady – Noted concerns related to potholes and sidewalks. She added someone is going to get hurt. She then noted the city needs more cops and she is concerned about cars turning right on red.

Carol DeLaMarter, Schenectady – Noted she is the President of the Stockade Neighborhood Association. She then referenced the February issue of a local publication and noted the Stockade has featured. She added the Stockade neighborhood is pleased the city received funding for studies related to the historic nature of the neighborhood and flood mitigation. She noted the committee chairs are interested in partnering with the city related to street, sidewalks and lighting in the neighborhood. She added Council President Perazzo will be the guest speaker at the next meeting on March 17th at 6:30 p.m. She noted she would be leaving copies of the publication featuring the Stockade neighborhood for review. She closed by stressing the need to keep the cars out of the stockade as the harbor development opens.

Donny Burch, Schenectady - Noted concerns related to the actions of the public defender's office in relation to his case and the disregard for the constitution. He stressed the presence of corruption in the system. He noted that he has been able to competently represent himself in relation to his legal issues. He noted that while he was in police custody his phone was seized and evidence he had on his phone was deleted. He also questioned the \$100,000 bail that was set related to his legal issue which he believes was excessively high. He noted he was able to use a FOIL request to obtain the video of his booking. He added he would never let the DA represent him and that he will be back. He encouraged residents to vote for him because he would do his part to honor the constitution.

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 applications for City Development and Block Grant funding are due in the Development office by 2:00 p.m. on March 16th. He then noted the Summer Youth employment program is accepting job applications which are available in the mayor's office and the city clerk's office. He added applications are due by April 22 and positions are available for Schenectady County residents ages 14-21. He noted applicants will need to provide Social Security numbers, birth certificates and working papers.

Ms. Porterfield – Extended her appreciation to her colleagues for naming the Mohawk trail in relation to the history of the site. She noted it's important to hear from the citizens because developers often have a skewed business perspective. She added the request to have the history of the site reflected in the street names is not a big ask. She noted this is the same consideration given to the new library which opened up on State Street. She added the street naming is an opportunity to engage the community. She advised colleagues to review letters and emails related to feedback on the street names as well. She closed by again commending her colleagues on the county legislature and asked the council respond in a similar manor.

Mayor McCarthy - Corrected an earlier speakers comments related to city bonds and stated the funds will be used in 2016.

Ms. Perazzo – Noted the Schenectady Police department participated in a training provided by the Justice Center which focused on interactions with persons with special needs. She noted the Schenectady Fire department will be hosting their annual Run for your Life event on March 26 at 9:30 a.m. followed by the Chowder Fest. She closed by wishing everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day.

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. Kosiur and seconded by Mr. Mootoveren. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

A true record



By Chad Putman

Schenectady Deputy City Clerk

Attachment A: Regarding Public Hearing held on Monday, March 14, 2016.

#1. Regarding Names of Certain Streets at Mohawk Harbor

To the Mayor, City Council Members and the Public:

In regard to naming a street at the Alco Site:

Many workers had laboring jobs there and many injuries occurred due to the fact that there were not safety procedures and no OSHA. In 1929 my father was injured and from then on was on crutches and was not well for the remaining 16 years of his life - he died in 1945.

To all the hard-working men who worked in the factory, we should commemorate them for their work especially in making the Tanks which helped win WWII. If it had not been for them, we would not be enjoying the freedom we now enjoy.

In my opinion I think the street at the Alco Site should be named in memory of all these men working in the factory of the American Locomotive Company i.e. "**American Locomotive Drive**".

I definitely do not think the street should be named "Rush Street" like the casino developers want. Rush Street belongs in Chicago where all the fancy places exist. This is Schenectady and we like the past which is our history. In fact, the oldest New York State Historic District is located not too far from the Alco Site.

Thank You,

(Mrs.) Jessie Malecki
21 North St.
Schenectady, NY 12305

To be read on my behalf:

By way of introduction, my name is Mark Meigher, I'm 31 years old and I am a proud 4th generation Schenectadian. I'm also a member-at-large of the Schenectady Millennial Council.

I'm writing to express my strong support for naming the main road, that will service Mohawk Harbor and the casino, Rush Street.

Schenectady is a city steeped in history; we have two historic districts, we are the birthplace of GE and Alco, and our people invented things that changed the world - firsts that include the incandescent light bulb that would not burn out, television (a station and for the home), medical X-rays, the mobile X-ray machine, electric car technology, the MRI machine, the first jet engine in the U.S., and the list goes on.

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All around our city we pay homage to our history and to those who came before us, because they had a vision of the future and they made great sacrifice to create our future.

Our forebears would want us to continue that tradition of looking forward and creating the future, which is why we should name this road Rush Street.

Schenectady is a city of strong people, and with hard work and good faith, we can make Mohawk Harbor a great success. Perhaps 50 years from now, I can walk along Rush Street and remember all of the forward-thinking men and women who worked to make Mohawk Harbor a reality -- those who had a vision for Schenectady's future.

This should be the story of our city.

--

Mark Meigher
518.369.7944

Rush Street Gaming's CEO Greg Carlin justifies his street name choices by saying that the street names "must be about the future of the site and not the past" ("Paving the Way for the Future," *Daily Gazette*, 23 Feb 2016, A1). However, this is quite a narrow view.

First, the suggestions that have been made by local citizens for street names that reflect ALCO's contributions to Schenectady are not—unlike his own—narrowly-focused solely on the site itself (or, contrary to his protests in the article cited above, on his own company). Rather, by highlighting ALCO's contributions to the city, the citizens' suggestions also honor the workers whose efforts helped build Schenectady in population, in wealth, and in the city's effect on the rest of the country and on the world.

THIS is where Schenectady's past greatness largely lies: in its citizens' contributions to the world. As Gloria Blum noted in her Feb. 28 letter to the editor in the *Gazette* (D2): "It was the tank building that kept the workers on overtime and weekend work, which helped win World War II." I should add: the tank building—the work of Schenectady's citizens—also helped strengthen Schenectady's economy.

Mr. Carlin's implication that ALCO-related street names would keep the city unfruitfully dwelling on its long-lost, past glory rather than forging ahead into the future, is actually insulting—even if it wasn't intended to be. Acknowledging—giving a nod to—the city's history is not the same thing as dwelling on the past. I also disagree with Joseph Kaczynski in his March 8 *Gazette* letter (C6) that the alternate names that have been suggested in *Gazette* letters "are negative about our city's future." One can be appropriately forward-looking without erasing the past. However, this is, in fact, what Mr. Carlin's street names do: they erase Schenectady's history—a history of the proud, honest, hard work of its workers—both those who'd already been here and those who migrated here in order to work, replacing that history with self-

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#1. Regarding Names of Certain Streets at Mohawk Harbor

references—or, at best, allusions to another city, with a cachet that seems designed solely for upscale marketing.

Mr. Carlin further justifies his street names with a suggestion that his casino can impart “excitement and success to the Electric City.” That may well be the case. However, I find his use of Schenectady’s nickname to be ironic, because that nickname is, of course, the very result of Schenectady’s industrial history. It seems that, once again erasing the city’s history, he wants to re-define “electric” for Schenectady to refer instead to the neon and glitz—which is what he seems to see as “excitement and success”— of Chicago’s Rush Street and Miracle Mile entertainment district (where, he says, “the atmosphere on this mile-long thoroughfare is electric”; “Paving the Way,” A8). The name “Rivers Casino and Resort at Mohawk Harbor” already clearly has the power to convey “excitement and success.” (In addition, the name also reflects the fact that the site is alongside the historic Mohawk River, so street names like “Harborside Drive” and “Mohawk Harbor Way” aren’t needed to do so; these names, by the way, focus on the harbor newly-created for the site and not the river itself, which has played such an important role in the life of Schenectady).

Rather than allowing the developer to name these streets, I strongly recommend that the City Council listen to the “thoughtful” street name suggestions that have made by the local citizens (Sara Foss, “Readers’ Thoughts on Streets Interesting,” *Daily Gazette*, 25 Feb 2016, C1)—the ones who, like myself, were born and raised here and are STILL here, or who—having moved here, have raised families and contributed to the area through their work, their business, their shopping, their civic activities. Please, let Schenectady’s citizens have the say in naming the streets rather than a commercial interest. Placing the casino developer over the citizens will no doubt alienate especially those citizens who already have economic and other reservations about the casino. Placing the casino developer’s wishes over those of the citizens would also suggest a misplaced allegiance on the part of Schenectady’s leaders, along with potentially sending a message of an equal desire to ignore the city’s heritage.

In the context of County Legislator Hughes’s statement that “Part of the plan for the Mohawk Harbor site has always been recognition for Alco on the site,” which refers to the fact that the bike trail on the site is apparently to be named “Alco Heritage Trail,” (“Harbor Trail to Honor Heritage,” *Daily Gazette*, 8 Mar 2016, A1), I’d like to point out that while the name might provide “significant Alco recognition,” it’s recognition of the company—the institution—and not of Schenectady’s citizens. In contrast, the street name suggestions in *Gazette* Letters to the Editor have focused on recognizing Schenectady’s citizens.

On that subject, I humbly suggest that naming streets after former mayors and other politicians (e.g., “Sam Stratton Boulevard” per Gilbert E. Kelley’s March 3 *Gazette* letter, C5) would create partisan discord and resentment over omissions (e.g., why Stratton and not Duci or Wemple or Lunn or Begley . . .?) In addition, suggestions that have been made to honor Charles Steinmetz or Ivar Giaever do recognize great men, yes—but men associated with GE rather than with ALCO. (In addition, several locations in Schenectady are already named after Steinmetz.)

This was my reasoning in my February 24 *Gazette* letter (C6) when I suggested street names that reflect job titles of Schenectady’s ALCO workers: in not singling out individuals but in noting

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the kinds of work they performed, such street names would honor the Schenectadians whose hard work and dedication made such important, though anonymous, contributions not only to the city but to the nation. (If my own ideas or those in Gloria Blum's letter are inadequate, I'm sure others could come up with alternate alliterative or more pleasing ALCO job titles.)

Thank you for respecting the ideas and wishes of Schenectady's citizens in your choice of street names for the Mohawk Harbor development.

Constance J. Ostrowski
1572 Clifton Park Road
Niskayuna, NY (Schenectady native)