

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

June 13, 2016

The City Council Meeting was called to order by the City Council President Leesa Perazzo at 7:07 p.m. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. Perazzo asked Rev. Sara Baron to provide the invocation.

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

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

Excused - John Ferrari & John Mootooveren

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

At this point, Ms. Perazzo turned the floor over to Peter Fitzgerald, an award winning, first-year Schenectady County Community College music studies student to conduct one of his musical compositions, played by two local musicians.

At this point, Ms. Perazzo asked if there were no objections, she would like to take agenda item number 24, 25 & 26 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2016-137 – A Resolution of Support of the Gender Expression Non Discrimination Act. Angelicia Morris, Executive Director of the Schenectady County Human Rights Commission was on hand and she extended her gratitude for the resolution by the Mayor and City Council.

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

At this point, Ms. Perazzo asked Mr. Kosiur to assume the role of chair while she presented the ceremonial resolution for Patrolman Irwin. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2016-138 – A Resolution Recognizing the Actions of Patrolman Patrick Irwin. Patrolman Irwin was on hand and he extended his gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Ms. Perazzo reassumed the role of chair.

Resolution No. 2016-139 – A Resolution Recognizing Diane Wilkinson Capital Region's Administrator of the Year. Diane Wilkinson was on hand and she extended her gratitude for the resolution presented by the Mayor and City Council.

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

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

1. Regarding Multi-Year Dog Licenses.

Charles Thorne, City Clerk - City of Schenectady - Noted the proposal would make licensing and renewing dog licenses more convenient for dog owners. He added the proposal would also be more efficient for the clerk's office. He stated, "currently dog licenses are valid for one year. One of the proposes of a license is to ensure that dogs have a current rabies vaccination. Rabies vaccinations can be valid for up to three years. We are proposing extending the term of the dog license for up to three consecutive years, dependent on the rabies expiration date. There will be no change in the annual license fee. The purpose of the change is in response to requests from dog owners who have said it would be more convenient and to even out the workflow in the Clerk's office associated with license renewals. Refunds of the second or third year license fee would be made to dog owners whose dogs have been relinquished or are deceased prior to the start of the second or their year."

P.D. Voorhis, Schenectady - Noted she received information from the City Clerk related to her question about what would happen if the dog died prior to the expiration of the dog license. She added if the city is charging for a license for an animal that does not exist that's taxation without representation. She noted she is paying taxes and not getting representation. She closed by noting that if the police won't respond to her calls she is going to get a gun permit to take care of herself.

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 May 23, 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, June 13, 2016

Official:

None

General:

None

Petitions:

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Kosiur, City Development & Planning - Spoke of the property sale resolutions on the City Council agenda. He noted the City Council is moving several vacant properties and lots and then listed them. He noted the City Council appreciates the efforts of the development office to connect most of these vacant properties with nearby property owners.

Ms. Porterfield, Health & Recreation - Noted a Carlilian Foundation grant was secured for \$15,400 which will be used to renovate the dog park in Central Park.

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 lack of a waste water treatment agreement with the Mohawk Harbor development. He noted the tax payers are being stuck with a \$20 million bond. With regards to the taxi cab moratorium he advised review of the medical cabs and

services for persons with disabilities. He noted the expense to outfit a normal cab to provide services for persons with a disability can cost \$20,000. He added it would be prudent for the city to help offset the expense by helping cab companies secure grants. He then shared an incident that involved a cab driver who had a list of felonies and also assaulted a disabled cab customer. He noted this is a safety issue on top of the occurrence of medical cabs providing multiple customers rides to and from medical appointments on a single run.

P.D. Voorhis, Schenectady - Noted there were too many items on the agenda and she questioned whether the City Council can add items to the agenda at the start of the meeting. She then told the story about a fire in her apartment building. She also suggested the need for police at the Schenectady Pride event for public safety. She closed by recommending the removal of one of the members of the Civilian Police Review Board, but did not disclose the name.

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. Polimeni.

Consent Agenda –

- Ordinance No. 2016 – 11*Adopted Unanimously
- Ordinance No. 2016 – 12Adopted Unanimously
- Ordinance No. 2016 – 13Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 140Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 141Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 142Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 143Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 144Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 145Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 146Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 147Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 148Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 149Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 150Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 151Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 152Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 153Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 154Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 155Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 156Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 157Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 158Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 159Adopted Unanimously

*Ordinance No. 2016-11 - Amended on the floor by Council member Mr. Kosiur. The amended ordinance was moved by Ms. Porterfield and was seconded by Mr. Polimeni.

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:

Jason Planck, Schenectady – Noted in the wake of the recent Orlando tragedy to many people including the press are attacking the mental illness community. He added the Orlando shooter was not mentally ill. He referenced a movie that has come out recently that many disabled persons are protesting. He said it features a disabled person, with a poor sense of self and included a suicide attempt. He noted it's important for people who are struggling with depression to reach out for help because their life has meaning.

Marva Isaacs, Schenectady – Noted the Hamilton Hill Neighborhood Association will host its annual Block Party on June 25. She added residents are welcome and invitations are out.

Elaine McDonald, Schenectady - Noted recently a police officer was charged with a misdemeanor. She noted keeping with that precedent, the mayor should be treated the same. She said the mayor should be suspended without pay and Council President Perazzo should be the interim mayor pending the outcome of investigation.

Tony Buonome, Schenectady - Referenced a recent article in the paper which indicated the city has to pay the school district \$5.4 million dollars. He asked when the school district gets the money, is there a mechanism for the school to give the money back to the city? He also asked how much this amounts to for each taxpayer? Regarding the Oak Street Bridge, he noted the mayor said the bridge would be complete in 2017. He noted the process is ongoing and the bridge won't be built this year. He said that Boardway is scheduled to be paved. He asked how this will impact the access of public safety and fire personnel and if a plan has been developed to address this concern.

P.D. Voorhis, Schenectady - Spoke about the departure of Steve Strichman, Zoning Officer from the City's Development office and added he is now working for the city of Troy. She added his departure from the city is a loss to the city and that he will be working for a cool city that does cool things.

Art Collins, Schenectady - Noted he has walked his dog on Eastern Avenue for many years and recently his dog was attacked by another dog. He added he reported the incident to the police with a goal of preventing the incident from happening again. He noted the police officer who took the report presented with little interest in the case and advised the resident to walk his dog down a different street. He added he has been a resident of Schenectady for 70 years and he was disappointed in the response. He noted there are pole cameras in the vicinity which he suspected captured the incident. He reported he later found out the cameras are in the hands of the District Attorney's office and don't fall under the purview of a FOIL requests. He added he was told he could appeal a denied FOIL request to the county manager. He suspects nothing will be done to the owner and in the end will be left to walk down a different street.

Anthony Carota, Schenectady – Expressed concerns related to the handling of the situation that occurred recently involving the mayor. He added there are two ways to handle the situation, the right way and the wrong way. He noted if someone encounters something suspicious they should call 911. He noted the Saratoga District Attorney is going to investigate the incident which included a nine minute, recorded 911 call and reports of the Mayor following the suspect. He noted, we the people demand the Mayor resign, the city to disclose the names of the officers involved and answer the people's questions. He added, we elect the Mayor and no one is above the law.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady – "Good evening to the model citizens who run Schenectady. On May 9th an American citizen was arrested right here where I stand because he used profanity in this chamber. The Council President had announced that such language would not be tolerated during these proceedings and she wanted respect. Her announcement was ignored, two policeman walked in here with hand cuffs, cuffed the speaker and lead him away. The camera man turned off his camera and the

Gazette reporter never wrote the story. Consequently the incident is lost to history. Recently, another American citizen had a run-in with the Mayor. She said she smelled liquor on his breath. She said he appeared intoxicated. She said he was driving a truck and flashing high beams in the face and he frightened her out of her wits in the middle of the night. In that case, the Council President wanted more options. Currently America is involved in a presidential campaign. The designated nominee has been known to call people liars, sleazy, low energy, bunnies and claims the system is rigged. Is he not mimicking society?"

Robert Sanders, Schenectady - Stated that affirmative action policies are a good thing and can help ensure equality across the board. He added in the wake of the shooting in Orlando it's evident terror attacks are on the rise. He noted the LGBT community knows how to lobby and the general population can learn from their actions.

Seeing no other speakers 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 proposed change to the dog license process would allow for reimbursement if the dog dies prior to the start of the year noted on the license. He noted the City pools will be opening July 2 and scheduled hours are available at City hall and on the website. He added Central Park's pool will be open on July 4th but the other City pools will be closed. He noted the list of SICM free summer lunch sites are now available. He added this year the program will also be offering breakfast for area youth as well. He noted there are 42 sites across the city including Ellis' McClellan Campus and Yates Village. He added volunteers are needed and interested parties can contact 374-2683 ext. 108. He then noted the top 10 student achievers at Schenectady High School have been announced. He named the top three including Valedictorian, James Blanchfield who will be attending Harvard in the fall.

Ms. Porterfield - Noted the Development office will be hosting a Community Needs Assessment at the GE Theatre on June 22 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. She noted Schenectady is one of six communities in the nation to host this assessment process offered by HUD. She added topics will include housing, public safety and employment. She encouraged community participation in the questionnaire process and added grass-root concerns will be incorporated into a final action plan. She then noted 400 high school age students will be coming to Schenectady to help with home improvements for more than 70 qualified home owners in the city. She noted donations to help feed the youth are appreciated and more information is available by calling the Mayor's office at 382-5000. She then reflected on the Youth Summit which took place at Proctors Theatre in the city which was sponsored by the Schenectady Foundation. She noted the program was geared to engage the leaders of tomorrow and silicate ideas from area youth. She noted meetings are ongoing and plans are in development to turn ideas into action within the next year.

Mr. Polimeni - Noted the City Council recently passed legislation related to discounts on building permit fees secured between June 15th to August 1. He noted aside from not being charged the permit fee, Marty's and Philips Hardware in Schenectady are offering discounts on the purchase of materials made between those dates, with proof of permit. He added the permits include a window of six months to complete the work. He also reminded residents of the value added project, tax abatement in relation to the home improvement permit. He noted the City Council will continue to push for neighborhood revitalization and will be introducing legislation next month related to zombie properties which is another tool to help improve neighborhoods.

Mr. Riggi – Reminded residents to be mindful of their neighbors. He added summer time is when residents often host parties and are using fireworks. He urged respect and asked residents to be reasonable. He added elderly often go to sleep earlier and they have a right to peace and quiet as well.

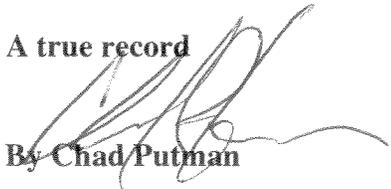
Commissioner Bennett - Noted the Mayor is in Texas at a Smart Cities conference and would be reporting back to the City Council after his return. He then noted with regards to early comments about Donnie Burch Jr. arrest, for disorderly conduct at the City Council meeting, the interaction was preceded by a warning. He added that Mr. Burch Jr. didn't listen. He then noted he would respond to any public spin on his reputation and challenge to his integrity. He added people can't just make false accusations. He advised the public to allow the investigation to play out in relation to the incident reported in the paper involving the Mayor. He added outside counsel has been assigned and he asked residents to hold judgment. He then noted an incident in Mount Pleasant occurred this evening around 5:30 p.m. involving a male who challenged police officers with a gun and was subsequently killed by police. He added no police were injured in the altercation.

Ms. Perazzo – Noted the Schenectady Greenmarket is open and taking place every Sunday on Jay Street from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. She also noted the Hometown Hero banners are now on display in Schenectady following a ceremony at the Armory. She noted the DSIC has a map for tours related to the Hometown Hero banners in downtown. She noted Give Graffiti the Brush will be addressing graffiti sites throughout the city during the summer. She then congratulated Habitat for Humanity on the start of their 50th home construction breaking ground last week. She also thanked the City Engineer for securing funding for paving projects in the City including \$1.5 million dollars to pave Erie Blvd. between Union Street and the new traffic circle at Nott Street. She noted an additional \$1.2 million was secured for Broadway and \$3.8 million for the Kings Road Bridge. She added with regards to the Oak Street Bridge repairs, Amtrak is reviewing the final design plans for approval. She noted the City Council will likely be considering a resolution during the next legislative cycle to urge state and federal elected officials to move the process forward.

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. Polimeni and seconded by Ms. Porterfield. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

A true record


By Chad Putman

Schenectady Deputy City Clerk