

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

October 24, 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 Rev. Ken McHeard with the Emmanuel-Friedens Church to provide the invocation.

Ms. Perazzo then called on Bob Harvey to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

Also Present – City Clerk Charles Thorne, Corporation Counsel Carl Falotico & Mayor Gary R. McCarthy

At this point, Ms. Perazzo invited Mayor McCarthy and Police Chief Clifford to the front of the chamber to administer the oath to Sergeant Peter Montalto and Lieutenant Macherowe.

At this point, Ms. Perazzo invited Assistant Fire Chief Gallesspie and Am in Choukairi from the American Red Cross to the front of the chamber. They both spoke about the importance of smoke detectors in homes and how they save lives. They also invited volunteers to an event at the Schenectady Fire Department on Veeder Avenue on November 12 to assist with home installs.

At this point, Ms. Perazzo asked if there were no objections, she would like to take agenda item number 15, 16, 17 & 18 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2016-252 – A Resolution Honoring All Veterans on Veterans Day. Tony Buonome, Bob Becker, Jim Wilson, Kurt Von Maucher and Domenic Famiano were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the resolution and recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Resolution No. 2016-253 – A Resolution Recognizing Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Assistant Fire Chief Gallesspie, Captain Christopher Keough with the Schenectady Fire Department and a 27-year survivor of breast cancer were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the resolution and 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. 2016-254 – A Resolution Recognizing Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Representatives from the YWCA were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the resolution and recognition by the Mayor and City Council. It was noted that this is the 40th anniversary of Domestic Violence Awareness Month which impacts 1 in 4 women. Walter Simpkins was also on hand and spoke on the Community Fathers program which runs the violence secession program.

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

Resolution No. 2016-255 – A Resolution Recognizing Clergy Appreciation Day. Rev. Collins, Rev. Bookhout & Rev. McHeard were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the resolution and recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

PUBLIC HEARING:

Ms. Perazzo invited all who wished to address the City Council regarding creating a process for ceremonial naming of streets. The following speakers rose to be heard and their remarks are summarized:

PD Vooris, Schenectady – Noted she is not clear about what program the Council has in mind related to naming streets. She then reflected on the recent naming of Rush Street in the new harbor and its name sake correlated to one of the signers of the Constitution. She added Dr. Rush and George Washington supported a free black women whose husband had died.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady – "This issue, "Ceremonial Street Naming" is a perfect example of what happens when people are elected to public office, have no world experience and bring nothing to the table. The issue falls flat. Council relied on Hoboken New Jersey has guidelines on this issue. I had the good fortune to go to Nijkerk, Holland for an adult exchange program. That experience gave me a broad understanding of Schenectady's culture. To my way of thinking, every nook and cranny of the city should scream Dutch. Be it in the naming of streets. The merchandise sold in stores or visible symbols and yet Schenectady does not even have a Peter Stuyvesant Street. I learned about Peter Stuyvesant in the fifth grade, in Catholic school, in New Jersey. Do students learn about him in Schenectady schools? Furthermore, does anyone on this Council know the significance of the name for the Fort Orange Club in Albany? Schenectady doesn't have a street named orange, why not? Last year when Holland was 300 years old, the Dutch celebrated by eating orange cookies with orange icing, drinking orange punch and using orange napkins. Does any bakery in town make orange cookies? When I returned from my trip to Holland I tried to promote the color orange for the Summer Night event and the Stockade's Walk-About. No one would touch it. I also think items with Dutch themes should be sold in Proctors Gift Shop and elsewhere throughout the City. Council missed the mark on this issue. Hoboken, New Jersey was not the place to go for guidance. Schenectady's Historical Society has all the information you need. New York has a uniqueness that no other state has. Promote it and get it right. Even the land on which rests the Statue of Liberty, was obtained by a Dutch Colonist through a land grant. How about an Isaac Bedlow Street for Schenectady?"

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 11, 2016 Council meeting as submitted by the Deputy City Clerk; Mr. Kosiur made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Polimeni seconded the motion.

Communications Presented to the City Council for Monday, October 24, 2016

Official:

From the Mayor a list of appointments dated October 24, 2016

From Richard McIlravy-Ackert, Purchasing Supervisor recommending the award and lease of "100' tower apparatus" and "two custom pumpers" for the Fire Department dated October 24, 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:

PD Voorhis, Schenectady - Noted few residents are in attendance at the City Council and the county meetings. She noted young people who are interested in college should consider the military which can help pay for it. She said it's a fine thing to recognize the clergy but not everything is known about religion in 2016. She referenced an article in the New York Times related to Jewish traditions and added it's important for clergy to do their job.

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

Mr. Polimeni made a motion that Council approves the Consent Agenda and the motion was seconded by Mr. Mootoveren.

Consent Agenda –

- Resolution No. 2016 – 256Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 257Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 258Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 259Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 260Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 261Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 262Adopted Unanimously
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- Resolution No. 2016 – 267Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 268Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 269Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – CS- 20Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – CS-21Adopted Unanimously

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Ms. Perazzo 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:

Donnie Burch, Schenectady - Noted he wanted to recap his last report regarding the nuclear leak at Knolls Atomic Laboratory which he spoke about at the last Council meeting. He added the Council and City has not followed up further. He stated there was radioactive material leaked which is dangerous and this is something the media should be looking into, he added. He then spoke about the police officer swearing in ceremony conducted tonight which he believes was not done correctly. He noted he has been able to beat many cases and prosecutors against him and added they keep trying to prosecute him. He noted he has been arrested for not surrendering his phone. He noted there is a war on black people

and they are being locked away. He noted the money collected by the jail commissary is not going to the City. He added inmates are being feed soy which can cause breast growth and he fears it can also turn people into homosexuals. He closed by noting we need to get the fluoride out of the City drinking water which he says lowers IQ and does not protect teeth.

Anthony Carota, Schenectady – Noted that he appreciates his neighbors for coming to the Council meeting to speak. He said he was in attendance tonight to highlight the Albany Street and Georgette Dix intersection which he said is very dangerous. He added the intersection needs a cross walk or a signal. He noted there are a lot of elderly in the area and a number of emergency vehicles driving through the intersection. He is also noticing taxi cabs are doing u-turns in the middle of the street and added this is dangerous. Regarding recent violence in the City he noted he appreciates the Mayor talking about it but questioned why the Mayor would show up after the violence has already happened. Rather he advised, the Mayor should show up when something happens and not up after the fact.

PD Voorhis, Schenectady - Shared comments related to housing and added the GE union is focused on housing now. She noted she has had housing issues for nearly two years and when she comes to City Hall she is told the City does not have the information she is requesting. She noted she has paid \$40,000 and has squat to show for it. She then commended the City Clerk and Deputy for their responsiveness and involvement in the community. She then encouraged residents to vote and added their vote will be counted. She suggested people go out and by a newspaper in case something historical happens.

Joy Hall, Schenectady - Noted she has seen a lot of vehicles making u-turns and speeding on City streets. She added if more drivers obeyed the law there would be less accidents and this City would be a better place to live. She then credited the Schenectady Police and Fire Department for their work.

Richard Holder, Schenectady - Noted he has been a City taxpayer for 20 years and has observed and worked with all levels of government. He added the goal is to reduce overhead and unfortunately this is an election cycle. He added the City of Schenectady is facing a fiscal tidal wave and although many have warned about it, nothing has been corrected. He closed by noting nothing will change until the top down is prepared to change the status quo.

Sherain Rivera, Schenectady - Noted she owns Rain Drop Closets which is a program for homeless families. She added she is looking for donations including blankets and coats for homeless families and calling on community leaders to consider donating to her organization. She noted she was homeless and lived in the Days Inn at one time with her children and added she knows what it feels like to be homeless. She also asked for donations of men's suits adding people who are homeless are looking for jobs. She noted the closet is located at the Emmanuel Friedens Church. She closed by noting if everyone can give one item it would make a difference adding we live here and should be able to help each other.

Keylynn Bellrose, Schenectady - Noted she is a senior at Schenectady high school and part of the Youth Council. She noted concerns about public safety comes up and if youth don't feel safe how can others feel safe. She added she was reading through the notes from the October meeting and added nothing is being addressed regarding lights and cameras related to public safety. She noted instead of installing new street lights she asked why don't we focus on making sure the lights we currently have work. She notes she has heard about plans to put new lights on Union Street because of the high volume of visitors but she asked, what about keeping the residents safe?

Rosa River, Schenectady - Provided an update on the Miracle on Craig Street. She asked for support from the city. She noted the project has been developing its organizational plan and has collected hundreds of signatures supporting the effort. She added the group has spoke with funders in hopes to acquire funds for a planning grant and more tech support on a feasibility study. She noted they

are looking at new construction versus rehabbing the former Craig Street Center. She noted the potential funders want to know the City supports the efforts of the Miracle on Craig Street group and is committed to helping the group secure the property located at 700 Craig Street. She added the group is looking for a letter of support from the Mayor regarding site control and for CDBG funding allocations to support the center as a priority in 2018. She noted efforts are underway regarding a feasibility study and whether to focus on improvements to the 700 Craig Street property or if new construction is best. She also noted the need to potentially add 700 Craig Street to the list of properties for demolition so any money raised can go toward new construction. She closed by noting this is a grassroots campaign and the group is out there trying to make this happen.

Raeshelle Frasier, Schenectady - Noted she is the coach of the two time championship team in the community and police basketball league. She added she is also a core member of Miracle on Craig Street group. She noted our community center already exists in the form of the basketball league, community garden and cast of volunteers. She noted we just don't have a home and added they need the support from the City regarding their effort. She then asked the Council and Mayor if they could have gotten to where they are today without some sort of support. She added, now the group needs their support. She closed by noting she is a teacher and servant of my community.

Denzel Morris, Schenectady - Noted he is a member of Miracle on Craig Street and added the neighborhood needs a community center. He noted a community center offers protective factors which are important to the residents. Some of which include employment, daycare, afterschool programs and a community center. He added they are looking to make forward progress. He noted the Hamilton Hill neighborhood seems to be depleted of most protective factors and the residents are in need. He added the group is coming out in numbers while looking for a hand up and not a hand out. He added the group is trying to do for themselves, their community and their kids and are in need of City support.

Damoni Farley, Schenectady - Noted he wants to give a round of applause to all those in attendance for being here at the Council meeting tonight. He added that he has been inspired by what he has heard. He then noted he wanted to honor clergy and added a scripture about faith without work is not enough. He added its clear that his group is interested in doing the work as evident by the community garden. He noted that Hamilton Hill is a food desert and the garden increases access to fresh produce to people in the neighborhood. Regarding the Miracle on Craig Street he noted the group secured signatures of support by going door to door with the help of Union College students. He noted other events the group has participated in including the Interfaith Run and a project to secure 100 new home owners in Hamilton Hill to increase neighborhood stabilization. He noted the group has faith in the City and they are looking for a letter of support from the City regarding efforts related to the Miracle on Craig Street. He added the group is willing to answer any questions the City has related to the project.

Jaya Sundareh, Schenectady – Noted she was in attendance a year ago, and is a core member of the Miracle on Craig Street. She noted she is inspired by the work of the group which has included a multicultural book drive. She added the group now has office space in Mt. Olivet Church and has raised thousands of dollars in a single year. She noted that all of Hamilton Hill and others in the community are standing behind the effort. She noted the group is not just asking but demanding support from the City related to the Maracle on Craig Street. She added the group is aware of a line item in the 2017 City budget allocating funding to Central Park and noted they would rather see that money spent on the Miracle on Craig Street project. She closed by noting, if that could happen, that would be great.

Janel Hooks, Schenectady - Reflected on the effort to try and save Carver. She noted she goes to the County Legislature meetings and she is concerned about the development of condominiums on Craig Street. She asked the Council to help her stop the development. She added there are people who don't have much and are concerned about losing what they do have. She noted there is nothing for kids and

they end up going out and hanging out on the streets because they have nothing else to do. She asked the Council to consider the Schenectady kids and noted the letter of support would be appreciated.

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

Ms. Porterfield – Noted on October 28 the Schenectady Boys and Girls Club will host a Halloween party and Breathing Lights tour. She noted another event will take place on October 29 and will include a poetry workshop and open mic. She noted the event runs from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and the open mic portions should include original material with a focus on blight and neighborhoods.

Mr. Riggi - Noted Election Day is coming up on November 8. He noted St. Josephs will host a ziti dinner from 11:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and tickets are available by calling 225-4626. He then spoke on the Stewart's Shop project on Broadway and added he is glad to see the project is moving forward. He noted the new location will help with traffic flow and noted there were some initial concerns related to demo and building permit. He then noted concerns related to paving over the sidewalk. He added if we don't let residents do it, the City should not let the contractors either. He noted J. Luke's is doing the construction and he hopes recent events don't set a precedent. Regarding the budget he noted a caucus was called to discuss the budget which he was not invited to and he is concerned members are reverting backwards. He noted it maybe legal to hold a caucus but he does not believe it's proper to do this under cover. He added that he has attended all of the hearings. He noted the caucuses are not open to the public and are contrary to keeping the people informed about what the Council is doing. He reiterated the budget discussions should be held as a public meeting.

Mr. Polimeni - Noted this will be the last week to donate to the Mits for Kids. He added the effort is collecting winter hats, gloves and scarves. He noted people can make donations at City Hall by stopping by the Mayor's office and the Clerk's office. He added other drop off sites are located at the county building. He then thanked Schenectady's Police and Fire Department for participating along with the Mayor. He added a number of donations have been received and the effort ends on November 2.

Mr. Kosiur - Noted his appreciation of the Hamilton Hill community for coming out to the meeting tonight and speaking. He noted their concerns are important and the Council and Mayor are aware. He then noted the Schenectady Youth Advisor Council organized by the Schenectady Foundation talked about the needs of community including the need for a community center. He noted it's important that the different organizations work together. He noted that he drove through Central Park this evening and noted that five street lights are out. He added that he has been in touch with John Coluccio with the City to have them replaced. He noted it's important for residents to report outages on the City website. He then spoke of the County project on Craig Street in relationship to Community Builders which will host apartments for seniors and veterans in the community. He added the apartment is not intended for casino workers and added it's a great project for the community. He reminded residents of Election day and to vote on November 8 while the polls are open from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. He also reminded residents to change the batteries in their smoke detectors with the changing of the clocks on October 29th. He noted he was glad to see the Schenectady Fire Department has teamed up with the American Red Cross to help install fire detectors in homes throughout the City. He closed by wishing everyone a safe and happy Halloween.

Mr. Mootooveren - Noted if residents identify street lights that are out they can go on the City website to report the pole number and location. He encouraged residents to use the service. Regarding the Miracle on Craig Street he noted the group has shown up in large numbers in a show of support on several occasions. He added the Council stands with them and supports their efforts. He noted the Council can provide a letter of support and will not hesitate to provide the letter of support to help open Carver back up for the youth in neighborhood.

Mayor McCarthy - Thanked everyone for coming out to speak at the meeting. He spoke about the Smart Cities Initiative and the goal to do a full deployment City wide so everyone benefits from the cost savings and technology. He noted City Hall is hosting a student traveling art show which will be on display until the end of November and will then move to SCCC and eventually to Proctors Fenimore Gallary. He wished everyone a Happy Halloween and added the formal trick or treat hours run from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. He added all four City Fire Departments will be open and kids can stop by for candy. He noted the City website also has Halloween fire safety tips and he encouraged everyone to have a good time.

Ms. Perazzo – Noted progress on the 2017 proposed budget. She then commended Finance Commissioner Ferrari on all his hard work and noted they are almost there. She added the Council has hosted a minimum of 6-8 open public meetings allowing for public discussion. She noted the Council will be back to the table to further discuss the budget to work on a consensus. She added the Council has also offered public hearing allowing for public comment as well. She then commended Stewart's Shops for their efforts to help preserve the stained glass windows and the time capsule that were located in the church. She added Stewart's Shops also accommodated the families who requested the windows and items in the time capsule. She noted they also salvaged a number of items that were in the church and gave the items to non-profits. She then congratulated the Chamber awardees including Chez Nous, the Double Tree, the Foster Building renovated by Jeff Buell and the new Institute for Clinical Pharmacodynamics on Broadway. She closed by noting the Schenectady Greenmarket has moved inside for the winter and will host a Harvest Dinner fundraiser on November 10. She also asked everyone to vote on Election Day.

Adjourned:

Seeing further business to come before the City Council, Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to recess the meeting. The motion was moved by Mr. Kosiur and seconded by Mr. Polimeni. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

A true record



By Charles Thorne

Schenectady City Clerk