

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

March 28, 2022

The City Council Meeting was called to order by the City Council President Marion Porterfield at 7:00 p.m. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. Porterfield asked Reverend Brad Jones of Christ Church to offer the invocation.

Ms. Porterfield then called on Pastor Francis Rigobert of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church 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: Doreen Ditoro, Damonni Farley, Carmel Patrick, John Polimeni, Carl Williams, and Marion Porterfield.

Also Present – Mayor Gary R. McCarthy, City Clerk Samanta R. Mykoo, and Corporation Counsel Andrew B. Koldin, Esq.

Absent – John Mootoveren

At this point, Ms. Porterfield asked if there were no objections, she would like to take agenda item Eighteen out of order. There were no objections

Resolution No. 2022-075 Recognizing the 150th Anniversary of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church.

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

The resolution was accepted by Pastor Francis Rigobert and representatives of Zion Evangelical Luther Church. They thanked the Mayor and City Council for the recognition.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Porterfield asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 14, 2022 Council Meeting as submitted by the City Clerk. Ms. Patrick made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Farley seconded the motion.

COMMUNICATIONS PRESENTED TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Official:

None.

General:

From Mark Baker, an email dated March 19, 2022, regarding LED streetlights. He asks that the City abandon the plans to purchase the streetlight poles from National Grid due to the toxicity to human health and that they are also not energy efficient.

From P. D. Voorhis, an email dated March 21, 2022, urging Council to invest in new microphones for the Council Meetings or for Council Members to purchase their own equipment for the meetings.

From Maria Schroll, an email dated March 26, 2022, regarding her ideas on how to utilize ten-million dollars from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

Petitions:

None.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS):

Ms. Porterfield invited all who wished to address the Legislative Agenda to come forward or otherwise submit their comments to the City Clerk:

P. D. Voorhis – Remarked on the Bond Ordinance being passed and stated that she does not like debt services. She then added that there are properties that were in executive session in which the public does not have enough details on the sales. She then commented on the procurement policy stating that titles should be written on the policy instead of names and the procurement of the Police Department Rifle Range has been shrouded in secrecy.

Seeing no other speakers to come forward, Ms. Porterfield declared the Privilege of the Floor regarding Legislative Items, to be closed.

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

Ms. Porterfield made a motion that Council approves the Consent Agenda, the motion was moved by Mr. Farley and seconded by Mr. Williams.

Consent Agenda

Ordinance No. 2022-03 Adopted Unanimously
Ordinance No. 2022-04 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-076 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-077 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-078 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-079 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-080 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-081 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-082 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-083 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-084 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-085 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-086 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-087 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-088 Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-089 Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2022-090.....Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-CS-06.....Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-CS-07.....Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-CS-08.....Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2022-CS-09.....Adopted Unanimously

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Ms. Porterfield directed all who wished to discuss any items for City Business to come forward or otherwise submit their comments to the City Clerk.

Giselle Figueroa – She was asked what her priorities are and she had taken a few days to ponder that question. She has decided that the priorities are the School District, taxes, beautification, and communication between City Hall and the people. The School District’s communication has improved significantly since the appointment of Superintendent Soler, the taxes with the addition of the Casino and the developments downtown have been excellent. She only wishes that some of that funding would come up the Hill. There are many programs that deal with litter and the beautification of the City. She commends the City’s updated website and the SeeClickFix to report issues but added that there are many that this media method does not reach. She would like the City to address the paving program and understanding the gateways of this community. She would like to see the improvement of life in general.

Diablo – Communicated that he is disappointed with the body language of some of the Council Members because they seem disinterested. He stated that Jamaica Miles will run against Madame Porterfield. He then spoke about the first black Councilman who used to sleep during meetings. (At this point he was interrupted by Council President Porterfield to refrain from making remarks about people’s ethnicity or color and direct comments to her.) He then continued to say that the Daily Gazette endorses the move of Council Meetings to areas in the hood because it will sell newspapers; you will encounter many people (he was asked again to not use derogatory language) he described as being less than civil during meetings. He then asked about the American Rescue Funds Act and if any of the funds have been set aside for public art. He also cautioned against people adding those funds to their own pockets.

Nick Petrillo – Spoke about an article he read in the Daily Gazette that had made him upset; it was the dismissive tone of some of the Councilmembers regarding racial tension within the committee. It’s a privilege to dismiss racism if it’s not happening to you, he hopes everyone understands and keeps that in mind. If you admit that you are part of a tense environment, it does not mean that you are a racist, it means you realize and acknowledge that you have room to grow. He hoped that within the seven Councilmembers there can be honest conversation and work and wished them the best. He also thanked Council President Porterfield for her leadership during this high-tension atmosphere.

Leonard DiMasi – Explained that he would like to save the residents of Schenectady a few dollars and make the City a little cleaner. He would like the Council to follow the lead of Niskayuna and Rotterdam and allow at least one container to be used for yard waste. Not only will it save the residents a few pennies, it will appeal their human nature of being lazy because it will be easier to dispose of yard waste. He added that the decorative lighting is nice but not necessary.

Seeing no other speakers come forward, Ms. Porterfield declared the Privilege of the Floor to be closed.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL:

Carl Williams – Acknowledged the “More Music and Less Violence” event hosted at the SEAT Center in collaboration with DJ Hollywood. It showcased some of the talent in our City and it gave the youths an opportunity to network, connect, and collaborate with each other. He also thanked everyone who attended tonight’s meeting and commented, he is excited to help address some of the items that have the most benefit for the City. He also stated that language matters and there are opportunities to come together when there are misunderstandings, addressing them, and moving forward together for the benefit of the City.

Doreen Ditoro – Spoke about the Firefighter’s Run for Your Life event that was held at Central Park over the weekend. She stated that the funds raised for this event benefit Firefighter’s health concerns and educational advocacy. Many local restaurants donated chowders, the beautiful pavilion was used and it was a wonderful event.

Carmel Patrick – Complemented the Firefighters for organizing the event for the Firefighter’s Cancer Foundation. It was a great family event. Not only did local businesses donate chowders to the event, but the platoons competed with each other with their own chowder recipes. She also announced that the following day will be National Vietnam War Veteran Day and thanked all the Vietnam Veterans in our community for their service. She also thanked Council President Porterfield, Councilmember Ditoro, herself, and the Mayor for meeting with a group of young women from the School District grades 8-12. This field trip introduced these students to the idea of what it was like being a woman working in Government. They were able to meet various women working in City Hall and ask questions. She thanked the School District for their My Brother’s Keeper program for young men of color and hopes this will jump start My Sister’s Keeper.

John Polimeni – Noted that there will be many repercussions due to the ongoing global events. Interest rates are rising, and we should expect to see it continue. There are forecasts for a recession. These are things we should take into consideration as a City and City Council; the global situation does have a local impact and we should try to adjust our efforts for the financial benefits for the City. With the warmer temperatures, we are receiving many complaints about noise and music and asks that individuals be respectful to their neighbors and community. Also, now that the snow is melting, we are seeing trash that was hidden beneath the snow and ask that everyone help clean up. He also asked that everyone be more discerning with information that can be found on the internet. There are global and international information that has become problematic and creates division and hatred.

Damoni Farley – Attended a community resource fair with over thirty different vendors and community service providers to make our residents aware of what is available. All these events over the weekend required a level of collaboration and that is the spirit that the voters and residents of Schenectady expect of us. He then said that under the leadership of the Mayor and Council President Marion Porterfield, these collaborations are growing stronger. He then said that we encourage everyone to attend and let their voices be heard; they do not have to agree with everything we say or do but you do have to be respectful and not use racist or homophobic terms at the microphone. There are parliamentary procedures to follow and he will not sit silent when anyone uses racist or homophobic language and encourages everyone to do so as we move forward as a legislative body.

Mayor McCarthy – Thanked everyone who voted on the Community Officials Data Exchange (C.O.D.E.) project that shares data around problem property owners and best practices in code

enforcement with the goal of using data to address urban blight in our communities. We have been working on this for eight years with the Center for Technology in Government at the University at Albany (CTG UAlbany). Schenectady prevailed and designated the winner of the 5th Annual North American Awards. This award shows our effort and sets the standard for building a better and brighter future.

Marion Porterfield – Thanked everyone who came out to express their opinions. Thanked her colleagues for mentioning the various events; everyone could not be at everything, but someone from Council was at every one of these events. She attended the Stockade Meeting with Councilmember Polimeni and the Mayor to hear about the mitigation of the ice and it was an interesting presentation. She attended a play at Proctors, and it was packed, it was great seeing everyone and we all had to wear masks because it was so well attended. Then announced that there will be a clean-up day on the Northside on Saturday, April 23, 2022 at Steinmetz Park from 8am – 2pm. Show love where you live in Hamilton Hill will have their clean-up day on Saturday, April 30, 2022 from 10am – 2pm at Jerry Burrell Park. She encouraged everyone to attend and anticipate many more event such as these to occur. This will not only make Schenectady a Smart City, but a sparkling City.

Adjourned:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Ms. Porterfield asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was moved by Mr. Farley and seconded by Ms. Patrick. The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

A true record

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samanta R. Mykoo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

**By Samanta R. Mykoo
Schenectady City Clerk**

Samanta R. Mykoo

From: Mark Baker [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 19, 2022 2:35 AM
To: Samanta R. Mykoo
Subject: LED Street Lights

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Town Clerk, Schenectady, New York,

Please forward to the city council and city manager.

Dear City Council and City Manager, Schenectady, New York,

We were notified that Schenectady is planning on purchasing their streetlight poles from National Grid and then switching to LED streetlights. We have grave concerns about the truthfulness of National Grid's claims of energy savings from LED streetlights and that National Grid is fully aware that LED street lights cause epileptic seizures, migraines, and other illnesses and so National Grid is attempting to place the liability for injury onto Schenectady.

We are providing the Schenectady council and city manager this video that we made that details how LED street lights are not energy efficient, but simply an industrial, low-quality light that is toxic to human health. <https://youtu.be/s-eiP9bRnMM>

Here is a link to a study published March 14, 2022 that details how artificial light is harmful to our health: <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2113290119>

With this knowledge, we urge the city to abandon plans to purchase the streetlight poles from National Grid, abandon plans to switch to low-quality LED light, and instead develop a comprehensive plan to protect the natural night resource which will greatly reduce costs to taxpayers and protect their health.

Sincerely,

Mark Baker
President
Soft Lights Foundation
www.softlights.org
mbaker@softlights.org

Samanta R. Mykoo

From: PD Ironclad [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 21, 2022 9:23 AM
To: Samanta R. Mykoo
Cc: Marion Porterfield
Subject: Microphones

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

All forms of government have spent large sums of money on microphones and installation of the same with disappointing results due to failure on the part of users to make them operative.

All legislators receive a salary to speak to the public at public meetings, so why not invest in your own microphone pack for official and other venues when you want to be heard. Members of my family with similar responsibilities have their own 'packs' and the corporate issue mobile 'packs'.

So members of council, since none of this is new information to you, I want to know why you do not do it. There is nothing in the rules that says you can't bring your own equipment. Many of you bring your own tablets.

February 16, 2022, at a City Planning and Development meeting, the President of Upper Union St. Neighborhood Association, stated that none of the speakers could be heard. It has been cited many times, however, someone was good enough to record it in minutes.

P. D. Voorhis

March 21, 2022.

Samanta R. Mykoo

From: Maria Schroll [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 26, 2022 4:03 PM
To: Samanta R. Mykoo
Subject: Re: ARPA Advisory Committee

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City of Schenectady & 10 million dollar ideas :)

Dear City of Schenectady & to whom it may concern,

#1.

Thus a fundraiser! Will be 1 time a year or we can value a seasonal editing. We as a community will find the source to have well hand painted, or spray painted yet possibly logoed garbage cans. For a small fee of X amount of dollars, a small logo. For X & X amount of dollars spray painted or hand crafted and water resistant. There can or may be applications to fill out ongoing to have a seasonal changed image-illustrated, painting or logo even. Weather it's holiday invented for your every changing season or a photo-shopped image edited to fit for us to be proud of, we can charge this a 1 time fee, an every-couple of year fees with a new addition logo or an all new make-over. I believe this will bring a great fundraiser to the neighborhood and its community to keep a kind balance between city streets and the way they look. Of course we as a community and team will have to work to the efforts of finding artist and logo creators for the job. However if we offer this everywhere I believe it will pay for itself and we can save a ton of extra income shall the city of New York keep this tradition alive.

#2

Lets SAVE
St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The church today is a natural beauty! In a great location its one of our neighborhoods #1 reasons for feeling safe and looking holy! So WHY not spend our togetherness in income for our church! It does in fact, in-need of a inspection for its kitchen and a new handicap ramp leading to the upstairs. We could make a few new signs (considering it being wooded & or kindly medal) with lights.

#3

A garbage machine made to vacuum our streets and lawns.

#4

Billboard advertisement on : joining our community & being a part of our neighborhood help, team and efforts.

#5

Improvements on our small parks in schenectady. We are in need of small grills and picknick tables, upgraded playgrounds in to our most innermost parks (like fairview park or veterans park). Even the landscaping is available for money well spent. Planting pretty bushes and trees flowers and grass is beautiful for our health! So lets keep in mind to go green along the way!

#6

A full month garage sale

#7

A senior center

What a beautiful season it shall be !

Thank you & I hope this was helpful!