

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

June 8, 2015

The City Council Meeting was called to order by the City Council President Margaret King at 7:04 p.m. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. King asked Rev. James Bookhout from the Bridge Christian Church to provide the invocation.

Ms. King then called on David Gade 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, Margaret King, Ed Kosiur, John Mootooveren, Leesa Perazzo, Marion Porterfield, and Vincent Riggi

Excused – John Ferrari

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

At this point, Ms. King asked if there were no objections, she would like to take agenda item number 10, 11, 12 & 13 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2015 - 144 – A Resolution Recognizing to Celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Rose Garden Restoration Committee and to Honor David Gade for his Contribution to the Central Park Rose Garden. – Representatives including David Gade from the Rose Garden Restoration Committee were on hand and extended their gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council. The Committee also announced a fundraising event taking place on June 19 at the River Stone Manor in Scotia.

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

At this point, Mayor McCarthy then made a special presentation of the Patroon Award to David Gade for his service to the community. Mr. Gade was very appreciative and thanked the Mayor for this special recognition.

Resolution No. 2015 - 145 – A Resolution Declaring the Month of June as Gun Violence Awareness Month. – Assistant Police Chief Seber was on hand and extended his gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council. He added this resolution relates to the GIVE Grant funding resolution before the City Council this evening.

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

Resolution No. 2015 - 146 – A Resolution Sondra's Fine Jewelry as an Outstanding Local Business. – Sondra Stephens and her son Anthony were on hand and extended their gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council. Sondra noted her small-business on Upper Union Street is committed to Schenectady following recent renovations to the store. She added Sondra's will also be maintaining its partnerships with area non-profits including the SICM summer lunch program and Toys for Tots.

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

Resolution No. 2015 - 147 – A Resolution Recognizing the 15th Anniversary of the Ralph and Marjorie Kenney Center at Union College. – Dr. Gretchel Hathaway and Angela Tatem were on hand and 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.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- 1. Regarding an Amendment to Chapter 86 of the Schenectady City Code regarding the Parks and Recreation Administration.**

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. King asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 27, 2015 Council meetings as submitted by the City Clerk; Mr. Riggi made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Mootooveren seconded the motion.

Communications Presented to the City Council for Monday June 8, 2015

Official:

From the Mayor a list of appointments dated June 8, 2015.

A letter from Paul LaFond, Director of Water & Wastewater recommending the award of the “Sludge Transportation and Disposal Contract” to New England Waste Services of ME, Inc.

A letter from David Fronk, Director of Operations recommending the award of the “Demolition and Debris Removal of Select Vacant Buildings in the City of Schenectady pursuant to the HUD 108 Loan Guarantee Demolition Program” to Jackson Demolition Services.

General:

None

Petitions:

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Marion Porterfield, Health & Recreation – Noted the Recreation Advisory Commission has completed its assessments of City parks and will host a review meeting on June 9 at 6:00 p.m. in room 110. More information related to the outcome of the assessments to be announced.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS)

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

Seeing no speakers come forward, Ms. King 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. Mootooveren.

Consent Agenda –

Ordinance No. 2015 – 08	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2015 – 148	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2015 – 149	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2015 – 150	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2015 – 151	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2015 – 152	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2015 – 153	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2015 – 154	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2015 – 155	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2015 – 156	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2015 – 157	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2015 – CS - 17	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2015 – CS - 18	Adopted Unanimously

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Ms. King 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 – Praised the Police Department for their handling of the Michigan Avenue incident. He also extended praise to the City related to the Arts Fest that was held downtown on June 13. He noted concerns related to violence in Hamilton Hill that was posted on Facebook. He then noted Affordable Housing is the wrong idea. Rather he suggested the City should follow Council member Vince Riggi’s position related to zero tolerance regarding violence and graffiti. He added that New York City has a drug pipeline to Schenectady which creates a dangerous environment for City residents. He closed by reiterating the City should focus on zero tolerance and not affordable housing.

Joe Rodriquez, Schenectady – Noted the State Street carwash is good for the City. He then suggested the City step up more related to sanitation and appears to be avoiding certain islands. He then noted concerns related to neighborhood convenient stores and the promotion of cigarette sales. He questions if the store on Altamont Avenue was in compliance related to signage. He also made a note related to paving of Altamont Avenue.

Marva Isaacs, Schenectady – Noted the Hamilton Hill Neighborhood Association will host its neighborhood block party on Saturday, June 27th from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. which is open to the community. For more information she noted residents can visit the Hamilton Hill Arts Center website.

Judy Atchinson, Schenectady – (with two children, Lexis & Anthony from the Quest program) noted Quest started over 23 years ago and has an annual budget of \$90,000 per year. She added she does not receive a salary from the Quest program. She noted Quest has cleaned-up a lot next to their property on State Street which use to be cluttered with debris and garbage. She noted that Quest has received assistance from the Buhmaster family related to the installation of a

community garden on the vacant lot. She added she is interested in buying the lot from the City and that she has the community support behind her efforts. She closed by noting that Quest will be hosting a bakeoff in July along with an open house. She added all events are free and open to the public.

P.D. Voorhis, Schenectady – Noted she was attacked after a city Council meeting and recently again by a non-verbal attacker. She added Mr. Ferrari came to her rescue. She noted she spoke to the Fire Chief who said historically she could have pulled the fire box alarm and the police would have come. She noted she could not pull the fire alarm box now due to the boxes being covered after they were decommissioned from service. She noted the Police Department would not take a report that she had written up for the last two months. She added she had copies that she was going to turn over to the City Council which included a write up on “Union College and the Lincoln Assassination”.

Mohamed Hafez, Schenectady – Spoke on a host agreement another municipality in upstate New York has with a casino developer. He noted the Mayor provided a short response. He noted the City taxpayers do not want to pay for the increase expenses that will come as a result of the Rivers Casino. With regards to the other municipality agreement he noted the town will not be responsible for additional costs incurred as a result of the new casino related to public safety. He added our Mayor did not sign a similar agreement to protect residents. He noted the residents elected the Mayor to look out for the best interest of the residents, not the developers. He closed by asking why the residents should re-elect the Mayor.

Chris Gibbs, Schenectady – Noted the City waited for Judy Atchinson from Quest to clean up the lot before taking ownership of the lot. He added Council member Kosiur has not been responsive, but Council member Riggi has been. He added that Judy has worked with a generation of children. He noted the more people who care the work will focus on our town. He added Nott Terrace seems to be the other side of the tracks. He noted that he is originally from New York City and that he has worked daily to help clan parks and neighborhoods.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady – “I want to address the issue of beautification and the new sign at Ellis Hospital. When I take a position on an issue at this microphone it is done from an educated perspective. In the case of beautification, I have taken flower arranging classes for the past 25 years. In one of my very first classes, the teacher told her students don’t just look at a tree and find the prettiest branch on it for your arrangement. I have been conditioned to look for beauty and found it at the corner of Nott Street and Rosa Road until the City let Ellis Hospital destroy the site. Whoever signed off on that ugly project owes the people of the Goose Hill neighborhood an explanation. Beautification wasn’t on anyone’s radar when the project was proposed, designed and approved. Why would the City allow the hospital to expand a parking lot smack in the middle of prime real estate. When the hospital was simultaneously building a 5 story parking garage just a few feet away? As if that wasn’t bad enough a metal guard rail was installed around the lot. Guard rails belong on the highway, not in a primary residential area of the City. That corner went from beautiful to a cheaply showy mess. I saw the initial picture for the project. The finished product does not look like the picture because the background conditions were not included. Things such as guard rails, parked cars, larger parking lot, etc. Someone either wasn’t paying attention or got hood winked on the project. The new Ellis Hospital sign degrades rather than enhances the neighborhood. That is not what the comprehensive plan is all about. Council members may work hard but they don’t work well. Mediocrity is the mantra of the administration. Go take a look at what the City did on my street. It doesn’t make any sense.”

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

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

Ms. Porterfield – Noted her disappointment that some of the memorial flags used as part of the display at Veterans Park were taken. She added this is unfortunate because her goal was to leave the memorial display out until Flag Day. She noted due to the change in circumstances she will be ending the memorial early. She then noted the Arts Fest was a great success on June 13th. She added that today she was a guest at a special gospel service that recognized the bicyclists from Kunming, China, Schenectady's sister City. She then noted that Affordable Housing and Zero Tolerance can occur at the same time. She noted her intentions to send out invitations to the annual Juneteenth event which will be taking on June 20th in Vale & Central Park. She added more information can be found on the Hamilton Hill Arts Center's website. She noted the Hamilton Hill Neighborhood Association will also be hosting a neighborhood block party in Jerry Burrell Park the same weekend as the neighborhood garage sale. She added the block party will take place on Saturday, but the garage sale will be all weekend.

Mr. Riggi – Noted that he finds the situation related to the memorial flags despicable. He added that he hopes someone will either report the incident or return the flags. He then asked about whether the emergency call boxes that are currently out of service and covered would be operational again. He then encouraged the Council and Mayor to consider the Quest request related to the vacant lot which the organization is looking to use for a community garden. He then noted concerns about the impact of neighborhood bars on residents with regards to loud music. He added these neighborhood bars have been in the community for years and it appears issues arise with the change of ownership. He then noted the Bellevue Neighborhood Preservation will host its monthly meeting on June 17 at 7:00 p.m. with special guest, Eric Shilling, Director of Code Enforcement. He added the Bellevue Farmers Market will start on June 11th and will take place every Thursday on Broadway in Bellevue.

Ms. Perazzo – Noted the Kids Arts Fest was a great success over the weekend. She added the Give Graffiti the Brush program is up and running for the summer, every other Saturday. She encouraged residents and property owners to contact her with locations that have been tagged by graffiti so the program can add the location to the list. She noted attending the recent Kenney Center volunteer recognition dinner and was really impacted by the number of hours of community service the Union College students provide to Schenectady. She added the volunteer hours often involve some dirty and difficult work. She noted the Schenectady Pride festival will be taking place on June 20 on the Jay Street Marketplace. She then encouraged residents to register with <http://www.911ai.com> to assist emergency responders with contacting emergency contacts.

Mayor McCarthy – Noted the call boxes have been replaced with a central dispatch. He noted that letters have been sent to the building owners. There has been no response from the building owners and it's currently under review. He added the City has received a \$500,000 grant for neighborhood revitalization, plus an additional \$100,000 for the Land Trust which focuses on owner occupied properties. He noted the Schenectady Police Department has received two donated bullet proof vests for the K-9 department. He added the City has a new business in town called Furlocity which will be located in the New York State BizLab. Regarding the proposed casino host benefit agreement he noted certain proponents are taking positions of convenience. He added especially those who originally opposed the casino coming to Schenectady to begin with. He added the big difference between the Tyre and Schenectady projects is that in Tyre, the Seneca County IDA awarded the project generous incentives. These included a \$16 million

exemption from sales taxes, an exemption from mortgage recording tax worth another \$3.35 million, and property tax savings worth about \$10 million for a total of almost \$30 million. He added the new casino in Schenectady does not include any IDA benefits. The Rivers Casino and Resort in Schenectady is paying 100 percent of sales tax, 100 percent of mortgage recording tax and 100 percent of property tax. He noted the direct payment to the host community is expected to generate over \$8.2 million each year, with \$4.1 million going to the city of Schenectady and \$4.1 million going to Schenectady County, according to the formula established by state law. He added in addition, Schenectady stands to benefit from approximately \$6.7 million in taxes each year from property tax, hotel tax (also known as bed tax) and sales tax. He closed by noting the annual estimated total tax payment to the city of Schenectady/Schenectady County is \$14,900,000. This figure does not include tax payments from the adjacent Mohawk Harbor development.

Ms. King – Noted the Art Festival was a great success. She extended her appreciation to Karen Johnson and all those involved with the event. She added that Jay on Jay is taking place every Thursday on the Jay Street Marketplace from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. She encouraged residents and patrons of downtown to check out the event. She closed by wishing Mayor McCarthy happy birthday.

Adjourned:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Ms. King asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was moved by Mr. Mootoveren and seconded by Mr. Riggi and the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

A true record



By Chad Putman

Schenectady Deputy City Clerk