

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

October 13, 2015

The City Council Meeting was called to order by the City Council President Margaret King at 7:03 p.m. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. King asked Rev. Joe Kelleher to provide the invocation.

Ms. King then called on Cliff Brucker 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, John Ferrari, Margaret King, Ed Kosiur, John Mootooveren, Leesa Perazzo, Marion Porterfield, and Vincent Riggi

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 numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2015-263 – A Resolution Declaring October to be Italian-American Heritage Month. Representatives from the Sons of Italy were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Resolution No. 2015-264 – A Resolution Recognizing the 100th Anniversary of the Sons of Italy Lodge 321. Representatives from the Sons of Italy were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Resolution No. 2015-265 – A Resolution Recognizing “Schenectady’s the Place” to be the Official City Song. Cliff Brucker was on hand and he extended his gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Resolution No. 2015-266 – A Resolution Recognizing the Month of October as Stop Domestic Violence Month. Representatives from the Schenectady Fire Department – Never Fight Alone 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. 2015-267 – A Resolution Declaring the Month of October 2015 to be Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Representatives from the YWCA were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council. Kim Siciliano, Director of Women and Family Services at the YWCA then presented on the High Risk Task Force covering statistics and programming along with two events taking place including Take back the Night on October 22 and the Purple Purse Challenge through the month of October.

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Regarding the Proposed 2016 Budget

Jason Planck, Schenectady – Noted the Fair Housing Coordinator is receiving a \$9,000 pay increase and he asked why? He noted there is a history of pay role increases in the Development office related to this position. He then spoke on the CDBG funds in the budget and noted the Affirmative Action officer is not complying with mandates. He then spoke on the distribution of funding in relation to handicap surcharges and added half goes to the city and the other half to the county. He noted the fund should have around \$28,000 earmarked for disability parking.

Seeing no other speakers come forward, Ms. King declared the public hearing to be closed.

2. Regarding the abandonment of Water Street

Steve Strichamen, Zoning Officer – City of Schenectady – Noted the abandonment of Water Street is in relation to the beginning of the expansion of Liberty Park. He added this has been a two part study process which included the adoption of a resolution by City Council along with securing grant funding to cover expenses for the renovations.

Seeing no other 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 September 28, 2015 Council meeting as submitted by the City Clerk; Ms. Porterfield made a motion to amend the minutes to reflect the Hamilton Hill Neighborhood Association hosted its monthly meeting (not annual meeting); Mr. Kosiur made a motion to approve the minutes with the amendment, Mr. Mootooveren seconded the motion.

Communications Presented to the City Council for Monday October 13, 2015

Official:

From the Mayor a list of appointments dated October 13, 2015.

General:

None

Petitions:

A petition to reconstruct Oxford Place & Maryland Avenue streets

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

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. Ferrari.

Consent Agenda –

- Resolution No. 2015 – 268Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2015 – 269Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2015 – 270Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2015 – 271Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2015 – 272Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2015 – 273Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2015 – 274Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2015 – 275Adopted Unanimously

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Ms. King 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:

Dave Monty, Schenectady – Noted he owns Side by Side Storage at 1524 Crane Street and has invested more than \$1 million dollars into the business and surrounding landscaping. He noted the business will be hosting an open house and ribbon cutting on October 17th from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. He noted new black top, handicap access and further development to come. He noted the event is free and open to the public.

Jason Planck, Schenectady – Noted that October is Disability Employment Awareness Month adding it’s important to bring awareness to the number of jobs not in the city. He noted there is a seven percent participation rate related to contracts and hiring persons with disabilities. He added Schenectady County is the worst in the state related to hiring persons with disabilities. He noted the Gazette reported that Metroplex falsified documents related to the jobs report adding that Metroplex was not recouping project funding as well. He added the jobs report did not indicate if the individuals lived in the city. He noted when looking at affirmative action, both the mayor and Council’s appointment to Metroplex need to act on behalf of the mayor and council. He added it would be important for those appointed to Metroplex to take a look at what is actually going on. He closed by noting the NYS Comptroller verified that Metroplex did not create 7,000 jobs.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady – “If my comments gave anyone the impression that I did not like the flower baskets hanging from the downtown light poles that was not my intent. I object to the mix that was added to the original plan. This summer, the poles were to feature live flowers in hanging baskets. Someone wanted American flags, so the flags were being on the poles. Others wanted banners and their wishes were fulfilled. Consequently, the downtown was left with honky-tonk. It doesn’t happen in other nearby cities. It shouldn’t happen here. Which brings me to another point; I want to correct the statement that I made during the last City Council meeting. It was an honest mistake. The comments refer to the four picnic tables introduced on the lawn of City Hall this year. It was dust when I left the Committee meeting on September 21, 2015. From my vantage point at the top of the steps, it looked like three tables were painted a rust color and one set was painted blue and I so stated in my remarks. Such is not the case. When I saw the sets in daylight, every table was painted a different color. That is even more objectionable. Those

colors belong in a kindergarten classroom. The colors are out-of-place on the lawn of a stately, historic building. Once again, no thought was given to the beauty of the surroundings. Someone had an idea and it ended up in the wrong place. Another point at the Committee meeting last week, an agenda item was about streets and sidewalks. No one mentioned beautification or the final look of a finished project. The City Engineer stressed functionalism and Council members talked cost. As I mentioned two weeks ago, the city needs a beautification committee, people who will embrace the comprehensive plan and make all neighborhoods look beautiful.”

Joy Hall, Schenectady – Noted concerns about city sidewalks and added that gaps are unsafe for pedestrians. She asked the city to fix the sidewalks before someone gets hurt.

Mohamed Hafez, Schenectady – Noted on October 10 he attended a coffee hour with the mayor at Ferrari’s and asked questions about what services have been provided to Mt. Pleasant. He noted he asked questions about the casino and police presence in Mt. Pleasant. He noted he asked for details about the money Mt Pleasant has received for parks along with street and sidewalks improvements. He asked why Mt. Pleasant is not getting the investment dollars like he sees in downtown. He then noted the mayor addressed his rental certificate challenges as a landlord. He added landlords challenge the improper enforcement of the law including only allowing inspections by the consent of the landlord, tenant or a judge’s order. He added Code Endorsement should not be able to penalize a landlord for not allowing inspections which he said is a protected right under the constitution. He closed by noting miss-information was provided at the Bellevue debate related to crime levels around the Pittsburg, PA casino.

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. Perazzo – Noted Schenectady’s Puzzle’s Bakery & Café was featured on the national CBS nightly news on Saturday. She noted that Puzzles employs persons with disabilities including autism. She added the business is a great model for the city and nation. She noted Give Graffiti the Brush wrapped up its 3rd season. She added the last project including covering graffiti off Michigan Avenue near the I-890 off ramp. She noted she often gets asked about how often locations get re-tagged and she said most stay clean otherwise program participants will go back and cover them up again. She then noted she has been asked to be Chair of the Vale Park Task Force which has been inactive in the last couple years. She noted the city has placed lights back up in the park which recently hosted volunteers for National Day of Service. She noted 40 Union College students were in attendance and helped with painting and raking the park. She then added to Steve Strichman’s presentation noting the berms will be removed in the near future and she is aware of other clean-up activities that have taken place at Liberty Park as well. Regarding the picnic tables in front of city hall she noted they were donated by Schenectady Pride and that she has observed them being used by employees, families and residents on a regular basis. She closed by thanking the pride committee for the donation.

Mr. Riggi – Noted he hopes residents will attend the Side by Side Storage open house taking place this weekend. He then expressed caution to residents related to a set of phone calls he has received from a group reporting to have an affiliation with the IRS. He noted the call is recorded and encourages residents to follow up by calling another number. He noted he suspects this is a scam and he cautioned residents from responding to the call.

Mr. Porterfield – Noted there will be a forum on gun violence prevention to be held on October 14th at 7:00 p.m at the 1st United Methodist Church on State Street. She added the Director of Neighborhood Safety from Richmond, CA. will be presenting on a program which has been

shown to reduce gun violence in his community. She added the forum is free and open to the public.

Mr. Mootoveren – In response to an earlier speaker he noted Mt. Pleasant has undergone the following improvements; (15) blighted properties demolished including 1150 Cutler Street, (48) home improvement and renovation projects worth over 1 million dollars, 28.4 percent of the roads in Mt. Pleasant have been paved or are scheduled to be paved in 2016, and Quackenbush Park will benefit from 45,000 dollars in new playground equipment which comes out of the 2015 capital budget. He closed by extending the appreciation of the Schenectady Premiere Cricket League to the mayor and Councilwoman Perazzo for participating in their award presentation event over the weekend.

Mayor McCarthy – Extended his appreciation to the City Council for their ongoing review of the budget. He then extended his sympathies to the family and friends of Ed O'Brien who passed away recently after a long battle with cancer. He added that Ed was a great asset to the community and will be missed.

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. Kosiur and seconded by Mr. Mootoveren and the meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

A true record



By Chad Putman

Schenectady Deputy City Clerk