

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

February 13, 2017

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

Ms. Perazzo extended her sympathies to the family of City Code Inspector Eric Shilling who passed away suddenly. She then asked Rev. Hawk Stone to provide the invocation following a moment of silence.

Ms. Perazzo then called on Nancy Peterson 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 Edward Kosiur, John Mootooveren , Leesa Perazzo, John Polimeni, Marion Porterfield, Vincent Riggi and Karen Zalewski-Wildzunas

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

PUBLIC HEARING:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 23, 2017 Council meeting as submitted by the City Clerk; Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunas made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Mootooveren seconded the motion.

Communications Presented to the City Council for Monday, February 13, 2017

Official:

None

General:

A letter from Schenectady Veterans of WWII thanking the city for funding dated January 24, 2017

Petitions:

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Porterfield, Health & Recreation - "The Health and Recreation Committee held two meetings for the purpose of discussing the use of Grout Park to play Cricket. Meetings were scheduled on Friday, January 27, 2017 at 5:30 PM in room 110 and Monday, January 30, 2017, at 5:30 PM in room 110. These were public meetings called by Councilwoman Porterfield, Chair of Health and Recreation. The January 27, 2017 meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm, present were H&R Committee Chair, Ms. Porterfield and Committee member Mr. Mootooveren, Committee member Mr. Riggi was excused. Also present were Council members, Mr. Kosiur and Mr. Polimeni. The Upstate New York Cricket Association who is currently using the grounds was represented by Mr. Steve Weisse. He provided information on how the grounds were used in 2016, including fees that were collected and how they were spent. Mr. Weisse also responded to questions raised by Committee members and other Council members present. The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 pm. The January 30, 2017 meeting was .

called to order at 5:32 pm, present were H&R Committee Chair, Ms. Porterfield and Committee member Mr. Mootoveren, Committee member Mr. Riggi was excused. Also present were Council members, Mr. Kosiur, Mr. Polimeni and Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunas. The following cricket teams were present, Schenectady Softball Cricket Association, represented by Mr. Onkar Singh, Premier Cricket Association represented by Albert Morris and Capital District Cricket Association represented by Ashok Adikoppula and Vishnu Kiran. There were also members of the public present. None of the teams that attended the January 30, 2017 meeting are currently using the grounds on a regular basis. Each team representative was asked which days they would like use of the fields and provided an opportunity to express any other concerns. The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 pm. The Chair of Health & Recreation received two written communications which were shared with all Council members and the entire City Council received an email on this subject. Throughout the discussions, everyone was in agreement that the desired outcome is to make the best use of the field by scheduling as many Cricket teams as possible to play on a regular basis. The Health and Recreation Committee will hold additional meetings to discuss concerns, review the information provided to us and bring our findings and recommendations to the entire Council Committee."

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS)

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

Seeing no speakers come before the City Council, Ms. Perazzo declared the privilege of the floor, regarding the Legislative Agenda, to be closed.

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

Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunas made a motion that Council approves the Consent Agenda and the motion was seconded by Ms. Porterfield.

Consent Agenda –

- Resolution No. 2017 – 21Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2017 – 22Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2017 – 23Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2017 – 24Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2017 – 25Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2017 – 26Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2017 – 27Adopted 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:

Tony Buonome, Schenectady - Noted concern related to the recent swastika graffiti in the city. He added if people understood the context of such images this would not have happened. He hopes the vandals will be caught. Regarding the recent snowfall he noted concern related to city snowplows pushing snow on top of cleared sidewalks. He added that he brings up this concern every year and nothing is done about it.

Bob Corliss, Schenectady – Noted plans to speak in support of sanctuary cities and referenced recent mass protests against the Trump administration. He added many of the protests are focused on a recent immigration order which has been challenged by states and blocked by the courts. He asked what

the City of Schenectady can do in relation to becoming a sanctuary city, which he added is mostly symbolic. He noted a look at the history of immigration and its impact on the country and Schenectady is significant. He noted several municipalities have passed legislation in support of immigrants including Bethlehem, New York. He asked the City Council to consider a resolution that would ensure the police department would not engage in enforcing these new immigration laws.

Marva Isaacs, Schenectady - Noted concerns related to city snowplows pushing snow around area fire hydrants. She added she cleared a fire hydrant near her home twice and the city plow covered it back up with snow both times. She asked who is going to keep clearing the snow out around the hydrants?

Jaya Sundaresh, Schenectady - Noted she is a reporter with The Alt and is present to speak in support of Schenectady as a sanctuary city. She noted she is a daughter of immigrants. She added that immigrants are hardworking regardless of status and that other local communities including Bethlehem have taken such actions with overwhelming support. She noted that she reported the Bethlehem story and that some people at the meeting spoke from a place of hate. She added this is why there needs to be sanctuary cities and she asked the Council to do the right thing.

Jamaica Miles, Schenectady - "The City of Schenectady is a city of diverse racial and cultural history. We have current residents who were born in different cities, states and countries. We have residents who practice different faiths and religions. Our diversity is, and our people are something to be acknowledge, embraced and protected. We are a city of people and a city with a history of intentionally welcoming immigrants. We can no longer be silent and side with the oppressor. We must be intentional in our treatment and protection of all individuals regardless of their zip code, race, or immigration status. I stand with all people of color. I stand with refugees. I stand with the Muslim community. I stand with immigrants. I demand a government that leads with justice and equality for all intentionally through its policies, procedures and laws. The President, Donald Trump has voiced numerous untrue stereotypes of refugees and immigrants, stroked fear and xenophobia, and used immigrants as scapegoats for structural economic problems. He has pledged to deport between 2-3 million immigrants, rescind executive orders that have provided deportation relief for tens of thousands of immigrants brought here as children, proposed a blanket ban on Muslim immigration into the country, as well as a Muslim registry. We are calling on you, our elected officials and law enforcement leadership, to join with us in rejecting the harmful rhetoric and policy proposals of the President. We want you to show that Schenectady is committed to protecting and supporting all communities, including its immigrant and refugee communities, and delivering non-discriminatory services to all of its residents. We urge you to declare Schenectady a place of sanctuary. Specifically we ask you to do the following: (1) State publicly that you reject the President's statements and characterization of immigrants, refugees, and Muslims as criminal and suspect, and that you welcome and value them as parts of our community. (2) State publicly and enforce through legislation and policy that our city law enforcement will not collaborate with federal immigration law enforcement (i.e. ICE, Border Patrol, etc.) to arrest or detain immigrants. (3) State publicly that, should a registry of Muslims or immigrants of any kind be implemented by the Federal Government, that the city will refuse to comply. The City of Schenectady must ensure protection and support for everyone regardless of their zip code, race, or immigration status. We trust that in this time of hatred and threats that you will do the right thing, and protect and defend all our communities to the best of your abilities. Thank you."

Robin Schnell, Schenectady - Noted she is not a resident of the City of Schenectady, but lives in the county. She added that she hopes Schenectady County can do as Albany County did related to sanctuary status. She noted that she teaches English as a second language and that she has heard stories of survival as families have fled oppression. She added that if she were to have an interaction with a police officer, as a white female, it's unlikely they would check her tax records or immigration status.

She noted no one should worry about that. She added that every family member may not have the same immigration status and if something were to happen they should not fear for their family member. She added that in cases of domestic violence that federal immigration officers could become involved, pulled in by the abuser against the victim.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady - "This is the picture of a paved street that the mayor chose to show for his State of the City address. Why wasn't a picture taken of my street so that the taxpayers could see how the city really fixes streets? I wonder how many people in the room would have given the mayor a standing ovation if he had fixed their streets the way he fixed mine - half new and half old? Another picture the mayor showed was this one of Steinmetz Park with a patch of ground and flowers. Why didn't he show a picture of the exposed, galvanized heating tunnel running across the ceiling in the multi-purpose room. Would the invited guests put such a thing in their family rooms? The city dumped it in the Goose Hill neighborhood and it doesn't belong there. The mayor also showed a picture of the Smart City Advisory Commission. One of Mr. Morris' job requirements should be to review the tape of City Council and Committee meetings. Then he would know the kind of product Open Stage Media is producing. Mr. Spring needs to get rid of the monstrosity of the Oneida School campus. Whoever signed off on that sign went to ugly college. Lastly, on the same night of the State of the City address, Council voted to settle five law suits. One was for more than \$1.5 million dollars. Is that why taxpayers didn't receive a bigger tax deduction because Council needed the casino money to pay off a lawsuit? There are lawsuit settlements on every Council agenda. Lawsuits are filed because someone has been damaged. Why is the city doing so much damage in the community? The settlement costs are not mentioned in the State of the City address. Folks you are bluffing your way through life."

Seeing no other speakers come before the City Council, Ms. Perazzo declared the privilege of the floor, regarding general City business, to be closed.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

Mr. Riggi – Encouraged residents to apply for their senior exemption in the Assessment office before the deadline. He noted that last year there were no issues with snow plowing due to the mild winter. This year however he added a reminder for residents to comply with parking restrictions on priority streets and to use off street parking when available. He noted that cars are plowed in on Crane Street, which is a priority street and this should not be. He asked residents to respect the city workers and allow them to do their job. He added that he received a positive call on a city driver, number 505, adding a resident had observed the driver was courteous and helpful. He then extended his condolences to the family of City Code Inspector Eric Shilling who passed away unexpectedly over the weekend. He added that he will be missed. He closed by wishing everyone a happy Valentine's Day and encouraged them to hug their sweetheart.

Ms. Porterfield - Extended her condolences to the family of City Code Inspector Eric Shilling who passed away over the weekend. She added that he will be missed. She then thanked the speakers for sharing their concerns and adding to the discussion. She added a judge recently ruled against the discriminatory immigration policy. She then reminded residents this is tax season and they can call 211 for information on free tax filing assistance. She added VITA sites and trained volunteers are available in the city and the service is free based on eligibility.

Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunus - Noted the new Rivers Casino opened this past week and it was a huge success.

Commissioner Bennett - Noted Mayor McCarthy is at a mayors conference in Albany and unable to attend the meeting tonight. He then extended his condolences to the family of City Code Inspector Eric Shilling following his unexpected death. He noted that Eric worked to

address issues in the Code Department and had recently finished a massive project with bringing the new Rivers Casino online. He noted that Eric and the Code Department signed off on countless elements of the casino project in order for the casino to open on time.

Mr. Falotico - "The Mayor couldn't be here tonight, but in light of the interest in immigration issues he asked me to give a summary of some actions the City has taken to support immigration policy at the federal level. In 2014 President Obama issued an executive order on immigration. It offered a legal reprieve to the undocumented parents of U.S. citizens and permanent residents who've resided in the country for at least five years. It also would have expanded the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program that allowed young immigrants who arrived as children to apply for a deportation deferral and who are now here legally. This executive order was immediately challenged in court, with opponents seeking a preliminary injunction to prevent the executive order from going into effect. In January of 2015 we joined an amicus brief filed by a number of different Mayors in the case State of Texas v. United States of America. This brief came from a coalition called "Cities United for Immigration Action" which was supporting President Obama's executive order on immigration. The brief opposed a preliminary injunction, and supported the executive order. Despite our objection, the preliminary injunction was granted. After that, we joined another amicus brief filed when the case was appealed to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. This happened in April of 2015, and in May of that year the Court, by 2-1 decision, denied the stay of the injunction again. Following that decision, the Dept. of Justice appealed to the Supreme Court. We joined that amicus filing in December of 2015, which supported the Court taking the case and in March of 2016 we joined the brief for the actual case argument. The case ended in a tie, so the lower court decision was upheld. Following that, in July of 2016 the Mayor signed on to an open letter to the next president calling for a commitment to immigration reform in the first 100 days of his or her administration. The Mayor asked me to give this information today so the people here would know that the this is not an issue which Schenectady has ignored, and in fact the Mayor and City have been an advocating about this issue for years."

Ms. Perazzo – Noted the Phyllis Bornt Library is celebrating its one-year anniversary on February 25 at 12:00 p.m. She noted the Council is planning to discuss the sanctuary city topic further and will be reviewing related materials.

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 Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunas and seconded by Ms. Porterfield. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

A true record



By Chad Putman

Schenectady Deputy City Clerk