

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL – JUNE 9, 2008**

The meeting was called to order by Council President Margaret C. King at 7:00 P.M. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. King called upon Rev. Bill Levering, First Reformed Church, to deliver the Invocation.

Ms. King then called upon Chuck Thorne to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Present – Councilmembers Joseph L. Allen, Denise K. Brucker,
Mark W. Blanchfield, Gary R. McCarthy, Thomas
Della Sala, Barbara Blanchard and Margaret C. King

Absent - None.

Also Present – Mayor Brian U. Stratton, City Clerk Carolyn Friello
and Corporation Counsel L. John Van Norden, Esq.

At this point in the meeting, Ms. King asked if there were no objections, she would like to take Agenda Item #13 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2008-96

Adopted Unanimously

Mr. Blanchfield invited Guy Semitelli and Chuck Thorne to come inside the rail to accept a resolution recognizing and naming June 21, 2008 as “Upper Union Street Strawberry Festival Day” in the City of Schenectady. They thanked the City Council for the resolution.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Brucker moved that the minutes of the City Council meeting of May 27, 2008 be approved as submitted by the City Clerk. It was seconded by Mr. Blanchfield. Hearing no objections, Ms. King declared the minutes approved as submitted.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Official –

From the Mayor, a list of appointments.

From the Utilities and Facilities Department, two letters accepting the bids of and awarding the contracts to:

- Slack Chemical for “Sodium Hypochlorite Bulk Liquid” in the amount of \$20,376.00; and
- Vulcan Signs for “Traffic Signs” in the amount of \$9,195.95.

General (Public Announcement):

The Hamilton Hill Neighborhood Association will hold its Neighborhood Meeting on Thursday, June 19, 2008 at Petta’s Restaurant, 134 Duane Ave. at 7:00 P.M. The Guest Speaker will be Mathew B. Tully, Esq. from the Schenectady County SPCA.

PETITIONS:

With 105 signatures from the Duryee Memorial AME Zion Church to change Hulett Street to one-way from Albany Street to Hamilton Street and to rename it “Harriet Tubman Drive” (Referred to John Coluccio, Signal Control).

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Ms. Blanchard stated that the Governmental Operations Committee met. She invited Antonio Ferrari to come inside the rail to explain Channel 16 Film Festival. Mr. Ferrari explained how he would like to do a film named “Schenectady As Seen By”. Antonio is an award winning documentarian.

Mr. Blanchfield stated that the Finance Committee met. He explained Agenda Item #7 which is at a great interest rate of 3.5%. Agenda Items #12, #14 and #15 is simply a bookkeeping issue.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the Public Safety Committee met and we discussed the Police Department and outstanding warrants. It’s not my goal to generate headlines out of this or to focus on what I would call obvious problems in the

Police Department. We are going to have an ongoing methodical discussion and look at the Police Department and how public safety functions. We will do this over the next several months. When I expect a discussion – maybe a little debate to occur is when we do the budget and how this Council sets the policy and where we put the money and where are we going to address some obvious problems. It's going to be an on-going systematic, methodical process. We are not looking for quick solutions. There is a number of things that require the Committee's attention daily. We all know that things aren't what we want, but, we can't lose sight of our end goal. We want a department that we can be proud of. We want a department that's looked upon, respected and a leader in Law Enforcement. We will slowly get there. The end result is going to be something we can be proud of.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS):

Ms. King invited all who wished to address the City Council on any item of the Legislative Agenda to come forward. Seeing no speakers, Ms. King declared the Privilege of the Floor on the Legislative Agenda closed.

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

Consent Agenda –

Ordinance No. 2008-06	Introduced Only
Resolution No. 2008-97	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-98	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-99	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-100	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-101	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-102	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-103	Adopted Unanimously

Consent Agenda (Continued) –

Resolution No. 2008-104	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-105	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-106	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-107	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS25	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS26	Adopted Unanimously

With Unanimous Consent –

Resolution No. 2008-108	Adopted Unanimously
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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:

William Roth, P.O. Box 1054, spoke regarding the elderly being abused by the State Agencies and case workers. He suggested a “Watch Dog Agency”.

Pat Zollinger, 150 Clement Ave., stated that for 35 years, these Council Meetings have been broadcast on SACC-TV and I think that I have been a rather faithful watcher and attendee over at least the last 10 of them. And for 35 years, there have been many pretty colorful characters on both sides of this rail. I have agreed with some and disagreed with some, but mostly, I enjoyed hearing what the people had to say. But for 35 years now, it seems like we have gone through the same issues over and over again. Not much has really changed in our city except that we are all 35 years older. We have got Center City, a deco-art building that could become something else next week. It used to be an ice skating and a hockey rink. Then, I think it was a soccer field for a while. Then, it was supposed to become part of Mildred Elley, then something else, and now, I guess that it’s going to become the downtown residential YMCA. Until next week, maybe. For 35 years that I know of, Hamilton Hill is the most dangerous place in the city. The only new thing here is that it’s even more dangerous and Mont

Pleasant and Bellevue are fast becoming dangerous places too. So, it's looking like that particular problem is growing and I don't think compact, fluorescent light bulbs and water saving, shower heads is going to solve those problems. Besides, now – we have got to worry about where to dump those compact, fluorescent bulbs. And, you want to talk about the Police Department? Times have changed in our city; 35 years ago, we didn't have the gangs and the guns we do now. People actually respected the police. I could walk down the street and not worry about some pit bull getting loose and killing me. So instead of politically spinning the few bad guys in the department, it would be nice to hear the Mayor tell us about his ideals, and implement new ways to deal with crime. Something – in addition to that Gun Amnesty Program that wasn't. The trash fee is a great gimmick for collecting money under the guise of it being a user fee. It's not a user fee. I can't say that enough. It's not separated into its own fund nor is it paid for only by the monies collected. You can call a tax anything you want. That doesn't make it anything other than a tax. The Arts and Alcohol District, also known as Downtown, Proctors, Movie land and many other Metroplex milestones, like \$3,000,000.00 shovel ready lots, zero interest loans and a quarter of a million dollar grants for a business to move here from Rotterdam. I would have to reiterate Center City and also bring up Canal Square except that I can't help but crack up when I think about it. And, I have to say that even though I think downtown looks real nice, it still looks pretty empty most of the time. These are and have been the problems of our city. And for 35 years, there are still problems, even with this vindicated administration. So, I would really like to see a new recruitment plan put on by this Council. In addition to recruiting new cops and minority firefighters, I would like to see this Council recruit new colorful characters to speak at our Council Meetings. I am sure you all know at least one. So, let's all do our part to keep SACC-TV's ratings up and bring a few more laughs in the hearts and homes of the viewing public.

Harry Brand, 2108 Van Rensselaer Drive, said – I was glad to see the “junk yard” on Oregon Ave. cleaned up. Also, you don't have to remind us to insulate our homes and use energy, efficient lights – if we could afford it, we would do it. Tell us how you are saving money. Also, discontinue taking city vehicles home. Clamp down on Unions and get things done in the city.

Vince Riggi, 2138 Campbell Ave., stated that the City School District has leased the old Marion Academy. It will be open again as a City School so the Crossing Guard may need to be moved back there. In regard to Agenda Item #6, it's a voluntary basis thing. Is it going to work? Is it going to cut down on sick time? The only way to do that is to cut the benefits. We need to get the police back on

the street; that will get them exercise and save on gas. In regard to city cars, it is time to rein this in. This is a big cost. Also at the last meeting, we had a procedural call and I congratulate Barbara Blanchard for asking that the Privilege of the Floor be opened back up. She should have been able to speak. That's sad.

Jason Planck, Schenectady resident, stated that the Disability Access Festival will be on Friday, June 27th. We received a \$500.00 donation for Marketing and the Media.

Janet Given Chen, 809 Karenwald Lane, stated that the friends of the Woodlawn Preserve was started in 2004. There has been a lot of positive return as a result. In 2007, the city was given a grant to study the Preserve. We are holding a cleanup on June 21st. Every time I go in there, the topography changes dramatically, in part due to ATV's. There's a lot of activity going on there and most of it isn't good. I know that signage has been discussed. Some of us want the signage changed to allow passive activity; we would like to know the status of the grant and we have an e-mail address – friendswp@g.com.

Andres Grifelt, 1047 Phoenix Ave., said – “Thanks” to the Mayor and Council for the fiscal management of the city after years of deficit. that's very impressive. Schenectady is turning around, but, not everyone is enjoying this new prosperity. We need Community Benefits Agreements. Donna Jones will be organizing a community coalition and we will investigate which project in Schenectady would be a good one to start with. We will be looking to you to partner with us to see that this gets started.

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

MISCELLANEOUS:

Mr. Allen stated that now that we have a number of new Building Inspectors, I still haven't seen much of a change in Code Inspections. I want to see a difference, not just to hear what they are doing. There's a short window to get these things done. In regard to the Woodlawn Preserve, we have talked about putting signs up prohibiting motorized vehicles. Our police needs to monitor that area. Also, I commend the people of ARISE to monitor jobs in the city. Also, I'm very concerned about the Residency Clause. We have to stop hiring people who don't live in the city. Also, we need more traffic signals designed for those who have impaired vision.

Ms. Blanchard stated that the Silver Diner has finally been sold. It opened in 1937. It is a vintage 1918 Pullman Car. When Ruby owned it for 3 years in a row, he won the award for the best diner. Also, Ms. Zollinger, the bulbs can be brought to the County Waste on their recycling days or Wolbergs on Erie Blvd. Also, if we don't avert climate changes, the things that we deal with daily won't matter a bit.

Mr. Blanchfield stated that this is a busy time in Schenectady for community activities involving children and exercise. We have had the McDonald Family run for breast cancer, the Children's Art Festival; we had the Vale Park \$5,000 Run. We have a lot of other things coming up. Also, school will be getting out and I remind people to be extra vigilant driving through the neighborhoods. Also, children need to watch out and don't dash out into the streets. The parents need to remind their children of this.

The Mayor said – Councilman Allen, I will have Keith Lamp get the list of compliance rate on Code Enforcement so you can do a visual tour of the before and after. We are not done. There's still a lot that needs to be brought into compliance. It's a work in progress. Also, thanks to everyone who sponsored or played in "Hook a Kid on Golf" Tournament last Tuesday. We raised \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00. This program teaches, primarily, underprivileged children how to play golf. With the money raised, we will be able to teach kids throughout the Summer about golf and team playing.

Ms. King stated that the Stockade Garden Tour is this weekend. The tickets are available at Arthur's Market. The next "Art Night" which is the 3rd Friday will be the start of "Rockin In the Circle".

ADJOURNMENT:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Ms. King declared the meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

**BY CAROLYN FRIELLO
CITY CLERK**