

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL – MAY 23RD, 2011**

The meeting was called to order by Council President Gary R. McCarthy at 7:15 P.M. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Mr. McCarthy called upon Rev. Bill Levering, First Reformed Church, to deliver the Invocation.

Mr. McCarthy then called upon Deputy City Clerk, 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, Carl Erikson, Margaret C. King,
Thomas Della Sala, Barbara Blanchard and Gary R. McCarthy

Absent – Denise K. Brucker

Also Present – City Clerk Eileen M. Versaci and Corporation Counsel, L. John
Van Norden, Esq.,

At this point in the meeting Acting Mayor McCarthy asked if there were no objections, he would like to call upon anyone involved in the Central Park, A Diamond Cleanup to come forward. There were no objections. Acting Mayor McCarthy gave Certificates of Thanks to all those present.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Erikson moved that the minutes of the City Council meeting of April 25, 2011 and May 9, 2011 be approved as submitted by the Deputy City Clerk. It was seconded by Ms. King. Hearing no objections, Mr. McCarthy declared the minutes approved as submitted.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Official –

From the Office of the Mayor, a list of Appointments (dist. 5/23/11).

General –

From Bellevue Preservations, Inc., three upcoming events:

Bellevue Community wide garage sale will be held Saturday and Sunday June 4th and 5th, 2011.

Third Annual Chicken Barbecue will be held Saturday June 11th, 2011.

For applications, tickets or information, call Jacquie Hurd at (518) 393-0403.

The Organization's monthly meeting will be held Thursday, June 9th, 7 pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Parish Hall, Fairview Avenue, Election of Officers will take place.

Petitions: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Della Sala - explained Agenda Item 12. Fire Chief Della Rocco has negotiated a Purchase Agreement with Rotterdam Fire District 2 for a 1992 1500 GPM Pierce Lance Pumper for the sum of \$45,000. This amount includes 42 AV-2000 SCBA face pieces. I want to thank the Fire Chief for this excellent purchase and a new apparatus would cost us over \$700,000. Thanks Chief.

Mr. Erikson - I would like to bring to your attention, a Work Shop on May 26. The reason I bringing this up, this is for small businesses that are wondering how I get in, how do I sell my services, how do I sell my product to my local government. This is a seminar to learn how to do that and for the taxpayer this is good because we have more competition and better pricing, when we get one BID, we have to go with that one BID and that is not very good and it will save us money to have multiple Bids. This workshop is every Thursday for the next four weeks May 26th and June 2nd, 9th and 16th. There are different topics but they are all small business concerns. If you have any questions contact Affirmative Action Office at 388-4171 ext. 4171 or the Schenectady Chamber of Commerce at 372-5656 and this is for all small businesses who want to sell their services or product to a government entity, this is for you. I encourage anyone out there that has been thinking about it to at least go to the seminar and get some information. Thank you.

Mr. Allen - I just want to bring up that the Golf Advisory Board met this past Friday and I think we accomplished a few things, we pin pointed some problems and some ideas on where we go from here. This is a real talented group that wanted to address some of the problems; it should definitely improve the conditions at the Golf Course. I was happy to be there and observe their operation of taking the bull by the horns for the Golf Course. Thank you.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR: (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS)

Mr. McCarthy invited all who wished to address the City Council on any item of the Legislative Agenda to come forward. Seeing none, Mr. McCarthy declared the Privilege of the Floor on the Legislative Agenda closed.

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

Consent Agenda –

Resolution No. 2011-105	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-106	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-107	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-108	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-109	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-110	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-111	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-112	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-113	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-114	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-115	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-116	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-117	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-118	Adopted Unanimously

With Unanimous Consent -

Ordinance No. 2011-12	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-CS-08	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-CS-09	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2011-119	Adopted Unanimously

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR: (CITY BUSINESS)

Mr. McCarthy 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:

Marion Porterfield - Schenectady, N Y - I would like to talk about some of the comments made at the May 9th, Council Meeting about Hamilton Hill, comparing it to other parts of the City and encroaching on other parts of the City. As a resident of Hamilton Hill, I feel compelled to talk about that. They talked about marijuana in the Hill, like all these things are happening there. I do want to say for the record, there are good people in all neighborhoods including Hamilton Hill, being low income or poor is not a crime. Crime is a Cancer, that Cancer will spread and when it happens in certain places and it is tracked it tends to spread out. In other words is no one does anything about it, it tends to spread. If you

look at the police blotters, the crime that happens on Hamilton Hill, most of the perpetrators come from someplace else and they claim that this is an easier place to commit crime. Now as a community and as neighborhoods we have to work together to arrest this problem. We are making progress with Weed and Seed and we do not want to lose the progress that we have made in our community. Today I read in the newspaper about some paving that was supposed to be done someplace else audit was done in Hamilton Hill, I do not know if there is any truth to that or not. What I do know is that the community that continues to advocate for itself should be applauded. How can we improve our neighborhoods, I offer this. Envision a better Neighborhood, hope for the best and then work for it. We would be glad to share with other neighborhoods what we have accomplished, because we want all parts of the Cities to do well. Also, from this podium it was stated that a large sum of money was earmarked for Weed and Seed, well that is not true, but if it is, "Show me the Money". Thank you.

Mary McClaine - Schenectady – Here it is folks. Study: City tops the list for taxes, we all knew it. The Gazette just confirmed it. How did we get here? Our City Council allowed it to happen because they did not enforce the residency law. Approx 2/3's of our firemen live outside the City, So, too, for about 1/2 of the police force. Most of Schenectady's department heads do not live in the City. The majority of teachers live some place else. Other City workers are moving out of town. These numbers represent a lot of people who are tapping into a single financial source and not putting anything into it. Some one told me the taxes on her house are \$14,000 a year. Times that amount by the number of firemen, policemen, teachers, department heads and others who pay taxes elsewhere and we are talking serious money. The residency law must be enforced. Schenectady needs those tax dollars to operate the City. Last year Council members supported the SCOPE candidates who ran for the school board. All four candidates were elected. This year the school board voted against the residency requirements for teachers. What is so pathetic about this policy is that the acting superintendent encouraged the passage of the school budget. He did not go to Delmar, Catskill, Saratoga, and Glens Falls where his teachers' live. He went to Bellevue, Woodlawn, Schenectady's neighborhoods and the school board president went there too. The City's shortfall cannot be blamed on Albany. Those in charge of the City are doing it. It is time to get real and address the issue of high taxes. Start by cutting back on expenses. Eliminate medical coverage and buy-outs for all part-time elected officials. Propose it in 2011; make it effective for January 1, 2012. Other communities have done it. Schenectady must do it.

Barbara Katz - Downtown Schenectady, NY - I want you to know that people are throwing garbage at the bus stop, cigarette, and food, bottles everything. The Bus Company says that they try to keep the stop on State Street clean. The entire City is going down hill because people don't pick up after themselves.

Tony Buonome - Bellevue - This is the time of year that we start opening our doors and windows open, but with the load music already this year we had to close doors especially with the smoke, open fires, the smoke comes in the windows, something has got to be done. As far as I know we are under contract with Mohawk Ambulance, a City service, someone approached me and said that they were taken to the hospital, from Woodlawn to Ellis Hospital, she got a Bill for \$909.50 and \$852.00 of that was for ambulance service. This is the part that gets me, she had to pay for five miles at \$11.50 per mile, and they are charging \$11.50. This is in the City; the contract is with the City, why are we paying mileage in the City?

Donnie Birch, Jr., - 236 Park Place - I am very emotional, this is something to me, that a bunch of people riding bikes on park trails are getting immediately attention, you are going to sit down with them tomorrow and I come to you guys with real evidence and you can see by Mr. McCarthy's body languages it is unprofessional in it self. I'm a young man, I get very emotional, the cops are worst than the people. It is just hard to believe that I get harassed when I go to the legal office; I get physically pushed out of the door by L. John Van Norden, that part I don't even care because you need to protect the interest of the City. Nobody will deal with me and I have all the evidence of corruption, actually they have been defective for a good many years, actually you are always talking about being short of money and we have over 35 cars going out of the City.

Harry Brand - 2108 Van Rensselaer Drive - I certainly agree with the Council and the Acting Mayor that our streets are in such terrible condition, actually they have been defective for a good many years, actually you are always talking about being short of money and we have over 35 cars going out of the City every day that are taken home and I think that is too many. Now you are selling the Mayor's car, with the salary of \$96,000 we should not have to provide a car. I think we should make a definite cut back in the vehicles going home. Our new Fire Chief lives in Altamont, how many trips a day does he make? No more deals that take place with a handshake. There are so many things in that Charter that needs to be changed, number one, any salary for an elected official should be voted on by the public it should not be decided by you people giving yourself a raise or the Mayor, you people are the same party. It should be the people it is our money we should be able to vote on it. I think the residency law should be enforced within two years, give these people time to sell their property or they have to give up their jobs. Thank You

Kristin Schaf 124 Bruce Street #3, Scotia, N.Y, I am here today to represent the large collective of people that enjoy mountain biking on the SCP trails. We estimate that at least 75-100 people use the trails that have been maintained by the mountain biking community for a variety of recreational and fitness activities. Since this past Tuesday, 46 people who ride their mountain bikes in SCP on a regular basis have given me permission to represent them personally here tonight. We wanted you to know who we are: we are highly educated and employed,

many of us in high tech fields. We are taxpayers and voters. We care about and contribute to our community and the environment; many of us volunteer outside of our work schedules as well. And we wanted to clarify what we do. We ride bicycles. There are no motors, we don't do flips. We just like being out in the woods. The mountain biking community has contributed hundreds of hours to maintaining the trails, including picking up garbage and erosion control. This work is making the trails accessible to the whole community, including joggers, hikers, and dog walkers. Now the trails are a clean, safe and enjoyable place. There are many examples of successful urban mountain bike trail systems: The Don Valley Trails of Toronto, Ontario; Cunningham and Highbridge Parks in NYC, Pine Hill Park in Rutland, VT, The BREC trails in Baton Rouge, LA and the I-5 Colonnade in Seattle, WA. These trail systems provide wholesome recreational and fitness opportunities to people in the community and make the surrounding communities a more attractive place to live and work. Likewise, the SCP trails have become an important asset to Schenectady's community. Not only do the trails provide recreational opportunities for people in the community, they also help attract mountain bikers from around the Capital District. These visitors to Schenectady typically patronize local restaurants and shops after a ride, bringing much needed revenue to the city. Going out for a meal after a ride is standard practice for those of us who live locally as well. We request an official explanation of the concerns regarding the use of the Central Park trails by mountain bikers. We are confident that we will be able to work together with the council to come up with a solution that works for everyone. Thank you. The mountain biking community of Schenectady Central Park.

Vickie Hurewitz - 837 DeCamp Avenue, Schenectady, N Y - I am up here tonight for the enforcement of the littering ordinance. Recently the City of Schenectady organized a cleanup of litter in Central Park, the City did not put the litter in Central Park the citizens did. You can see them walking around and driving around depositing their trash where ever they happen to be, the Eastern Avenue Neighborhood recently had a pickup day and filled 15 bags of garbage and with three days it was back. This behavior is not acceptable and needs to be stopped. I am up here tonight to offer some suggestions on how this may be accomplished. The City of Schenectady has a Littering Ordinance: the first littering offence has a fine of up to \$50.00 and the second has a fine of up to but not exceeding \$500. I understand that this Ordinance is not being enforced by the Schenectady Police Department because it requires the defendant to be booked and taken to the police station and the officers can not do that because they would have to come off patrol and this is not feasible. I would like to supply other solutions, one is Auxiliary Police. In researching this problem I found out about Brookhaven, a City in Ohio, who using Auxiliary Police to issue tickets for littering and they use sanitation workers, animal control offices to issue tickets. They would issue tickets for the first offense \$50.00 and up to \$500.00 and Community Service which would be picking up litter. We all should be picking up litter and stop with the pollution of our planet. Thank you.

Bob Harvey, 702 Plymouth Avenue - I have two issues I would like to discuss; I may go over the three minutes. The first one is in support of Mrs. Hurewitz and her close about the littering in Schenectady. A lot of people are calling us the dirty City rather than the City that lights the halls of the world. I know some Cities in Europe that are much clearer than Schenectady and they have been around a few more hundred years than us. I want to modify Mrs. Hurewitz idea and problem I see as far as booking down at the police station is that it takes a lot of time. Why can't the Ordinance be changed that a ticket is issued or a summons for a later Court date like minor traffic violations, that would seem to solve the problem of how much time it takes to enforce this code and you could use a variety of people to issue those tickets. That's one suggestion. My second issue is about the City of Schenectady as a whole, I think the people that helped clear up Central Park are a magnificence example of what can be done if you care about your community and we need more people to care about our community. I want to introduce a program of "A Culture of Caring" which has been used in other areas, in Oregon it has a clinic which has an "A Culture of Caring", and a big box retailer uses social responsibility and a "Culture of Caring". President Obama spoke at a Tennessee High School and he spoke about a Culture of Caring. If we can get the City Council and other organizations in the City to indorse that idea and bring it down to everyday level and everyone gets involved in caring for your City, you neighbor, the kids at school perhaps we can get more of an enthusiasm response in the City and clean it up. I would like to see something like that introduce. Thank you.

Miriam Cajuste - Schenectady, N Y - I am the Affirmative Action Manager for the County and the City of Schenectady. I want to continue on what Mr. Erikson mentioned about the Small Business Workshop, inviting anyone and everyone who has a small business in the City of Schenectady to joy us for this small business workshop. It is beneficial for us to have these sessions so that you as a business owner whether you want to do business with the City or County of Schenectady or the State of New York, we are inviting you to come and learn. You might want to learn this now before you get yourself into a situation, like you find that three months after you have provided the service you have not been paid, forgetting the fact that we don't pay immediately after services rendered. You might want to also want to come and learn that the commodity that you are offering to the City, County or State may not be used by them and will not purchase from you. So we are encouraging you to come to this Workshop. So if you have a small business, be it a woman owned business or a minority owned business, we are encouraging you to come to this Workshop. This workshop is very beneficial and we urge you to join us. There is a small fee for this Workshop, it is \$5.00, if you are pre-registering, and this is so we know how many people are going to be at this Workshop. If you have any question please call me at 388-4233 ext. 4171.

Seeing no other speakers to come before the City Council, Mr. McCarthy declared the Privilege of the Floor (City Business) closed.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Mr. Della Sala - Thank you Mr. President, last week I happened to pick up a copy of Capital Region Living magazine it was the "best of" issue, it honors the best businesses in the Capital Region. Six Schenectady businesses were identified and I wanted to single them out tonight. Best Theatre in the Capital Region - Proctor's; Best Appliance Store - Johnny Marcella's; Best Jeweler - Northeast Jewelry; Best Sandwich Shop - Gershon's; Best Cajun Food is Cafe Nola; Best Restaurant is Apertivo. There are a number of businesses identified in the runner up category: The Bow Tie Movie Theatre, The Open Door Book Store; Ferri's Formals; Our Green Market, Uncle Sam's Candy, Villa Italia Bakery, Mike's Hot Dogs, Perrecca's Bread, Bombers Burrito's, The Blue Ribbon for good Greek Food and Cornell's for Italian Food. I wanted to acknowledge those businesses and it is always nice to remember all the good things we have in the City and I encourage everyone to patronize these businesses. Thank You.

Mr. Erikson - Mr. Della Sala thanks, now I'm hungry. It is good to hear that a regional magazine mentioned so many of Schenectady establishments. One of the things I want to talk about is the littering Ms. Hurewitz was talking about, maybe some of her suggestion could be considered, hauling someone down to the station seems like and harrowing task, but there is definitely something that needs to be done. This is a very big problem and it lowers the value of our property in our neighborhoods. Thank you.

Mr. Allen - I have noticed lately that people are storing their garbage in the front of their houses; I have talked about this problem for years. Those cans are to be stored in the back of your house out of site, in your garage, in your cellar, not anywhere they can be seen from the street. Right now there are some houses on Hulett Street and some houses and Brandywine Avenue, they just store their garbage in front of there houses, and there is a law. I'll have to check with Carl Olsen that indicates that people have to store their cans out of sight, people just store it right in front of their houses, bags, cans and it should not be. Someone needs to address this, people have to know that they are not storing there garbage correctly. The other issue is why are people walking in the street? I can remember people are walking in street because of snow, but now there is no snow, and still the only the dogs are on the sidewalk. People are pushing their baby carriages in the street and that is dangerous, so I think we need to pass the word along to our Police, this Jay Walking has got to end, we just can't have it. I'm just surprised that nobody has been hit or killed the way they walk in the street. We have to enforce our laws about jay walking and putting our garbage away. Thank you.

President McCarthy - I just want to remind everybody that tomorrow is Grievance Day for Property Tax Assessment we will have two panels of the Board of Assessment Review. I believe that they will start hearing the grievance

at 9:00 am and the Assessor's Office will be open at 8:00 am. In some of the paper work if people have not filed prior to Tomorrow, they should go to the Assessor's Office first, to file their grievance and volunteers from all the departments, everybody has given a little bit of time to assist people through the process. Periodically, I have been going out with the Police Department and with other departments, Saturday night, at one time there was over 22 calls in the quad, there are 22 people waiting for assistance, and we cannot send a car because everything is tied up, we were deploying our latter trucks were responding to medical calls, those are the most expensive one to move around which means that our rescue one has been deployed. The engine company has been deployed so now you are sending a latter truck; again they are staff with people that can handle the situation so it shows the level of need for service. One of the Patrol Sergeant had just left a hit and run, he is driving down the street and there is debris all across the street and I saw it myself, it looks like another hit and run, he stops and looks at the material so he can identify the type of car and it turn out to be television, that somebody though on the back of a truck and it fell off and it just shattered on the street. The debris was spread over 100 feet of area, so the vehicle was going at the fairly high rate of speed, a citizen walks up and he has had his cell phone taken, so now we have the litter on the street and the stolen cell phone. I know if you are one of the 22 people in quad and we are not responding, you are not happy, the City staff is working generally in a good manner, they are trying to do the best they can. We are sitting here on the Council and we are juggling the resources that we have, there are no easy decisions. I think it is good when people come forward and talk about our littering problem, Mr. Harvey want to put a phase on it, a name that is catchy to motivate people and I do think these are things we should look at, Communities of Service was on our last cycle, we have a lot of people volunteering. I do not believe it is correct that police officers have to take somebody for littering down to the station and book them they can issue appearance tickets. Maybe we can discuss this in the next Committee Cycle and to implement them. I do see an attitude of people wanting to solve problems and the future here is going to work out because we do have some difficult budget issue to work on, working together will make things a lot better. With that I will entertain a motion to Adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Mr. McCarthy declared the meeting adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD**EILEEN M. VERSACI
CITY CLERK**