

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL – JUNE 26, 2006**

The meeting was called to order by Council President Mark W. Blanchfield at 7:00 P.M. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Mr. Blanchfield called upon Rev. Stephen Clunn, First United Methodist Church, to deliver the Invocation.

Mr. Blanchfield then called upon Bart Chabot 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, Frank J. Maurizio,
Barbara Strangfeld, Gary R. McCarthy, Barbara Blanchard
and Mark W. Blanchfield

Absent - Councilmember Margaret C. King

Also Present – Mayor Pro-Tem Sharon Jordan, City Clerk Carolyn
Friello and Corporation Counsel Alfred L. Goldberger

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. On an Ordinance regarding proposed amendments to Chapter 248 and Chapter 248-49 of the City Code to restrict the placement and storage of certain motor vehicles and conveyances on city streets.

Mr. Blanchfield invited all who wished to speak on Public Hearing #1 to come forward (7:30 P.M.). The following speakers rose to be heard and their remarks are summarized:

Mark Townsend stated that my concern is that I don't want to see an attack on poor people. This is unacceptable for people who live paycheck to paycheck. Two weeks would give people a reasonable amount of time to fix cars and still allow the police to crack down on owners who have inoperable cars on the streets for months.

Ms. King submitted a memo from the Blvd. Area Neighborhood Association in which she attended on Tuesday. They had some strong feedback regarding the Parking Ordinance. For many of these folks, they don't have off-street parking and may have more than one car, so the 24 hour limit is unrealistic, e.g., they are on vacation and their second car gets damaged – they aren't here to take care of it within 24 hours, or maybe they have to wait until the next pay day to repair it.

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They were suggesting 30 – 90 days for some of that stuff. They also noted that in regard to washing their car, they have no driveway so they have to wash it on the street. They were also looking for clarification of some of the sections, e.g., storage, abandoned. I think they will be sending us something in writing and at least one of them plans to attend the public hearing. Also, I have asked John Van Norden to look into this. There are 2 houses in the 1100 Block of Parkwood Blvd. that have blacktopped half of their lawn. One has a large camper parked on it. Their understanding is that these people got a variance to do this under the prior administration. John doesn't think that we have anything on the books prohibiting this, but, he's checking into it. If there isn't, we may want to consider something.

Seeing no other speakers, Mr. Blanchfield declared Public Hearing #1 closed (7:40 P.M.).

2. On Resolution No. 2006-129 contemplating the discontinuance of a portion of Maxon Road.

Mr. Blanchfield invited all who wished to speak on Public Hearing #2 to come forward (7:41 P.M.). Seeing no speakers, Mr. Blanchfield declared the public hearing closed (7:42 P.M.).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. McCarthy moved that the minutes of the City Council meeting of June 12, 2006 be approved as submitted by the City Clerk. It was seconded by Mr. Maurizio. Hearing no objections, Mr. Blanchfield declared the minutes approved as submitted.

COMMUNICATIONS:

From the Mayor, a list of appointments.

From the Law Department, a letter rejecting Resolution No. 2006-CS21 for the "North Jay Street Project".

General – None.

PETITIONS:

With 441 signatures from city residents to open Hillhurst Pool on Campbell Ave.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Ms. Blanchard stated that the Public Service & Utilities Committee met; the City Hall website is now up and running. The Governmental Operations Committee wants everyone to know that the Community Pride Awards will be given at our next meeting.

Mr. McCarthy suggested that since he had so much feedback as a result of his mailing the Ordinance restricting parking to all neighborhood leaders, he suggested that we do that with all upcoming Public Hearings.

Ms. Strangfeld stated that the Finance Committee met and she reviewed Agenda Items #2, #5, #6, #13 and #16.

Mr. Maurizio stated that the Intergovernmental Relations Committee met and they endorsed a resolution to include Schenectady as one community of inclusiveness. In regard to the City Development & Planning Committee, he explained Agenda Item #12. In regard to the Noise Ordinance, this is an enhanced Noise Ordinance; he deals with enforcement. We currently have a noise curfew of 11:00 P.M.. We had no intention of changing that. However, we felt some flexibility out there. We will pass it tonight with the time of 11:00 P.M., but, we will "dive" right back in and try to provide flexibility for the downtown and bar owners.

Mr. Allen stated that the Health & Recreation Committee met. Hopefully in a few weeks, we will have 3 pools open. The Boy's Club is moving forward with activities for the Quackenbush Pool.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS):

Mr. Blanchfield invited all who wished to address the City Council on any items of the Legislative Agenda to come forward. The following speakers rose to be heard and their remarks are summarized:

Michael Johnson, 108 Jay Street, said – You will harm and hurt the growth factor in the downtown area by limiting noise to 11:00 P.M. The residents have to understand that they are in a Commercial area.

John Nerney, 158 Orange Street, said – We believe that all contracts should be awarded to the lowest, qualified bidder. The Mayor vetoed the legislation

because the laborer's Union or the Operating Union reached out to the Mayor and that caused the veto. In the past, only one Apprenticeship Program was allowed. Are the requirements there to provide jobs for the youth or to pay back the construction trade unions by eliminating competition? I suggest that you sit down with the industry and work out how we can get the youth into the construction industry. I offer an opportunity to send a student to our school to get into an Apprenticeship Training Class. I will offer a scholarship and I will offer construction training. We hope that you award the contract to Carver Construction as you should and we hope that you get rid of the Apprenticeship

Programs. They don't work; my offer stands either way.

Harold Gordon, Attorney, 9 Cornell Road, Latham, NY, stated that Carver Construction does have an approved, registered program. After the bid was submitted, someone decided that 2 Apprenticeship Programs had to be enforced. That's contrary to custom and practice of the city and upstate. Only the Operating Engineers is required to meet the scope of the work. Carver Construction has one and will have the second one prior to the commencement of the work. I urge you to do the right thing.

Carver Laraway, 494 Western Turnpike, Altamont, NY, stated that we have followed the same format in all the jobs that we have done for the city for 15 years. There was no communication, back and forth, asking us to supply further information. I feel very slighted.

Robert Sanders, 2821 Halsey Drive, said – I would like to see CDTA bring the bus back to Woodlawn.

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

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

Consent Agenda –

Resolution No. 2006-146	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-147	Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-148 Adopted Unanimously

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Consent Agenda (Continued) –

Resolution No. 2006-149 Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-150 Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-151 Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-152 Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-153 Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-154 Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-155 Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-156 Adopted Unanimously

Resolution no. 2006-157 Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-CS27 Adopted Unanimously

Original Consideration –

Ordinance No. 2006-06 **(Roll Call Vote) – 6:0**
Voting Aye – Allen,
Maurizio, Strangfeld,
McCarthy, Blanchard,
Blanchfield

Resolution No. 2006-158 Adopted – 5:1
Voting Aye – Maurizio,
Strangfeld, McCarthy,
Blanchard, Blanchfield
Voting No – King

Resolution No. 2006-159 Adopted – 5:1
Voting Aye – Maurizio,
Strangfeld, McCarthy,
Blanchard, Blanchfield
Voting No – Allen

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PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Mr. Blanchfield 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:

Robert Sanders, 2821 Halsey Drive, stated that he would like to see a Skateboard Park in Woodlawn rather than a pool. I plan this to take 18 months.

J.D. Hotaling, Campbell Ave., stated that it's ridiculous to ask the residents to put satellite dishes in the back of their homes. I want to thank Jim Tedisco for the money for the Hillhurst Pool. He also complimented the police on a recent solving of a burglary.

Bart Chabot, 1159 McClellan Street, stated that this is the 4th year to conduct kids fishing in the park. Last year, we taught 250 kids. We will start on Tuesday, after the 4th of July from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. and they need to be accompanied by an adult.

Mary McClaine stated that in the past City Council meetings, there were frequent comments made regarding negativism. The Aqueduct Heights Program – the owner ravaged the neighborhood and never built his new housing. The city needs to see that he completes this. Also, Mr. Gillen should walk to the 200 Block of State Street; he would see mattresses stacked up in the store window, like wooden bulk heads. The owners need to hang curtains to hide the mattresses. Sheridan Plaza has no representative from this Council – denounced that the store is closing. Good will should have prevailed. We were loyal customers; the Council did nothing to help. These are some of the negatives.

Larry Myeroff, Schenectady resident, spoke in regard to the Erie Blvd. and Union Street problem. You have known about this. It's not right. Driving is a privilege, walking is a right. I don't understand what the problem is.

Ellen Desmond, 24 Ingersoll Ave., spoke in regard to the Erie Blvd. and Union Street intersection. We need a 4-way "Red" light to go on when the "walk" light goes on.

Dale Miller, 217 Green Street, spoke in regard to the Erie Blvd. and Union Street intersection. Stop all cars for 6 seconds.

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Mabel Leon, 22 Front Street, spoke in regard to the Erie Blvd. and Union Street intersection. You need a 4-way "Red" light. The traffic needs to stop in all directions.

Elaine Willi, 1571 Bradley Street, stated that the attendance of this third (3rd) Comprehensive Plan Meeting was pretty well attended. Of my own neighborhood discussion and outline in which we received and discussed pretty much covers the viewpoints and suggestions made by several of which a few had to be brought up again. Hopefully, they will also be implemented in the final plan. My major concern was the way that this whole meeting was presented. The discussions were limited to our own specific neighborhood designations; therefore, the effects of the city, as a whole, could not be discussed. In the Woodlawn neighborhood - concerning parkland - many, throughout the city - the majority living in the Woodlawn area have signed a petition against developing their parkland; keeping it forever wild. This petition, presented as part of this plan, has not yet been addressed. Neighbors of the Woodlawn neighborhood were told of a plan of development with condos being built at the garage on Oregon Ave. What of the rest of Oregon Ave. containing trees and a stream? Hopefully, it is not included in this development plan. Absolutely, this eyesore area of a garage is in obvious disrepair and neglect. Accordingly, the relief due to the attention given to the immediate neighbors that trees and wooded area around the Golf Course are not considered in this development is greatly appreciated! It still ignores the fact that this is still parkland and parkland alienation has to be properly assessed. It also still ignores the possibility that once the parkland is alienated, the parkland is no longer protected against possible more development in the future. What still may happen to these trees and wooded areas and/of around the Golf Course now promised to be saved? Furthermore, it certainly still ignores the fact that this is still yet another example of "Demolition upon Neglect", on the part of city whims for development. This particular area has been revisited time and again against the continuous opposition of neighbors in this area. This garage has been in disrepair to satisfy these whims to develop here all along and the encouragement of this practice needs to be put an end to. "Demolition upon Neglect" by the whims of development must not be allowed to continue anymore! I strongly agree that this area should be cleaned up, but, only development that would profit towards the parkland, not requiring alienation, can truly satisfy the requests of relief asked by these neighbors who attended this plan.

Barbara Katz, Schenectady resident, stated that public safety is the most important tool on having these kids driving their bicycles double; also, skateboarding is another tool.

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Dana Swalla, 1017 Phoenix Ave., said - I heard that the "Swingers Clubs" are out of our neighborhood and into an Industrial Zone. I think that's a positive step to restore peace in our neighborhood

Jason Planck, Schenectady resident, stated that 3 months ago, I asked to get some stuff done in Central Park - still nothing has been done. We need to move forward to make our parks accessible.

William Roth, P.O. Box 1054, said - I am speaking for the elderly and disabled homeowners commenting on tax relief on behalf of them who cannot keep up with their property and other hidden dangers that should be fixed by the City of Schenectady.

Dale Miller spoke in regard to the Stockaders' concerns of Union Street/Erie Blvd. and Liberty Street/Erie Blvd. intersections. Cars don't yield to pedestrians with the "Walk" signal in the crosswalk - connection between the Stockade and downtown is dangerous for the pedestrians. Suggested solutions include: - Post "Yield to Pedestrian" signs; -ONLY when walk button is pushed, then: - reduce Erie, green from 70 to 67 seconds; - 4-way "Red" light for 6 seconds, "Walk" sign for pedestrians; - reduce Union and Liberty Streets "Green" light from 25 to 22 seconds. The advantages are: - Safety for pedestrians; - 2% reduction in Erie Blvd. The "Green" light won't affect the traffic flow much; - Is in effect only when a pedestrian pushes the button; - changing timing doesn't require extra funding; and it can be done immediately.

Fred Kindl, 14 North Church Street, said - I live in the Stockade and I would like to walk to destinations downtown, including East of Erie Blvd. Crossing Erie Blvd., particularly at Union and Liberty Streets is a problem. I urge you to take action to improve the ability to safely cross Erie Blvd. on foot.

Maria Papa, 50 Washington Ave. and Perreca's Bakery, 33 N. Jay Street, stated that as a marketer and a businessperson, I know for certain that it is imperative to the economic growth of our Great City to improve accessibility to pedestrians. I

regret that I could not attend last night's City Council meeting since, as I understand, the topic of crossing Erie Blvd. was addressed. I beseech you to make this improvement in our ever-improving city a priority. As a shopkeeper at Perreca's Bakery (across Erie Blvd. from the Stockade), I see with my own eyes the economic impact of residents walking over from the Stockade to my business. They are a bunch that will walk, walk, walk. They walk in the summer, they walk to my shop in the winter. I see it with my own eyes – and

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they spend money. These things I know. As a resident of Washington Ave. in the Stockade and the mother of a young child, we join our neighbors in the walking culture. We frequently walk to work to Perreca's. We will walk to events at Union College. We will walk to dinner at Bangkok Thai or Cornell's. I do not, however, ever patronize Wendy's, Quiznos Subs, or the new Bambino's Italian Restaurant, simply because crossing Erie Blvd., at this section, is simply too precarious. Let us not abet the mindset of the pedestrian as a second class citizen in our City of Schenectady – to do so would be economic ruin. Thank you very much for your time.

Priscilla and William Gocha, 17 Front Street, said – We, too, were not able to attend last evening's Council meeting, but are very concerned about crossing Erie Blvd. We now drive to Union College to take our daily walk instead of walking up there because of the light changing too quickly and my husband being nearly hit by a car. Thank you.

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

MISCELLANEOUS:

Mr. McCarthy spoke in regard to Resolution #16 where we rejected the bids and are re-bidding. It was a convoluted process that brings us here tonight, but, the underlying thing – the Apprenticeship Program in which people like to debate, discuss and create issues that shouldn't exist. If we want to have a well-trained workforce and have the people here that are able to do the job, we have to have these things in place. It's good, public policy to have it and everyone benefits from it. Also, I appeared before the Bellevue Neighborhood Association when Assemblyman Tedisco announced the money for the pool. I think that it's a good thing, but, it's \$30,000.00. Saratoga got slightly more than that - \$1 Billion Dollars; Albany got \$300,000,000.00 and we are able to open our pool in Bellevue. We can't short change this community. There is a little money for Schenectady – it's just wrong. We don't staff the Police Department properly, people call for service, ask for help and we can't do it. If we don't do this in a timely manner, it will have an adverse affect on economic development that we are doing. We have to be serious about it – the numbers are big – we have to approach it in a comprehensive manner. Public Safety has to be a lead point on it. We need to nip this in the bud and the easiest way is to have full partnership with the State and a substantial amount of money. While I want the pools open, there are just so many other things that we need.

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Mr. Allen stated that Marsha Mortimer will be circulating a petition requesting to change Hulett Street to Harriett Taubman Way.

Barbara Blanchard stated that for those who missed the June 20th Comprehensive Plan Meeting, you can still comment on this by going to the website.

Ms. Strangfeld spoke in regard to the Parking Ordinance – the prohibition against washing in the street was mentioned. This is in the existing Ordinance. We are not proposing to amend that. This has always been there. What we are changing deals with inoperable autos, abandoned and oversized vehicles. Also regarding handicap accessibility in the park, I know that we have miles to go, but, there are always improvements to be made. We will continue to make the improvements. Also, school is out – please make sure that your children are wearing reflective clothing and helmets when they are riding their bicycles. If you can afford a bike, you can afford a helmet.

Mr. Blanchfield said – I am very enthusiastic about the pools opening, particularly, Quackenbush Pool. I think that we will be seeing a Comprehensive Recreation Program up there. It's an integrated program that addresses the whole issue. Pools alone doesn't solve the recreational issue. The idea is to get good structured activity. Whether a pool is part of that is another determination. We are seeing some good activity up there. In regard to crossing Erie Blvd., the timing of the lights do present problems. I am told that Signal Control is working on that. Also, Mr. Chabot has a great program teaching kids how to fish. The fish survived the draining of the lake and the repairs that were done. Also, we passed the renewal contract for the concession. The Casino is going great, guys. Also, this is the time to check out the Rose Garden. It's an explosion of color.

ADJOURNMENT:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Mr. Blanchfield declared the meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

**BY CAROLYN FRIELLO
CITY CLERK**