

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 27, 2010**

The Council President, Gary R. McCarthy called the Meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Mr. McCarthy called upon Reverend Father Paul Panos, of St. George's Greek Orthodox Church of Schenectady to deliver the invocation.

Mr. McCarthy called upon John Polimeni 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, Denise K. Brucker, Gary R. McCarthy, Thomas Della Sala, Barbara Blanchard and Margaret C. King.
Absent – Joseph L. Allen and Carl Erikson.

Also Present – Mayor Brian U. Stratton, Deputy Clerk Charles W. Thorne and Acting Corporation Counsel Al Goldberger.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve minutes by Ms. Brucker.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Official:

From the Mayor's Office an appointment dated September 27, 2010

General:

None

Petitions:

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

None

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS)

Mr. McCarthy invited all who wished to address the Legislative Agenda to come forward.

Jason Planck: Spoke on item number 1 and voiced concerns about affirmative action and no money for youth employment in the County City Budgets

Seeing no more speakers to come before the City Council, 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 –

Ms. King moved the following items be adopted,

Ordinance No. 2010 – 15	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010 – 171	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010 – 172	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010 – 173	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010 – 174	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:

Barbara Katz – Complained about littering on Albany Street and in downtown. She suggested organizing volunteers need to organize and help clean downtown.

Marva Isaacs – Complained about the condition of 305 Union Ave. The building is boarded up, doors are open and people are living in it.

Pat Yager – Good Evening, my name is Pat Yager and I am a resident of Schenectady representing the Schenectady Eviction Task Force and The Eastern Avenue Neighborhood Association. Thank you Mayor Stratton, and City Council members for allowing me the privilege of the floor tonight. I am here to speak about the Nuisance Abatement Code, Chapter 183 Article One of the City of Schenectady Code. According to this code, the Mayor can impose sanctions and penalties for public nuisances such as noise and property maintenance issues. We realize that City Council has been focusing on property maintenance issues and this code may be of assistance in addressing these problems. As far as we are aware, this code is not being utilized to its fullest extent. The City of Troy has a very similar Nuisance Abatement Code on the books and has successfully utilized it to address some significant quality of life violations. As the local Weed and Seed Program lead, the Troy Community Police have spearheaded the effort. We appreciate that the Schenectady Police Department is overburdened and suggest

that Schenectady County's Office of Emergency Management Auxiliary Police Force be utilized to assist the Codes Dept. with enforcement of this article. We recognize that there may be concern about victims of domestic violence being unfairly evicted as a result of enforcement of this code. We recommend working closely with the YWCA Domestic Violence Program to ensure fair and equitable response in these situations. The members of the Eviction Task Force working on this are: Bethesda House
Better Neighborhoods, Inc.
Capital District Center for Disability Services
Community Land Trust Of Schenectady
Integrity First Realty
Legal Aid Society of Northeastern NY
Schenectady Community Action Program.
We look forward to working closely with you on this matter. We believe this is a tool for improving the quality of life in the City of Schenectady.

Bob Harvey - Spoke in favor of Pat Yager's statements, stating the neighborhood needs focused Police Department and Code Enforcement attention.

Jason Planck – Commented favorably on the police consolation presentation, which was presented at the last Committee Meeting. He complained that the proposed County Budget was online, but the City's was not.

Vince Riggi – Stated that the recent downtown shooting was no surprise. He said the neighborhoods are in trouble and that spreads throughout the City. He stated we need zero-tolerance.

Wayne Harper – Stated his curbs are still crumbling, inquired about the status of Mr. Van Norden and voiced concerns about the costs of the Police Department

Crys Hamelink, SICM – SICM Summer Lunch 2010

Over 70 % of Schenectady's kids qualify for free or reduced rate lunches in school, and many do not have regular meals when school is not in session. That's where SICM stepped in, offering free and healthy lunches at 13 locations including 6 city parks (Central Park, Jerry Burrell, Hillhurst, Quackenbush, Wallingford and Crane Street), 2 municipal housing complexes (Yates and Steinmetz), and several church fellowship halls (Friendship House, Faith United Methodist, Trinity Lutheran, Mount Olivet, and New Creation in Christ). We are now in our 15th year of serving free lunches, and this summer we served nearly 28,000 meals to hungry kids.

How the City Helped

The City helped in 3 special ways:

1) First, we thank City staff for their outstanding support of the summer lunch program. We fed over 18,000 meals in the 6 city parks. Your handouts include photos of kids eating at these 6 parks. In particular, we thank Carl Olsen, Bill Macejka and OGS staff for building pavilions at Wallingford Park and Carrie Street Park so we could feed the kids in those areas, and providing port-a-potties, gardening areas for the Edible Playgrounds, and maintenance and support. We

also thank the Parks Department for their help throughout the summer, and the Police Department for their presence in the Jerry Burrell area following the shootings just before summer lunch began.

2) The city pools were very important for the kids, giving them safe and fun ways to spend their summer days, while we were there to give them food. We know there are budgetary concerns over opening the pools for next year. Please remember the kids when you make your budget decisions. Most of our kids ate at parks with open pools. Kids that we fed in other locations tended to be more bored and some were even acting out by the end of the summer.

3) SICM is appreciative of other groups that partnered with us over the summer. These groups offered educational and recreational activities while SICM provided the meals. Some of these partners were funded by the city, including the Boys and Girls Club at Quackenbush Park, and the YMCA at Jerry Burrell. Summer is a special time for kids when there are good things to do and healthy food to eat. Please continue to fund these types of summer programs.

The Volunteers

Most people spend their lunch break, well, eating lunch. But this summer, 650 volunteers decided to serve lunch, instead. These volunteers-from 66 teams in all-helped serve lunch to hungry children across Schenectady. The groups came from area congregations, GE, ARC, and several other non-profit and business groups, and you have a handout listing these teams. SICM provided the food through a government grant from the USDA and the NY State Education Department, and a local food provider - JR Proprietor's - prepared and delivered the food. Volunteers packed the meals, fed and entertained the kids. One volunteer team brought boxes of donated books, and smiling children rapidly grabbed them. One young boy, with 5 books in tow, said these would be his first books to have at home. Two teams made paper airplanes with all the kids at their sites, while many others brought games and craft/ school supplies.

The Kids:

Savannah was one of the kids who depended on SICM for food this summer. The day we met her, she was clutching her five oranges as she prepared to leave the SICM site where she ate her free lunch every day. "I love fruit" she said, "and we don't have it at home". She enjoyed all the lunches, and the free program gave her and hundreds of other children healthy food during the school break. We fed over 700 kids each day.

One afternoon, the last week of summer lunch, I left the SICM Office on Albany Street to go to one of our lunch sites. Sitting in the parking lot, directly behind my car, was a young boy eating a stale donut. He had ridden his bike nearly 3 miles from Crane St. because someone told him that SICM served food to kids. He was crushed to find that we were not serving food there. I had a bag of oranges in my car, so I gave him one. As he ate it, he told me that his family was basically out of food until the first of the month, and he and his brothers were hungry. I gave him the whole bag of oranges, plus some water and snacks. I returned to the office for

a minute, and when I returned, he and the food had vanished. Sometimes I wonder whether our children are truly hungry, or if free lunch is an option that basically helps low income families with their daily expenses. Now I know - it's both. The 28,000 lunches we served this year is less than last summer, when the economy experienced a severe downturn. Participation at Jerry Burrell Park declined compared to 2009, due to the incident that occurred in that area at the beginning of the summer. Attendance at other SICM sites was comparable to last year. Parents, grandparents and caregivers across the city thanked us repeatedly for the food for their families. The kids just smiled and said that lunch was good!

Crys Hamelink
Assistant Director, SICM
September 2010

Rev Phil Grigsby, SICM – Echoed Ms. Hamelink's statements regarding the SICM

Rev. Van Stuart, SICM – Spoke about the successes of The Summer Lunch program over the past two years and stated support from the City's OGS has been fantastic.

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

Miscellaneous Business of the Council

Mayor Brian Stratton: In response to Mr. Harper's comments the Mayor said he has spoke to our State legislators and believes that the Police Consolidation Study will show cost saving methods and processes. He also stated that this has been the most difficult budget process since he took office and work is continuing.

Recess:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, at 7:44 p.m. Mr. McCarthy adjourned the meeting.

A true record

**By Charles W. Thorne
Deputy City Clerk**