

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

January 28, 2019

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

Mr. Kosiur asked for Pastor George Carstensen, of the Zion Lutheran Church to offer the invocation.

Mr. Kosiur then called on Councilmember Karen Zalewski-Wildzunas to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Present – Council Members: John Polimeni, Marion Porterfield, Karen Zalewski-Wildzunas, Leesa Perazzo, Vincent Riggi, John Mootoveren and Ed Kosiur.

Also Present – City Clerk Chuck Thorne, Mayor, Gary R. McCarthy, and Corporation Counsel Carl Falotico.

PUBLIC HEARING

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Kosiur asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 28, 2019, Council Meeting as submitted by the Deputy City Clerk. Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunas made a motion and Mr. Polimeni seconded the motion.

COMMUNICATIONS PRESENTED TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Official:

From the Mayor, a list of appointments, dated January 28, 2019.

General:

From Philip Gibbs, of Electric City Taxi, a letter regarding the proposed changes to the Taxicab Ordinance.

Petitions:

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR - LEGISLATIVE ITEMS

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

Carol DeLaMarter - Spoke regarding the poor condition of sidewalks in the Stockade Neighborhood. The Stockade Association conducted a sidewalk survey and concluded the

overall sidewalk condition is poor. While the proposal is not perfect, she said she supported the proposed program.

Mary Moore Wallinger - Supported looking for ways to replace sidewalks and said the proposed plan will reduce the cost of replacement.

Suzanne Unger - Spoke in favor of the sidewalk program. She said, ideally the City would pay, but reducing the burden is helpful and a substantial savings over going it alone.

Richard Unger - Spoke in support of the sidewalk plan, citing economy of scale by working a block at a time, costs would be staggering alone, low-interest financing through the City, and City Code requires repair.

Peter Knutson - Spoke in favor of the sidewalk program, saying his neighbors favor the program. He wished the program was available when he purchased his home, because his insurance company required him to replace his sidewalk as a requirement of being insured.

Marie Vergona - Spoke in favor of the sidewalk program, saying the cost burden is large. She also expressed concern for walkers.

David Bouck (Written comments submitted) - I wholeheartedly support Mr. Polimeni's sidewalk initiative. This has been twenty plus years in the making. The issue has been how to make this affordable. Mr. Polimeni has researched and provided residents an affordable option that not only addresses the problem of deteriorating sidewalks but spreads out payments to make it happen. As city code states, the residents are responsible for the maintenance and repair of their sidewalks. With this initiative, it will provide not only aesthetic quality in our walkable city but safety and value in their property. A majority of people on Raymond Street approve of this proposal.

Seeing no other speakers to come forward, Mr. Kosiur declared the privilege of the floor, regarding the legislative agenda, to be closed.

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

Mr. Kosiur asked for a motion that Council approves the Consent Agenda and the motion was moved by Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunas and seconded by Mr. Polimeni.

Consent Agenda

- Resolution No. 2019 – 010Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2019 – 011Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2019 – 012Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2019 – 013Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2019 – 014Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2019 – 015Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2019 – 016Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2019 – 017Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2019 – 018Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2019 – 019Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2019 – 020Adopted Unanimously

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR - CITY BUSINESS:

Mr. Kosiur 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:

Anthony Carota - Spoke regarding the snowplowing of the recent storm, saying the City failed the citizens of the city. He said many had to walk in the middle of the street and the plows need to do their job.

Bob Carreau - Good evening, I wanted to take a moment at the podium tonight to thank the City of Schenectady, Mayor McCarthy and the City Council for their support and partnership in the Thriving Neighborhoods Challenge.

About four months ago we asked the citizens of Schenectady what they would do to improve their City and neighborhood. We received 48 entries proposing a variety of projects – large and small – from almost every neighborhood in the City. This remarkable response truly demonstrated the passionate desire of people to make Schenectady the very best community it can be!

We then set about to narrow the field of entries, recruiting a panel of 25 City residents and stakeholders who participated in reviewing applications, meeting with applicant groups, and making final funding recommendations to the Foundation as to the handful of selected projects for the first round.

I'm pleased to announce that our Challenge Council selected twelve projects totaling \$250,000 in funding. Some of the projects include:

- Creating a sculpture park and art walk through Hamilton Hill;

- Installing a spray pad water feature in Woodlawn Park;

- Organizing neighborhood anti-litter and clean up campaigns in Goosehill, Hamilton Hill, Mont Pleasant and the Boulevards;

- Establishing free book library boxes to promote literacy;

- Public art installations such as unique sculptural seating in parks, and a Rainbow Pride exhibit in Gateway Park;

- Building pride and identity in the East Front Street neighborhood;

- And creating a safe, natural play space for children at Howe Elementary.

The City's \$100,000 commitment through CDBG funds was leveraged by \$2 in private funding for every \$1 from the City. City staff is also lending its expertise and know-how to provide technical assistance to some of the grantees. It's a great public-private partnership!

On Wednesday evening starting at 4 pm, we will be meeting with the first round grantees to discuss how we will move forward, and start the implementation phase. The meeting is at the Electric City Barn on Craig St.

We have a lot of work to do to implement these projects over the next 6 – 9 months. But given the response from the public and from philanthropic investors, we do anticipate launching a second round of the Neighborhood Challenge later this year.

He also applauded the creation of a Youth Advisory Board.

Philip Gibbs - After listening to Ms. Bailey from CDTA speak at last week's meeting, it is my understanding that what CDT A wants to do is create a regional rate STRUCTURE, using

meters, however each City is then able to create their own starting rate within that structure, therefore the council could approve a rate increase at this time if they wish and write in a clause for increases as minimum wage increases.

The city of Schenectady, is the only city that has been using meters and has been using them for the past 75+ years. Therefore, we have a rate structure that has been tried and proven. A rate structure that is fair for both the citizens of Schenectady and the Taxi companies. Why then does CDTA think that they have to create a new structure, based off the airport, which doesn't work for city driving, and off of a cursory conversation with taxi companies. Wouldn't it have been easier to take a proven structure and present that to the other municipalities.

CDTA has said that all of the other municipalities have signed on to this, or are in the process of signing off on it, so why is Schenectady putting up a resistance. I'll tell you why, because the taxi companies in the other cities have no idea how a meter system should work so they are not putting up a fight to their council. They just assume that since CDT A does transportation, then they should know. After 20 years in this business, all within the city of Schenectady using a meter system I believe I have a good understanding of what would work best. Second, Our council is doing their due diligence on this issue and listening to the taxi companies so they can make an informed decision and not rush to judgment. For this, I both thank and applaud you.

Next CDTA wants to create a REGIONAL Ordinance, they say Schenectady should have no problem with this because most of it was taken from our current ordinance. If they can use most of our current ordinance then why don't they go the distance and use our rate structure that is also in the ordinance. To me, that would be a no brainer. One of the biggest things they added into the ordinance was the age of the cars. I get it, they want newer nicer cars, I agree with this. However, what is the time frame to update these vehicles? Will the current vehicles be grandfathered in, until such time they are unrepairable, or to rusted out? Because depending on the size of the company this could be a 5 to 105 thousand dollar cost to upgrade, and unlike CDTA when they need a bus, we can't go to the state and get a grant, for replacement. I would suggest, at least 1 year to bring the fleets up to the 10 year rule, that way you can replace 1 car a month instead of a huge investment all at once.

I know all of this is a lot to take in, and we haven't even talked about medallions, the rules governing the medallions, and the enforcement of these rules which CDTA says will be up to the municipalities. That is why I implore you to continue to do your due diligence and not let CDTA try to push this though. Schenectady not only has to be the voice of experience, but the voice of reason.

Thank you, and please anytime you have questions do not hesitate to contact me. My knowledge and experience is always at your disposal.

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

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

Ms. Porterfield - Commented on how successful the Soup Stroll was and the many people it brought to downtown. She also brought up the free Senior Alert bracelets, made available by the law firm of Martin, Harding and Mazzotti.

Mr. Polimeni - Announced that our New York State representatives will be attending the February 19, Finance Committee Meeting. He also thanked speakers who spoke in relation to the Sidewalk Program.

Mr. Riggi - Questioned the depth of "institutional knowledge" in the City regarding plowing streets after a snow storm. He said, he received more complaints than ever. People were forced to walk in the street and crosswalks were not cleared. He said, a former employee offered assistance, prior to the storm, and his call was not returned. He also said that people parking in the street, rather than their driveway, contribute to the problems.

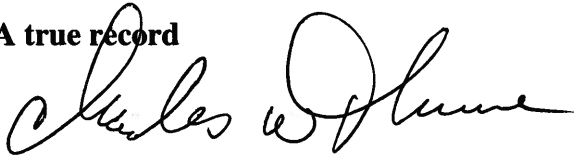
Mayor McCarthy - Thanked everyone for attending. He said, we received 15-17 inches of snow and all-in -all did a better job that surrounding communities. He also encouraged people to use off-street parking and reminded people not to park on primary streets after 3 inches of snow accumulation.

Mr. Kosiur - Thanked Bob Carreau, of the Schenectady Foundation, and congratulated the winners of the Thriving Neighborhood awards. He reminded people of the upcoming "Coffee with the Council on February 10 and the upcoming STAR deadline of March 1st.

Adjourned:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Mr. Kosiur asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was moved by Mr. Mootoveren and seconded by Mr. Polimeni. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

A true record

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chuck Thorne".

By Chuck Thorne

Schenectady City Clerk