

Ray O'Connell, President
Julio A. Guridy, Vice President
Joseph Davis
Jeanette Eichenwald
Jeff Glazier
Daryl Hendricks
Cynthia Y. Mota



Allentown City Council
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Allentown, Pa. 18101
AllentownPa.Gov

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**COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
March 18, 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

COUNCIL MEETING – 7:00 PM

1. Invocation: Pastor Nydia Ramos, Spanish Emmanuel Church

2. Pledge to the Flag

3. Roll Call: Davis, Glazier, Hendricks, Mota, O'Connell
Frances Fruhwirth represented the Solicitor's office

4. Courtesy of the Floor

Mr. Kenneth Heffentrager, 733 N. 11th Street – Allentown Tenants Association, asked why is the issue of Blight so important. The bottomline is that it is the biggest quality of life issue in the City of Allentown and cities across America. He showed pictures of five properties that are blighted. The inspection cycle is too long. He asked Council to watch the Documentary "Burn" about the Detroit Fire Department.

Mr. Dennis Pearson, 942 E. Tilghman Street, stated at our neighborhood meeting on Monday it was very intense because the owners/artists of the murals came to our meeting and we had a discussion. At the end, there was some accommodation and understanding. There was once a memorial at the East Side Fire Station and it was removed upon construction. We would like that memorial restored. We would like the planetarium restored. The Allentown Public Library closed a long time ago its east branch so our kids have to go to downtown Allentown or Bethlehem. We want something done about. He wants to form a committee for kids to read and get instruction for Ritter to remain a decent school.

Mr. Ray O'Connell stated that your comment about the murals is informational. Your third comment regarding the Allentown School Board. You should take those issues up at the Allentown School District School Board meeting.

Ms. Paulette Hunter, 737 W. Tilghman Street, thanked the city for having the Black History Month event. I hope they have it next year. She is passionate about the youth. She wants a youth council created and do focus groups and hear from them of what the city needs. She doesn't want the city just to pick students that are on A level, but different levels.

Mr. O'Connell stated that he came to the Black History Celebration. He was going to stay just for a half an hour, and I stayed over three hours. We will continue to do that.

Ms. Paulette Hunter thanked Winston's Restaurant.

Mr. O'Connell stated that Mr. Schweyer is here and two years ago we went to Allen, Dieruff and Central and talk to the students and asked what should be done for the city. That is an excellent suggestion.

Mr. Hendricks stated that our police department is meeting quarterly with students from Dieruff and doing the same thing with Allen. There is advocacy with the students.

Ms. Hunter recommended Big Brothers to walk them home from school.

Mr. O'Connell stated that the Police Athletic League (PAL) does a wonderful job with the 5th and 6th grade basketball league. The championships will be at Muhlenberg College. We need to do more.

Mr. Hendricks stated and a bowling league. It was in the paper today.

**5. Approval of Minutes: March 4, 2015
APPROVED BY COMMON CONSENT**

**6. Old Business
NONE**

7. Communications

Mr. O'Connell asked Mr. Schweyer to come up to the dais. Mr. Schweyer called with some interesting news that might affect the city with 9-11.

Mr. Peter Schweyer stated he will continue to talk to the administration and City Council on issues that might affect the operations of the City of Allentown. For the record, I had extensive conversations with the administration about this and spoke to the Mayor earlier today and Mr. Dougherty in passing and with all the pertinent folks from our Communications Department. One of the five committees that I serve on is the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee. On that committee we are tasked to fund our 9-11 systems. As you may or may not know, at the end of June of this year, the \$1 tax we all pay on our mobile devices sunsets. The problem, if that goes away, we will have a 9-11 system, but nobody will be there to answer it. We are working to fix that and fully fund the 9-11 system. Unfortunately, as part of the overall package that is being discussed that legislation could potential adversely impact our 9-11 system. Allentown and Bethlehem are the only two cities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia notwithstanding because it is a city and a county who are not part of a county system. As a result, we are an outcast. The way that this Bill is being authored would not exclude us from the funding, but from a number of things including potential serving on the 9-11 Oversight Board, but more importantly it is very vague on how that money would be distributed. There is no Bill number assigned to it, because it hasn't been introduced yet. I cannot guarantee that we would be able to move forward on a 9-11 System on our own. We might have to regionalize with Lehigh County. If we do pass something, as soon as I have an idea of what it is, I will forward it to the administration to Council and the Controller. We also have the crime numbers going down. We know that Allentown is doing relatively well in the crime statistics. The last thing any of us should want to do is jeopardize that by having such a key piece of our emergency response being merged with people that don't live in Allentown and don't know our streets or don't monitor our cameras.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked is one of the perimeters that it will encompass a minimum of two counties.

Mr. Schweyer stated that they are putting money in there because the chairman believes that the consolidation of 9-11 system will ultimately save the state, and the local taxpayers' money. I don't necessarily agree with that because it is very capital intensive.

Mr. Joe Davis stated that last year you were involved in the Council's decision and our 9-11 to collaborate with Northampton County. Will that be good for us?

Mr. Schweyer deferred that to Mike Hilbert. We have one of the top professionals here and I can't necessary answer that. He talked to us at the time about some cost savings there with access to the telephone systems, back office and extra backups.

Mr. O'Connell asked who creates these brainstorm.

Mr. Schweyer stated that this was largely written by the County Commissioners Association.

8. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

Budget and Finance: Chairperson Glazier

The committee has not met since the last council meeting; the next meeting is scheduled for March 25 at 6 PM.

Public Safety: Chairperson Eichenwald

The Committee has not met since the last council meeting; a meeting will be scheduled for April 1.

Community and Economic Development: Chairperson Guridy

The Committee has not met since the last council meeting; the next meeting has not been scheduled.

Parks and Recreation: Chairperson Mota

The Committee met tonight; the next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Public Works: Chairperson Davis

The Committee met on March 11 – we had a good update of capital projects the Public Works Department is involved. We looked at the impact of the winter storms, had a discussion on the compliance board (noting the first meeting will take place in early May after the board members are chosen and the LCA's annual report is completed) and forwarded an item on tonight's agenda. The next meeting is scheduled for April 8th.

Human Resources, Administration and Appointments: Chairperson Hendricks

The Committee has not met since the last Council meeting, the next meeting is not yet scheduled.

Rules, Chambers, Intergovernmental Relations and Strategy: Chairperson O'Connell

The Committee has not met since the last council meeting. There are no future meetings scheduled as of this time.

OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS

NONE

City Controller's Report

Ms. Koval stated that the City Controller's office has two interns working on projects in my office. The first project is a process-flow on the encumbrances that the city usually does and of the fore system at the golf course which is encompasses their point-of-sale and how it impacts their inventory and follows their sales and profits and reservation system for golfers that are checked in on various things. In April, we will be doing a meet and greet with the interns and we will be inviting the various members of Council.

Mr. O'Connell stated that the Golf Course situation is a very timely situation and we thank you for doing that.

Managing Director's Report

NONE

9. APPOINTMENTS:

Debora Roberson

Arts Commission

01/03/2016

Mr. O'Connell stated that Ms. Roberson is not here. I know Ms. Roberson and I think this is a real great appointment. She is very involved with the City of Allentown and the school district. She is an architect.

Mr. Jeff Glazier seconded Mr. O'Connell's comments.

RESOLUTION PASSED, 5 – 0

Mr. Hendricks asked to suspend the Rules for Appointment of Parks and Recreation Director.

Motion to suspend the Rules passed, 5 – 0

The Clerk read the title of the legislation.

Mr. Lou Hershman stated that he sees on Ms. Taylor's resume that she is involved with a lot of youth programs in Lower Macungie Township. In Allentown we need a lot of help with our youth program. Maybe she can energize the youth program.

Mr. O'Connell stated that I can't agree with you more. When I saw that on the resume that Lower Macungie Youth Association has an excellent reputation and serves over 5,000. We need to get the kids involved.

Mr. Heffentrager stated didn't we have a nationwide search. Why did the last gentleman quit?

Mr. O'Connell stated that your comment will not be addressed.

Mr. Pearson stated that you did not mention Midway Manor and Eastside Memorial.

R15 Director of Parks and Recreation

RESOLUTION PASSED, 5 – 0

Mr. O'Connell asked Ms. Taylor when is your official start date. Would you like to a comment.

Ms. Taylor stated Monday. I look forward to this and thank you to City Council for giving me the opportunity.

Mr. O'Connell stated best of success to you.

10. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE:

Bill 10 Rec

Amending the 2015 General Fund Budget by eliminating the position of Special Events Coordinator and replacing it with a Recreation and Events Coordinator.

Ms. Mota stated that it was recommended favorably, 3 – 0.

Mr. Hendricks asked was that for additional monies to complete the project. He asked if it was an overrun or transfer to completed.

Mr. Craig Messinger stated that those were funds left over from Union Street that was left over after completion of the project. Those are funds to complete the project at Schreiber's Bridge.

Mr. Hendricks stated which was damaged real bad from the detour.

Mr. Messinger stated correct.

Mr. O'Connell stated that we will get into full discussion on April 8th with the Public Works Committee.

13. RESOLUTIONS FOR INTRODUCTION:

R10 Sewage Planning Module - 90 South 9th Street - The Landmark

Sewage Planning Module for 90 South 9th Street – The Landmark

Mr. O'Connell stated that the sewage capacity is there. He asked any comments from his colleagues or the public.

RESOLUTION PASSED, 5 – 0

R11 Ban the Box 3-2015

Referred to HR, Administration and Appointments

Supports City's Employment applications procedures to remove any questions regarding criminal activity

R12 City Council Resolution - Blighted Properties 3-18-15

Authorizes the following properties to be acquired through eminent domain, if necessary, by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Allentown:

395 W Gordon Street

635 Park Street

Mr. Jeff Glazier stated that he believes it is the first time Council has seen properties come up under this designation in quite some time. In order to have properties designated blighted and get to this point is a long process. There is a flow chart and all the steps of the flow chart is consistent with state laws and the property owners are given numerous opportunities to respond to the city and advises them on the properties blight status and has opportunities to respond. Many of these meetings are public meetings. This is not a quick process. The properties you see now were first brought to the Blight Property Review Board last August. It is at this point the city was able to dot the Is and cross the Ts consistent with the state mandated processes. I would like to see as many properties that meet the definition of blight and that we have the money to dispose of and take through the process.

Ms. Shannon Calluori stated that the two properties that you are going to be voting on tonight the next step is to have the Redevelopment Authority to create a Resolution to take the properties. Part of the process is that we have to demonstrate that we have funding available to provide just compensation to the owner. We currently have funding for these two properties. There is another 15 properties going through the process. One of the challenges is to serve the property owners.

Mr. O'Connell stated that the due diligence for the due process.

Mr. Glazier stated that the Is are dotted and the Ts are crossed.

Mr. O'Connell asked any comments from my colleagues or the public.

Mr. Heffentrager stated that these two properties are awful. We gave pictures and it is on our top 10 properties. He asked any progress on the 12th Street property.

Ms. Calluori stated this is a property we discussed at the Blighted Property Review Board. We were not able to get successful service on that property. In order to take it to the next step we have to give the property owner notice and give them 30 days remediate the condition that is causing the blight.

RESOLUTION PASSED, 5 – 0

R13 Council Rules

Referred to Rules and Chambers

Amends Council Rules on the Appointment Process

R14 HARB RESOLUTION - 2015

Certificates of Appropriateness for Work at 238 N. 8th Street, 340-1/2 North 9th Street, 31 N. 11th Street, and 411 N. 8th Street.

RESOLUTION PASSED, 5 – 0

14. NEW BUSINESS

NONE

15. GOOD AND WELFARE

NONE

16. ADJOURNED: 7:55 PM

Council meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month beginning at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers. For copies of the agenda or meeting announcements, please visit our website at www.allentownpa.gov or contact the Clerk at Michael.Hanlon@allentownpa.gov to receive an email notice of the meetings.