

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



Allentown City Council
435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101
AllentownPa.Gov

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COUNCIL MEETING
May 20, 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – 7:00 PM

- 1. Invocation:** Psy Kolawole Soname, RCCG Living Spring International
- 3. Roll Call:** Davis, Eichenwald, Glazier, Guridy, Mota, O'Connell
Dale Wiles represented for the Solicitor's Office

4. Courtesy of the Floor

Mr. Kenneth Heffentrager, 733 N. 11th Street, Apartment 2 – Allentown Tenants Association, talked about the vacant properties and how they are tagged and blighted. Four properties have been broken into which were called in and should have been boarded more quickly. Affordable housing for the people that are at or below the poverty level should be examined. There are quality of life issues in the city. Mr. Joe Clark has properties that are not fit for human habitation. Act 90 was designed to hold permits and licenses until you take care properties.

Ms. Jeanette Eichenwald asked Mr. Dougherty is there something that we can do with this recurring problem. We have rental inspectors.

Mr. Fran Dougherty stated that we are very familiar with Mr. Clark. We know his properties and do the best we can to address them.

Ms. Jeanette Eichenwald stated to Mr. Davis we talked about under Community and Economic Development of having an open forum. Have we scheduled a date to talk about the housing issues and the blighted properties?

Mr. Joe Davis stated that they are being resolved on a constant basis through the Blighted Property Review Board. That was brought up during the Center City Initiative. We had two Community Development meetings. I have met regularly with Dave Paulus and the administration.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that the package that was presented a couple of weeks ago has all the information you were looking for. There is a group that meets monthly and they look at all those issues in Allentown with businesses and houses. If Council is willing to have a public forum and the president gives us time. We can discuss it again. We can start working on a date.

Ms. Jeanette Eichenwald stated that from her perspective, it is high on the list to look at and solve. It is a big problem, but it is going to get bigger.

Mr. Julian Kern, 252 E. Walnut Street, asked about the fire truck being out of service. He stated that it is a staffing issue.

Mr. Ray O'Connell stated to Mr. Kern that we are fully aware of what happened over the weekend. It was addressed by the administration. We are following what the arbitrators said for the staffing levels. Public Safety is our number 1 priority.

Ms. Kari Holmes, City of Hope Church, stated she has a concern for the necessity for a stop sign or slowing project to aid the traffic on Hamilton Street from 14th and 15th. The Pastor and Staff at Christ Lutheran say that speeding occurs on a regular basis.

Mr. Ray O'Connell stated that we will look into it.

Ms. Diane Teti said she is still concerned about 329 and 343 N. 8th Street. We have one more month left in spring. All they have done was put a sign in the window stating they are Habitat for Humanity Properties and PennRose Properties. Ken had asked her about 308 N. 8th Street because it had a permit that stated the work was being done by Fegley's Real Estate. She stated that she doesn't know about them buying this property. She stated 941 N. Front Street is a property that someone has started to do three townhouses and seized work. There is plywood that has rotted. She requested that someone on Council can attend the homeless meetings when they do occur. Zion Church open its doors for the homeless.

Mr. Julio Guridy asked if Ms. Teti wanted Council to do something on Monday. He asked what time.

Ms. Diane Teti stated that the Homeless Commission meetings happen once a month on Monday. Jeanette volunteered, but has family obligations on Monday. She stated 1:00 or 1:30 PM.

Ms. Teresa Barnes, 214 ½ N. Front Street, stated that she has pictures of the rental property she rents from Joe Clark. She stated she has sewer in her basement. My pipe is broken and has been leaking since I moved in.

Ms. Paulette Kesch, 1028 E. Chew Street, thanked Council. She asked about the railroad crossing. They put two lights there that flash. How often those railroad tracks used. She asked about the obstructed view. She asked about the status of the playground at Irving Park, soon to be Andre Reed Park. When is the dedication?

Mr. Fran Dougherty stated that it is still active. He stated that the other parks where under study before: Jordan and Stevens. We have committed to put a playground in with the added funding we received from the Trexler Trust allocation. There will be a number of projects at the NIZ collar.

Mr. Ray O'Connell stated that it is June 22nd at 1:30 PM. We are going to rename it Andre Reed Park.

Mr. Fran Dougherty stated that the repairs for the WPA structures (stone structures) will begin at Reed Park as well.

Mr. Joseph Rawski, 107 7th Street - Whitehall, stated that Jordan Park was always great. It had a walk bridge by the basketball courts so that Whitehall citizens can get across. The grass was always cut and Whitehall citizens would have picnics. There used to be a stone pavilion on our side and a field adjacent to Jordan Pool. No one is taking care of it. What is going to be done with this to rebuild this bridge?

Mr. Fran Dougherty stated that there are no plans to rebuild any bridge or to maintain the other side. It is back to nature. There are environmental and ecological reasons why the dam came down.

Ms. Jessica Rosario, Chestnut Street, stated that Joe Clark is her landlord. She has been living there in a month and the conditions are bad. She called the city on him and showed them pictures and filed a complaint.

**5. Approval of Minutes: May 6, 2015
MINUTES APPROVED BY COMMON CONSENT**

**6. Old Business
NONE**

**7. Communications
UNITED YOUTH SURVEY – Mr. Frassetto**

Mr. Julio Guridy made a motion to suspend the Rules to move R25 – the appointing of a Police Officer up.

Mr. Joe Davis seconded the motion.

The Rules were suspended and R25 was introduced, 6 – 0

R25 – THE APPOINTING OF A POLICE OFFICER - Harold D. Bonser, II – Leighton, PA

Assistant Chief Morris stated that Mr. Bonser is on the Bill 66 list. He was previously employed as a Salisbury Township Police Officer. He is going to start and put us at 207.

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

RESOLUTION PASSED, 6 – 0

8. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

Budget and Finance: Chairperson Glazier

The committee met this evening and discussed Bill 26 for our new collector and the Committee recommended it favorably. We discussed the financial report; the next meeting is not yet scheduled.

Public Safety: Chairperson Eichenwald

The Committee has not met since the last meeting; the next meeting is scheduled for June 3rd at 6 PM.

Community and Economic Development: Chairperson Guridy

The Committee met this evening and discussed Bill 27; the next meeting is not yet scheduled.

Parks and Recreation: Chairperson Mota

The Committee met this evening and discussed Bill 28; the next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Public Works: Chairperson Davis

The Committee has not met since the last Council meeting, the next meeting is not yet scheduled. The Compliance Review Board will meet on May 27th at 6 PM.

Human Resources, Administration and Appointments: Chairperson Hendricks

The Committee has not met since the last 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
NONE**

Managing Director's Report – IT

Mr. Fran Dougherty stated that as you all know Gary Strathearn will be leaving the administration and in the interim we have appointed Jeff Stout as the Deputy Health Director as acting CFO. He will assume his duties on June 2nd.

Mr. Matt Leibert stated that we have an IT department with 14 staff members. There are nine of us tonight. He recognized those that were not at the meeting Bernadette Sposato, Joy Nicholson, Jill Trznadel, Bill Chappell, Gary Lapinski, and Elisa Coyle. He introduced the staff: Scott Rawhouser, Gerry Anthony, David Uglow, Jason Schafer, Brendan O'Connell, Jerald Hartnett, and Brian Knappenberger.

Mr. Ray O'Connell stated that Granicus is going to be very interesting as we roll that out. We are going to look for support from IT. We are going to have some training session with a lot of stuff happening on the iPad. It will help the public with livestreaming.

Mr. Julio Guridy welcomed the IT staff. We mentioned you were getting a contract module. Is that part of Eden? When we passed the budget we talked about getting Chrome.

Mr. Matt Leibert stated that is part of the Eden system. It is on the road map to get started.

Mr. Fran Dougherty stated that HR is taking the lead. It is long overdue.

Mr. Matt Leibert stated that it is a big pipeline of IT projects and that is one of them.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated it is a good program and it saves time.

Mr. Joe Davis thanked Mr. Dougherty for bringing the crew here to put the face with the name.

Mr. Dale Wiles commended the IT department on behalf of the Law department. We got all our new computers installed and I have a wonderfully new tablet on my desk. They are very dedicated to what they do.

Mr. Julio Guridy thanked IT for changing the webpage and putting Council in there.

Mr. Ray O'Connell thanked Mr. Leibert and stated that he knows they are busy. He asked Mr. Dougherty what are we looking forward down the line.

Mr. Fran Dougherty stated that he is working on a new program as well.

9. APPOINTMENTS:

Margo Hobbs	Public Arts Committee	01/01/2018
Allan Messinger (replaces Albright)	EAC	01/01/2017
Ellen Roberts (replaces Wheeler)	HARB	03/27/2018

RESOLUTION PASSED, 6 – 0

Mr. Ray O'Connell asked Ms. Roberts and Mr. Messinger to come up and say a few words.

Ms. Ellen Roberts stated that she is a resident of West Park and lived there for about seven years on Fulton Street between Hamilton and Linden, a block from the Masonic Temple. I love it very much. I have a lifelong interest in history and historic houses. I love the West Park area and committed to helping it stay established and as nice as it is. I was a history major in college and have a lot of background.

Mr. Ray O'Connell thanked Ms. Roberts for serving.

Mr. Allan Messinger stated that he applied for the position quite some time ago and it came to fruition. I got the impression that this will be dealing with issues in the parks. I am interested in issues in the parks. I am a lifelong resident of Allentown. I look forward to seeing what my responsibilities will be.

Mr. Ray O'Connell thanked Mr. Messinger for his service.

10. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE:

Mr. Ray O'Connell asked to go to B28 Jordan Park Playground Build.

B28 Jordan Park Playground Build

Amending the 2015 General Fund and Capital Fund Budgets to provide for supplemental appropriation of \$70,000 to provide funds to purchase and install playground equipment and related site amenities at Jordan Park for the June 23, 2015 community build project. The funds are a result of a grant reimbursement.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that the committee met and it passed favorably 3 – 0.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that we have a DCNR Grant for \$70,000 and this will allow us to spend the money for this project and we will be reimbursed for that grant.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that we need a minimum of 200 people for this great event on June 23rd. We need the manpower.

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

ORDINANCE PASSED, 6 – 0

Mr. Ray O'Connell thanked Ms. Taylor for her service.

B26 Northeast Revenue Fee Schedule

Approves Penalties, Interests and Fee Schedule for the collection of Delinquent Real Estate Taxes.

Mr. Jeff Glazier stated that this sets the collection rates for the new delinquent property tax collector. I will point out that these rates are lower than the previous rates and sounds like they took over the delinquent claims office at the county. It sounds like a good and efficient system. A little less expensive. Hopefully, we will get our money in a timely manner. The committee forwarded favorably.

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

Mr. Lou Hershman, 405 N. Gilmore Street, stated that as you read this financial report, they collected the delinquent taxes since January. I am correct. How did they set the fees and penalties and tonight you are approving. We have a tax claim bureau and Northeast collects the taxes for the Lehigh County. He asked Council to ask the Solicitor if they can charge these fees.

Mr. Jeff Glazier stated that I suppose one could make that argument. I am not sure if they used the previous fee schedule.

Mr. Fran Dougherty stated that we have. A great amount of time and effort was spent on this hybrid model of collecting delinquent taxes. Dale took the lead from the Solicitor's office helping our finance department navigate and understand what this meant. It does not change the fees that are already on the books the Portnoff is responsible for and in going forward all this is doing to allow us to collect under the real estate tax sale law rather than the municipal claims and tax liens. That is only because the county finally engage Northeast Revenue as their claims vendor. They lowered the fees going forward and means more money coming into us.

Mr. Julio Guridy asked if we had Portnoff.

Mr. Dale Wiles stated that we had Portnoff. Portnoff was collecting. This is just a medication to reflect the new lower fees which will actually save the citizens money. Northeast Revenue is more flexible and the hybrid model will save the taxpayers money as opposed to the fees that were required by Portnoff.

Mr. Fran Dougherty stated Northeast Revenue collected all 2014. Before 2014, Portnoff is still collecting.

Mr. Dale Wiles stated that they are still collecting and their fees are still on record.

Mr. Fran Dougherty stated that their fees need to remain on record for them to continue to collect the money prior to Northeast Revenue collecting theirs.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that we are getting rid of Portnoff and Northeast is going to start collecting.

Mr. Fran Dougherty stated that what Portnoff inherited and what they had at the time they remain until they collect.

Mr. Lou Hershman stated that he worries about the people in Allentown. We are losing too many homes through foreclosure.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that taxes are not delinquent until a year after. He stated that he is satisfied that Northeast is cheaper than Portnoff.

ORDINANCE PASSED, 6 – 0

B27 PLA Study

Amending the 2015 Capital Project Fund Budget to provide for a transfer of Seven Thousand Three Hundred Thirty One and Fifty Two Cents (\$7,331.52) from Capital Project 1635 (Old Allentown Streetscape) to Capital Project 1641 (Arts Districts Enhancements) for a Project Labor Agreement Study, prior to project bidding.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that it is basically a study to see if we need a PLA. It is for the Project that is going to take place at the Arts District Area on Sixth Street between Linden and Hamilton Streets. The reason we

need the PLA study is because a project that is \$250,000 needs that study. This project is \$475,000. The committee recommended it favorably, 2 – 0.

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

Mr. Tom Hahn, 2016 E. Highland Street, stated that he understands the dialogue. I still have a hard time in the report finding out the actual amount/summary of what is owed from this year and last year.

Mr. Ray O’Connell stated you are not talking about Bill 27 at all. That is a courtesy of the floor question. We went over the capital projects and what it is.

Mr. Tom Hahn stated on the taxes, when you talk about what we have this year and last year and the potential of what is going to happen to the people that can’t pay on the other years.

Mr. Ray O’Connell stated that is Bill 26. He asked any comments from the public on Bill 27.

ORDINANCED PASSED, 6 - 0

**11. RESOLUTIONS FOR FINAL PASSAGE:
NONE**

**12. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION:
NONE**

13. RESOLUTIONS FOR INTRODUCTION:

R23 Certificates of Appropriateness

325 N. 9th Street, 1028 W. Linden Street, 348 N. 9th Street, 38 N. 12th Street, 630 N. 6th Street, 1520 W. Chew Street, 30 N. 11th Street.

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

Mr. Ken Heffentrager asked what is this specific for. I am curious on the ones on N. 9th Street, the 300 block. What is Certificates of Appropriateness for work done on the building?

Mr. Ray O’Connell stated that it is a historical architectural review.

Mr. Joe Davis stated that when they do work in that area, they have to do work that meets certain standards requiring historical interests. They just can’t replace a window or fix a doorstep. They have to come to us and we rely on the information provided by the Historical Architectural Review Board. When they do the repairs and new additions that it will meet HARB standards.

Mr. Fran Dougherty stated that it goes to Council and does not come to the administration.

RESOLUTION PASSED, 6 – 0

R24 Seat Wall and Stairs on 7th Street, Four City Center Encroachment

Authorizes encroachment of seat wall and stairs on 7th Street, Four City Center

Mr. Tom Berger stated that is 7th and Linden Streets. This is an encroachment permit we received. All of the entrances on 7th Street due to the grade on 7th Street coming down and the evaluation being built required stairs to be put in for handicap access. I think they are doing some ramps and stairs to make it ADA compliant. They had to come into the right of way. They went in a foot and a half over the one third required for Council approval. We have no issues with this. They are doing seat walls to protect the stair area in between each one and we still will have 8 ½ feet of public right away for pedestrians.

Mr. Joe Davis stated at the corner of 7th and Hamilton we gave this approval when they were putting in the retaining walls. It worked out good until they put Lamp posts in that we were not aware of and brought the area down 4 foot. We have seven feet left. Are they going to have lamp posts?

Mr. Tom Berger stated yes and there will be trees installed and new pedestrian lights. This is actually 8 ½ feet. These are not actually seats. They are concrete walls that are going to be straight up and down. They are concrete walls with stairs behind it.

Mr. Julio Guridy asked about the construction. In the alley from 7th Street north and south. We approved one bridge and it looks like they are putting two bridges.

Mr. Tom Berger stated there is no alley behind Four City Center. That is only one span over that alley. They are in the middle of construction. That will be on Church Street. I will take a look and see. It is part of Four City Center. It was for access for the new apartments to get to the parking areas on either side. I will investigate to make sure.

Mr. Ray O'Connell asked his colleagues if they had comments on R24.

Mr. Andrew Miller, North Star Construction, stated that he is working with Ted on a lot of these projects. That is one bridge. What you are actually seeing is the roof structure and the floor structure. We will combine it to enclose the entire structure. It is a completely enclosed walkway across.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that makes sense. Thanks for clarifying that.

Mr. Ray O'Connell asked any comments from the public.

RESOLUTION PASSED, 6 – 0

14. NEW BUSINESS

NONE

15. GOOD AND WELFARE

Mr. Ray O'Connell stated that Mayfair is this weekend on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday at the Fairgrounds. Enjoy Memorial Day with your family and friends.

16. ADJOURNED: 8:24 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.