

**MINUTES  
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2023**

**Call to Order:** Council met in a Regular Meeting session on Tuesday, May 23, 2023 in Council Chambers and via ZOOM Teleconferencing. The meeting was called to order at 6:21 p.m.

**Silent Meditation and Pledge of Allegiance:** A silent moment was taken followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:** Barletta-present; Colombo-present; Mundie-present; Ondishin-present; Perry-present

**Minutes of Previous Meetings:** The minutes of the April 25, 2023 Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

**Presentations/Proclamations/Communications:** – Presentation of Certificates of Award to Junior Council. Mr. Perry presented Certificates of Award to all outgoing Junior Council Members for the year 2022-2023.

**Bid Opening:** None

**Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY):** None

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**Mr. Perry stated that City Council met, in Executive Session, before the Regular Meeting, to discuss litigation matters in the City.**

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**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

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**(1<sup>ST</sup> READING)**

**Ordinance 2023-1**

An Ordinance Authorizing the Erection of a Stop Sign at the Intersection of South Hazle Street and East Beech Street (**1<sup>st</sup> Reading**)

Presented by Barletta. Seconded by Ondishin.

**On the Question:**

Perry stated the Hazleton Police Department did a study and determined that a stop sign is needed in this area. Atty. Sean Logsdon stated the stop sign will be erected at the southwest corner of

South Hazle Street and East Beech Streets.

**Roll Call:** Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

**ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1<sup>ST</sup> READING**

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**Ordinance 2023-2**

An Ordinance Authorizing the Erection of a Stop Sign at the Intersection of Laurel Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
**(1<sup>st</sup> Reading)**

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Barletta.

**On the Question:**

Perry stated this is a dangerous section. Atty. Logsdon asked if the verbiage is for the erection, of a stop sign, to be on southeast corner of the intersection of Laurel & 8<sup>th</sup> Streets. Perry said yes.

**Roll Call:** Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

**ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1<sup>ST</sup> READING**

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**(2<sup>ND</sup> AND 3<sup>RD</sup> READINGS)**

None

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**RESOLUTIONS:**

**Resolution 2023-26**

A Resolution Honoring Agudas Israel Congregation 100<sup>th</sup> year Anniversary

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

**Roll Call:** Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

**RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**

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**Resolution 2023-27**

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF CITY OF HAZLETON, LUZERNE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING AND EMPOWERING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO APPOINT A LIAISON BETWEEN IT AND BERKHEIMER, THE DULY APPOINTED COLLECTOR OF LOCAL TAXES FOR THE CITY, FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF SHARING CONFIDENTIAL TAX INFORMATION WITH THE CITY FOR OFFICIAL PURPOSES

PRESENTED BY ONDISHIN. SECONDED BY BARLETTA.

**On the Question:**

Mundie stated Lynch is the liaison for Berkheimer for the City of Hazleton. He said, in the past, he has requested, from Berkheimer, information and as elected officials, they are allowed to obtain. He asked if this would preclude City Council from getting the information. Lynch said no. He said this resolution was requested, by Berkheimer, for their records. Mundie stated he is fine with this resolution, and is a great idea.

**Roll Call:** Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

**RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**

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**Resolution 2023-28**

A Resolution Honoring Reverend Mariusz Beczek

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Ondishin.

**Roll Call:** Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

## RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

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**New Business:** None.

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**Old Business:** None.

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**Comments from the Audience:** Dee Deakos, 43 West Mine Street, Hazleton, thanked the City for patching potholes. She asked if the City could roll them flat. Deakos said a City resident “blew” a tire on a pothole.

Deakos stated in the downtown section of the City, some street light buttons are not working. She said the Broad and Church Street button is, usually, not working.

Sherrie Dzurishin, 24 West 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Hazleton, said she is here representing the neighbors near Altmiller Playground. She handed out a list of the neighbors who have concerns near this area. She said they are a close and well-established neighborhood. Dzurishin said the neighbors are afraid to let their children and grandchildren play near the playground. She said the cars speed near Altmiller. She stated motorcycles are racing each other, but they are not kids, they are adult men. Dzurishin said there is, also, loud music played. She requested some speed bumps near Altmiller Playground. She said the quads are riding through the playground.

Perry stated Mayor Cusat has ordered speed bumps for the area. Ondishin said a neighbor has sent City Council a letter regarding these issues.

Police Chief Brian Schoonmaker reiterated that Mayor Cusat has ordered speed bumps with several being placed in this area. He said the police officers have been in this area, and walking, through the park. He said the police are using the gunshot reduction violence grant the City received. Perry asked Schoonmaker if the security camera has been replaced. Schoonmaker stated the police department had to replace the entire system and the cameras are “back up”. Mundie asked if motorcycles are allowed on the playground. Schoonmaker said it is not the normal motorcycles that are driven there. He said they are ATV’s and bikes. Mundie stated there are problems at this playground and needs to be cleaned up. He said there either needs to be more cameras, speed bumps, or more police presence. Schoonmaker said the police department are trying to push all these ideas “forward”.

Dzurishin said men are selling drugs at the playground. She said the basketball courts are bringing in the wrong crowd. She said it is loud at all times of the day.

Mundie stated the City should set some rules, for all City playgrounds, to try to make them safer, quieter, and better for the residents. Ondishin said the City needs to reconfigure the playground.

Schoonmaker said the police department were turning the lights off earlier, but the residents said they heard noises later at night, and requested the lights to be on until 1:00 a.m.

Barletta stated City Council has been working with the police and recreation departments on this issue. Schoonmaker stated the gun violence grant is allowing the City to put more police officers there. Barletta told Dzurishin to call 911 if there are any issues there.

Barletta asked if the City has “crushed” any quads from the ordinance passed a few years ago. Atty. Logsdon said not yet, but soon. Barletta stated the City needs to “crush” them to send a message.

Eugene Babula, 191 North Lee Court, Hazleton, stated he has a problem with 5-6 stray cats around his house. He went to the Hazleton Animal Shelter and was referred to Luzerne County ASPCA. Perry stated the City does not have Vector Control. Lynch said the City could contact the SPCA to trap the cats. He said he could contact the SPCA for him. Perry said the City has skunk and an opossum problem. Colombo stated the problem, in the City, is residents are feeding the cats.

Babula at the intersection of Diamond and Church Streets, cars are speeding and are getting “airborne”. He asked if a sign could be put up, at Spring Street, stating not to block the intersection. He was told to contact PENN DOT because it is a state road.

Mark Rabo, 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Hazleton, said he brought up, about ten years ago, gang violence in the City. He said there are gang initiations in the City. He asked if the problem is in the schools, or they are using the playgrounds and parks for recruiting grounds where the kids are getting shot. He read a DEA report, from 2017, stating, “Dominican DTO’s and gangs are working to strengthen their position, and centralized operations, in Hazleton. The gangs, over the last two years, have expanded into Kingston and Wilkes-Barre and other surrounding counties”.

Rabo asked if the City could get assistance, from the state, to solve this problem.

Robert Gallucci, Hazle Township resident, said it is time to speak. He said he was born and raised in the Hazleton area. He does not live in the City, but has five businesses, in the City. Gallucci said his wife had to call 911, and spoke to Officer Zapotocky, to get into their self-storage business. He said there were two break-ins, but this has fallen on “deaf” ears. He said, recently, there were political signs stolen. He said with the City “flock” cameras, he has the time and has the culprits on the cameras. Barletta stated the police will look into it. Schoonmaker said the police will look into it and find out.

Schoonmaker stated he would need to speak to Officer Zapotocky about this issue. Gallucci asked why the PA State Police could solve this in a half hour and the Hazleton Police Department could not.

**Comments from Mayor:** None-absent

**Comments from City Administrator:** None

**Comments from Council:** Barletta gave an update at Columbus Park. She said the baseball games have improved. She said the neighbors around the park wanted to thank everyone for fixing the problem. She stated she hopes this stays the same for the whole summer.

Barletta asked Schoonmaker if the police department is “ticketing” tractor trailers in the City. Schoonmaker said yes. Barletta asked if the police could ticket every 24 hours. Schoonmaker said every 24 hours if it is the same vehicle. Colombo asked if the tractor trailers could be towed. Schoonmaker said the police could tow the trailers anytime they choose. Barletta said this situation will only get worse.

Barletta asked if PENN DOT could investigate putting lines on Poplar Street because drivers think it is two lanes or speed bumps. Atty. Logsdon stated they will find the person to contact, at PENN DOT, to re-line

the street. Colombo said he contacted Harrisburg to re-line the streets. He said the residents should be parking diagonally instead of "nose-in". Barletta asked because Poplar Street is a state road, and could the City put speed bumps on the street. Schoonmaker said no.

Ondishin said he noticed the increased police patrols on the streets. Schoonmaker said it was due to the funding from the grant. He said the police officers could sign up for extra time.

Barletta asked Schoonmaker if he could send City Council a police report, monthly, on what is going on in their department. Schoonmaker said as soon as their computer system is corrected, he could send it out.

Colombo reminded all to remember the veterans on Memorial Day. On Memorial Day, there is a mass at Holy Annunciation Church at 10:00 a.m. and at St. Gabriel's Cemetery. He said the fire department, girls and boy scouts, and the Elks placed over 2,000 flags on the veteran's graves.

Perry said he noticed lines on Broad Street for parking. Perry said the City paving and milling project, in the City, has started.

**Comments from Junior Council:** Paul Neyhart said the residents have been talking about the City crime. He said he almost cried when he heard all the issues at the Altmiller Playground. He said people are being reckless, and do not care. Neyhart stated people need to "stick" together to try to solve the City problems. Neyhart agreed there is a stray cat issue. Neyhart reminded all to be mindful of your neighbors.

**Adjournment:** Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.