

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2022**

Call to Order: Council met in a Regular Meeting session on Tuesday, March 8, 2022 in Council Chamber and via ZOOM Teleconferencing. The meeting was called to order at 6:18 pm.

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

Perry said there will be a moment of silent meditation for Stanley Jimson, Jr., and all those injured in the shooting. He also said a silent moment for all those in "peril" in the Ukraine.

Roll Call: Colombo-present; Mundie-present; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-present; Perry-present

Minutes of Previous Meetings: The minutes of the February 8, 2022 Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: None

Bid Opening: None

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

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

ORDINANCES:

(1ST READING)

None

(2ND AND 3RD READINGS)

Ordinance 2022-3

Ordinance to Approve, Adopt and Enact an Ordinance Codification for the City of Hazleton, County of Luzerne, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; to Provide for the Repeal of Certain Legislation not Included Therein; to Save from Repeal Certain Other Legislation not included Therein; and to

Provide Penalties for Tampering with the Code (2nd READING)

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Perry.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon suggested that city council table this ordinance approving the codification. He said there were some errors they found in it that need to be addressed, and he will point these out to council to make sure council has a “full understanding” of what they are passing, and, then, put it on a future agenda. Perry asked if the code in on the City of Hazleton’s website. Mayor Cusat said it was taken down, today, because they found the errors. Mayor Cusat (*inaudible*).

Motion to Table:

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE TABLED

Ordinance 2022-4

Modifying Consolidated Plan for CDBG Program Year 2020 (2nd READING)

Presented by Sacco. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Perry stated this is for CAN DO Community Park- Phase III match.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 2022-11

A Resolution Authorizing the City of Hazleton to apply for a Statewide Local Share Account Grant on behalf of the Willow Foundation

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon said this application was made by the Willow Foundation. He said they laid out their mission statement and a little bit of the background about the foundation. He stated he tried to break it down to the “bare” bones as not to go to three pages. He said this is an abbreviated version of what they are looking for their project. He stated with the city clerk being on vacation, he has an amended version of this resolution that will be passed. Atty. Logsdon it will be noted that there will be two signatories for authorizing the City of Hazleton’s mayor to sign on behalf of the

City, and the Community Development Director, Mr. Zeller. He said it is the same foundation, same ordinance, and same amounts, except there will be two authorized signers, for the City, the Community Director and the mayor.

Perry said council will make an amendment to add Joe Zeller as a secondary signatory.

Motion to Amend:

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

MOTION TO AMEND PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY AS AMENDED

Resolution 2022-12 A Resolution Requesting Statewide Local Share Account Grant Funds
for City Hall Improvements Project- Phase III

Presented by Sacco. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Perry said this resolution is requesting \$550,000, to do a lot of work. Atty. Logsdon said he requests the same amendment, from council, to have the second signer, Joe Zeller, Director of Community Development. He said this is for Phase III for the City Hall project, western side of City Hall. He said it is for the entrance and steps. Atty. Logsdon said it needs a "ton" of work.

Motion to Amend:

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

MOTION TO AMEND PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY AS AMENDED

Resolution 2022-13 Accepting the Comprehensive Park Study

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Perry.

On the Question:

Perry said this is a very extensive park study. He asked if this covers all the playgrounds in the City. Mayor Cusat said it covers all the playgrounds, in Hazleton, and surrounding areas, Hazle Township and West Hazleton. Perry said it is a very comprehensive study. He said this will be very beneficial when the City does their Comprehensive Study.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2022-14 A Resolution Authorizing the City of Hazleton to apply
for a Statewide Local Share Account Grant on behalf of
the YWCA of Greater Hazleton for the Hazleton YWCA --

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon said the same amendment requested. Perry asked if these are statewide grants.
Atty. Logsdon said yes.

Motion to Amend:

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

MOTION TO AMEND PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY AS AMENDED

Resolution 2022-15 Approving Contract Between the City of Hazleton and
SEIU BJ 32

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Perry stated all city council members received a copy of the contract. He said PEL has, also, approved the contract.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

New Business: None.

Old Business: None.

Comments from the Audience: Walter Meshofski, 927 West 15th Street, said the City has just taken down the fence at the 12th Ward Playground, between Branch and McKinley Streets. He asked if the City could put the money in something better, and just let this go. He stated it is going to make more problems in the area. Meshofski said there are enough now. He said when they call about drug deals, going down there, what is going to happen when no fence is there. Meshofski stated there is no parking down there, and half of them are in his driveway. He said there are more neighbors concerned about this, but they were the only ones who came to the meeting to speak out. He said there is always a hassle down there. Meshofski said every time he calls up about a drug deal, the City does not want to deal with it. He said they tell him they do not have the time to go down. Meshofski stated they will have to take a picture of the license plates, bring it down to the police department, give them to the police department, and they take them to the narcotics section. He asked if the City could put them in one of the playgrounds that are fixed up. Meshofski stated someone is going to be killed there. He said, 25 years ago, there was a street hockey rink. He said, then, they took the rink down to build nice townhomes. He asked if they could put the money into fixing up the City trucks or into the other City playgrounds. Mayor Cusat said they could, but recreation has to be spread out "community-wide". He said there is nothing in the northwest section. Meshofski stated James Street playground is pretty nice. Perry asked if the playground is empty.

Meshofski said everything but the trees. Meshofski stated part of the tree fallings are in his car air filters. He said they took the fence down. Meshofski said there is a light in the center of the old playground. Ondishin stated some city council members are not aware of this. He said that is why the residents need to come in to discuss this. Meshofski stated 15th Street has turned into a drag racing strip. Meshofski said if the City puts some part-time policemen, in this area, at night time, the City could make up the money. Perry stated 15th Street is a state road. He said the City is looking at every avenue. He said Poplar Street is the same way.

Lori Meshofski, 927 West 15th Street, asked if there will be a fence put up, around the playground, or will it be patrolled. Mayor Cusat said there are several phases to it. He said, currently, there is a children's area planned, concession stand planned, horseshoe and cornhole, and adult wiffle ball field. Meshofski asked if there will be food trucks there. Mayor Cusat said the trucks are scheduled for City View Park program. Meshofski asked if this fence will be locked at a certain time of night. She said there are people, at all hours, of night, there. Meshofski said they could hear the swing that was left there at all hours. Mayor Cusat said when the final rendering is done, it will be made available. Meshofski asked where the parking will be. Walter Meshofski said there is no parking there right now. Lori Meshofski said this plan was not "thought" through. Atty. Logsdon stated they could bring their concerns to the design team. Meshofski said they went to Mr. Vito several years ago and asked if DPW could trim back the trees. She said Mr. Meshofski's car air filter was filled with tree needles; "\$80.00 later". Mr. Meshofski said there is no parking there. He said they dug a trench around the back at Costello's. He said when Jim Woodring lived there, he stated there was nothing put in, right on McKinley Street. Lori Meshofski said there are a lot of drug deals done there.

Perry said they will make sure they are aware of these issues once the process moves along.

Comments from Mayor: None

Comments from City Administrator: None

Comments from Council: Mundie stated some people mentioned about Thirwell and Poplar Streets. He said there is a rehabilitation business there. He said when Quigley was in office, Mundie's father would cut the curbs with a concrete saw so a wheelchair could get through. Mayor Cusat said they spoke to PENN DOT about the sidewalks when they redid the streets and the corners. He said PENN DOT is supposed to come back and replace the corners that were not made handicapped accessible when they repaved the street. Mundie asked if they could cut the concrete so the handicapped could go into the business. Mayor Cusat said there are handicapped accessibility laws, the City cannot just go "in there" and do something that is not approved. Mundie stated some handicapped people cannot get over the curb. Ondishin asked who owns the curbs. Mundie said the City does. Mayor Cusat said no; the City does not own them. Mundie asked what the City could do to expedite the process. Mayor Cusat said there is nothing the City could do. He said when they did the curbs in front, of City Hall, the City needed to get an occupancy (HOP), it took months, and were denied. Mundie asked if Mayor Cusat could expedite the process. Mayor Cusat stated he has been with the state representative on it. Mundie said this issue is urgent. He said there is a rehabilitation service there and handicapped people cannot get in. Mayor Cusat said he knows he is not the only business that has problems. He stated it is not the City's streets or curbs. He said if they make it accessible for one business, there are "1,200" others that will complain they are not getting taken care of. He said he could get his own contractor and cut the curb.

Colombo said (*inaudible*).

Mundie stated a lot of businesses are getting forms about the payroll tax. He said he spoke to Jim Hunt today. He said he was under the assumption that it is gross payroll, on the form, underneath it has self-employment income and real estate income. He said he is assuming this is net and not gross. Mayor Cusat said they have a meeting scheduled later in the week to discuss, this issue, for clarification. Mundie said it would make sense it is net. Mayor Cusat agreed.

Perry stated Stanley, who was shot and killed in the City, was an amazing young man. He said he was a high school wrestler and wanted to go into the Marines. He said their thoughts are with the other youth who is in critical condition. He said they are juveniles, and this is another “black-eye” for the City. Perry said the Hazleton Police Department is doing their best to bring this, to a conclusion, as soon as possible. He said they do not want this to happen, but the City has good people and they will step “to the plate” to get it resolved.

Perry thanked the Frank Vito and his DPW crew; always doing a good job.

Perry wished Colombo a Happy Birthday on Sunday, March 13th.

Comments from Junior Council: Diane Arias-Tejeda asked if the YWCA is going to re-open. Perry said they are trying to get money to re-open and fix it. He said it has been closed. He said they are affiliated with the Wilkes-Barre YWCA. He said they are trying to fix the pool. Perry asked if this is the second amount of money city council has approved. Atty. Logsdon said there were two previous requests for grants for the YWCA. Perry stated they are not sure how soon it will re-open, but it is moving along.

Tejeda said she will be one of the first to go to the YWCA.

Adjournment: Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned.