

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2022**

Call to Order: Council met in a Regular Meeting session on Tuesday, May 24, 2022 in Council Chamber and via ZOOM Teleconferencing. The meeting was called to order at 6:22 p.m.

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

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

Minutes of Previous Meetings: The minutes of the May 10, 2022 Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: Presentation of Certificates of Award to Junior Council

Perry presented Hazleton Junior Council members with their certificates for participating in the 2021-2022 school year. He thanked all students for participating.

Bid Opening: None

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

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

ORDINANCES:

(1ST READING)

None

(2ND AND 3RD READINGS)

None

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 2022-31

In Memoriam- Evelyn Graham

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Perry read the resolution honoring Evelyn Graham.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2022-32 A Resolution Approving the Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2022

Presented by Sacco. Seconded by Perry.

On the Question:

Atty. Sean Logsdon said he received a report from Joe Zeller, Director of Community Development Department. Zeller said the resolution reflects the annual CDBG allocation and budget. He said the City's allocation was about \$60,000 less than they were told to anticipate and, approximately, \$80,000 less than they received in 2021. Zeller stated they amended amounts to what they presented to council in 2021. He said they amended the administrative line-amount to reflect the maximum 20% "cap" and removed money, from clearance, as they have money in there that was not spent yet and applied the difference to the streets line to keep it as it was, originally, proposed.

Perry stated it is \$83,000 less than what the City expected to receive. Atty. Logsdon said yes.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2022-33 A Resolution Requesting Local Share Account Funds for the Dominican House "La Casa Dominicana De Hazleton"

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Perry stated the total amount requested is \$376,750. He said he hopes this happens.

Victor Perez, President of the Dominican House of Hazleton, 32 East Broad Street, stated the Dominican House is requesting to city council members to approve this grant. He said this project is essential in maintaining and improving diversity and empowerment of services for citizens of all nationalities and races of the Greater Hazleton Area. He stated the Dominican House is an essential part of the diverse Hazleton community that improves and provides services for U.S. citizenship, English as a second language education, family counseling, domestic violence sheltering, multi-cultural involvement, and workshops for public assistance services. Perez stated, every day, the Dominican House receives about 350 people in their location. They provide food for

free for anybody and everyone is welcome. He said anyone who needs support is welcome. Perez said they are celebrating their 17-year anniversary. He stated they never received any grant. He thanked State Representative Robert Schnee for his idea for this grant for them.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2022-34 Resolution Authorizing Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

Presented by Sacco. Seconded by Perry.

On the Question:

Perry stated this is a plan that involved Hazleton, Hazle Township and West Hazleton. He said this will allow the City to look 10 years "out". He said they are all "intertwined" with housing, development, and traffic flow. He said the stakeholders are the citizens and they could all participate in what will be happening in their community. Perry said it is growing quickly. He said there could be around 30 million square feet of warehousing, including Hazle Township and West Hazleton. He said they have waited more than one year for this until the funding was available.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2022-35 Awarding the Contract for the Greater Hazleton Comprehensive Plan

Presented by Sacco. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Perry stated they are awarding the contract to Bergmann Architects, Engineers, and Consultants. He said they interviewed three different companies. Perry said the people interviewing the companies included Dan Lynch, Jim Montone- Hazle Township Supervisor, CAN DO representatives and West Hazleton representatives. He stated they agreed this was the best company. Perry said it will be a long process, but they are very good at what they do.

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: Robert Yevak, 1011 North Locust Street, Hazleton, said it was a great thing city council members did in honoring Evelyn Graham tonight. He stated Graham donated money, \$50,000, for Correale Stadium to be constructed for Hazleton Little League. He said once the work started, Seymour Graham wrote another check for \$50,000 to continue the project.

Yevak said he started the first Handicapped League, for kids, in the state of PA. He said Graham sent a crew up to one field to widen the paths for their wheelchairs to go through.

Yevak said Graham, also, wrote a check to him for \$5,000 for Jim Thorpe, for their Opera House.

Ricky DeLucca, 191 North Cedar Street, Hazleton, asked when the new Quality of Life Ordinance began. Perry stated it is in effect now. DeLucca asked who sets the citations. Sacco said the Code Department, at the moment. DeLucca said there are violations, going on, currently, with this contract with the City towing. He said a "victim of a crime" is supposed to pay \$50.00 not \$1,600. He stated numerous reports were done and sent to the Hazleton City Police Chief and the mayor. He said they are formally warned that Paul's Towing is violating the towing contract. DeLucca asked what is going to be done. Atty. Logsdon said this is the first they are seeing this. He said it is the first time DeLucca is appearing to talk about this. DeLucca said Atty. Logsdon represented Paul's Towing at the State Police Barracks before. He said there is a lot of stuff going on with this contract, and he is "covering" for the mayor. DeLucca said the contract is illegal. Atty. Logsdon said they will not comment. He said they could look at the documents and follow-up. DeLucca said this means nothing will be done. Atty. Logsdon said DeLucca "dumped" these documents in front of them. He said they need to look at the documents they brought in. DeLucca said people are being overcharged to get their cars back. He said their original tow fees were never changed, per Mayor Cusat, under deposition, and never brought before city council. He stated Paul's Towing, also, requires a 7-foot fence to be installed, and never was put up. DeLucca stated Eric Hernandez, Hazleton Police officer, was, also, working for Paul's Towing.

Gene Babula, North Lee Court, said the Quality-of-Life Ordinance just passed in the City. He said he should not be hearing the loud music and noises at night. He asked who, in the City, is responsible for this ordinance. Perry stated the police are to be called. He said there is a separate Noise Ordinance in the City. Babula said he called 911 three times, over the weekend, and the police gave them a warning, but it is never resolved. He said he came to meetings before and is frustrated.

Mundie stated a lot of reasons people are leaving the City is due to the noise issue. He said his solution is the first time the police are called to respond; they would give them a warning. If they go back there, a second time, they need to give everyone a ticket, even neighbors, and let Joe Zola "sort it out". Perry asked where the location is. Babula said it is North Lee Court, by Diamond Ave and Church Street. He said he has handicapped parking. Babula said he does not know why he cannot park in front of his house. He said he is going to start parking his car in front of his house. He said there was a tractor trailer, recently, parked on the sidewalk. Sacco said, unfortunately, everything goes through 911, non-emergency. He said if he gets a citation, he will not pay it.

Perry asked if someone is parking in a handicapped spot if the City tows. He asked what the City procedure is. Perry asked Police Chief Schoonmaker to respond to the noise issue. Schoonmaker said with noise complaints, the residents must call 911 and they do not accept calls through the 4940 number. He said the phone # is, active, and goes to a voicemail box, but everything else needs to go through, either 911 or the non-emergency number. He said there is a non-emergency number on the Hazleton Facebook site. He stated the police could, then, create a document, how many times they went to the

house, which house they went to and why they were cited. Sacco asked if someone is cited, does the person making the call, have to show up at Judge Zola's office.

Linda DeAndrea, North Lee Court, Hazleton, asked who "oversees" Mr. Pedri. She said she contacted Pedri, a few times, about the lawyer sign on Church Street, that it is too high. She said the vehicles have to go "way out" on Church Street to pull out from Spring Street. Mundie said this is a hazardous and needs to be taken care of. Atty. Logsdon said this would be a zoning issue. DeAndrea said she texted Pedri, this morning, but Pedri never responded.

Comments from Mayor: None-absent.

Comments from City Administrator: None

Comments from Council: Mundie asked Schoonmaker if a BYOB restaurant allows people to bring their own wine or liquor. He asked if there is a permit for a BYOB. Schoonmaker said there is a separate ordinance, in the City, for a BYOB. Mundie asked if the establishment needs a permit. Schoonmaker said yes.

Mundie stated Evelyn Graham contributed to many charities. He said she cared about the City more than "anyone will ever know". Mundie said Graham did not want her name mentioned.

Yevak said while constructing the Mount Laurel Pool, for the community, Graham always wanted the best equipment installed. Mundie stated the Graham family spent \$2,000,000 on the pool. He said she wanted to help people.

Mundie stated he helped Colombo load the truck, for Ukraine, at Berger's Auto. He asked if city council could pass a resolution to help some of the Ukraine people. He said they could relocate to the City. Mundie said Catholic Social Services and other charities could help them move here. Atty. Logsdon said they could do this and put something together. He agreed he could do this. He said the City would not have authority over asylum or immigration, but the City would be willing to work with any group.

Colombo said there are already some Ukraine residents who are, already, here. He said there are many people who need their help.

Colombo said there will never be another Evelyn Graham and she will be, truly, missed.

Colombo reminded all that this coming Monday is Memorial Day. He said there are several events scheduled. He said to thank the military personnel when you see them. He said there will be a mass at Holy Annunciation Church at 10:00 a.m. followed by a service at the cemetery.

Colombo thanked the DPW, fire and police Departments and all the other departments for all their outstanding work they are doing.

Perry thanked all the Junior Council members. He said he started this program several years ago and hopes it continues when he is gone.

Perry stated Graham was an amazing person.

Perry thanked all the City departments.

Perry asked Vito if all the flags are out in the City. Vito stated they are all out. Perry said the police department and DPW department is understaffed but doing the best they could.

Perry wished everyone a Happy Memorial Day.

Comments from Junior Council: None.

Adjournment: Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.