

Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa.

January 24, 2024

Easton, Pa
Wednesday
January 24, 2024
6:00 p.m.

City Council met in stated session at the above date and time, in Council Chambers, located on the Third Floor of City Hall, 123 S. Third Street, to consider any business that may lawfully be brought before the body.

The invocation was given by Mayor Panto, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Brown, Edinger, Pintabone, Rose, Ruggles, Sultana, Panto (7)

Absent: None (0)

Also participating in the meeting were Karen Roscioli, City Clerk, Luis Campos, City Administrator, Mark Lysynecky, Director of Finance, David Hopkins, Director of Public Works, and Joel Scheer, City Solicitor. At the beginning of the meeting there were seven (11) other participants present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved on motion of Mr. Pintabone seconded by Dr. Ruggles by the following vote:

Yeas: Edinger, Pintabone, Rose, Ruggles, Sultana, Panto, Brown (7)

Nays: None (0)

ACTION ON THE MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Brown seconded by Mr. Pintabone to approve the January 10, 2024 meeting minutes. The minutes were approved by the following vote.

Yeas: Pintabone, Rose, Ruggles, Sultana, Panto, Brown, Edinger (7)

Nays: None (0)

PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Ian Kindle, chair of the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) of Easton. Mr. Kindle introduced Nick Gorski Vice Chair and Tony Klapatch. Mr. Kindle presented the EAC 2023

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accomplishments report (PowerPoint slides attached). Dr. Ruggles brought a concern to Mr. Kindles. Dr. Ruggles was walking along the KSAT where the ramp comes from Lafayette, he noticed since the dam was removed, there is some bank erosion noting the erosion is close to the stream. There are buildings close to the stream. Further down the trail where the dam was removed on the Upstream side there is erosion on both sides. Mr. Kindle responded stating it could come from the re-establishment of the stream corridor since they have be impacted by those dams. Mr. Kindle said he will take a look at the situation.

Mayor Panto advised Mr. Kindle he will get someone appointed by the Planning Commission to be a member. City Council adopted the goals on reduction of greenhouse emissions of 30% by 2030 and 80 by 2050. We may have to change that if recommending net zero by 2050. The Climate Action plan would have to be amended by City Council. Dr Ruggles discussed hybrid vehicles.

Tony Klapatch, 1974 Mercer Way Easton, Pa. 18040. Mr. Klapatch had a questions on Bill #1, Garage Parking Fees. The pending legislation listed on the City's website states there is an exhibit A but nothing was attached to the Bill. Mayor Panto discussed with Mr. Klapatch the old fees and new parking fees.

Artie Ravitz, 144 Church St, Easton, Pa. Inquiring what records will be destroyed under Resolution to destroy police records. Dr. Ruggles stated the items are outdated and destroyed according to the statute of limitations in Pennsylvania

Councilman Pintabone stated he received two emails advising the sound quality is poor.

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were voted on for approval

- (a) Resolution approving a COA for 400 Northampton Street
- (b) Resolution approving a COA for 123 S. 3rd Street
- (c) Resolution approving a COA for 101 S. 3rd Street
- (d) Resolution approving destruction of police records (records list attached)
- (e) Resolution appointing Ledrew "Garey" Davis as Commissioner of Softball
- (f) Resolution approving an appointment to the City Clerk's Position
- (g) Resolution approving Codes and Planning Supervisor as new job description

Mayor Panto requested to move the Salary and Wage for Codes and Planning Supervisor from Consent Agenda to New business.

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Dr Ruggles brought to the attention of Council the COA for 400 Northampton St is removing a fire escape. Mayor Panto replied that code department looked at it and approved the plans.

Yeas: Brown, Edinger, Panto, Pintabone, Rose, Ruggles, Sultana (7)

Nays: None (0)

REPORTS RECEIVED BY COUNCIL

No reports were received by Council.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Brown, Chairperson of the Finance Committee stated later in the meeting he will introduce Bill #2 amending the 2023 Healthcare fund/close out.

Mr. Pintabone, Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee advised we have a couple grants we were awarded. First is a grant from Northampton County affordable housing for two affordable owner-occupied units for \$40,000 southside West Cooper and Coal Streets. Another grant from Pennsylvania Environmental Commission Water Trails mini grants \$2473 to buy trash cans, dog waste cans and install signage as part of the park renovations. Another grant for \$18,000 from Northampton County Hotel Tax to support Space Fest \$18,000. And a grant for \$50,000 from Greenways Trail and Recreation program Two Riverfront planning to generate plans for Waterfront improvements from Route 22 South along Lehigh Drive

Mrs. Rose, Chairperson of the Planning & Code Committee. Last Friday Mrs. Rose met with Stephen Nowroski Planning and Codes Director who gave Mrs. Rose background resources for her role on the Planning and Code Committee. She also plans on working with the new Planning and Codes Director once they are hired. She attended two Lehigh Valley Planning Commission events. One was a virtual meeting on January 11 that focused on increasing equitable access to planning in the Lehigh Valley. The other meeting was held in person on January 17. This. Lehigh Valley Workshop focused on the priority climate action plan for transportation decarbonization.

Dr. Ruggles, Chairperson of the Public Safety Committee Dr. Ruggles stated we have a Committee Meeting last night and discussed different ways we could enhance safety in the city. We formed two subcommittees. One to look at the city's response in disasters and the second one to look items we can address that will enhance our safety in the city. Reports by agencies such as Brookings Institute, look at how community can enhance their safety and have specific things they state. We will take a look at those items and see which ones could apply to our city. We look at this in the next couple months. Also, Dr Ruggles stated he, Mr. Campos and the Mayor met with a representative from the state who is taking a look at potential hydroelectric facilities in Easton or near Easton.

Mr. Edinger, Chairperson of the Public Works Committee. Stated he will introduce Resolution with Pennoni Associates for design work.

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Mrs. Sultana, Chairperson of the Administration Committee at last night's meeting Mr. Campos discussed adding a new position to Department of Codes and Planning. The new position provides additional managerial support to the department and directly supports the director.

Mr. Scheer, City Solicitor states he was also at the meeting regarding hydroelectric through water resources.

Mayor Panto states Dave Hopkins is in the process of working with the YMCA. Our intent is to open both pools every day this summer but is dependent on getting lifeguards.

Mayor Panto also announced in the next couple years we will build a Community Center in the West Ward. Mayor Panto will be forming a capital campaign committee for the center and told council if they know anyone who would like to serve on that committee they would need to raise at least 50% of \$6 million needed for the Community Center. Additionally, we must raise half a million dollars for a skateboard park.

Mayor Panto confirmed with Dave Hopkins, the Peace Candle will come down January 30.

Mayor and Mr. Campos attended the Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Economic Outlook today. The Community Spotlight Award went to the Crayola Experience in Easton.

Mayor Panto referenced the grant for Space Fest Mr. Pintabone mentioned in his report. Stating it was held at Twelfth St last year and was very well attended and educational. Space Fest is scheduled for May 18th and 19th.

We have five recruits in the fire academy who will be coming out of training in the next 10 weeks.

Mayor Panto read a letter he received from the Pennsylvania Municipal League (letter attached to minutes)

Mr. Campos Director of Planning and Codes, Stephen Nowroski is leaving the City of Easton and will be the Township Manager of Moore Township. At the Committee last evening the department was discussed with opportunities that could exist for managing the department. One is on the agenda tonight for approval.

Mr. Campos addressed Dr. Ruggles stating he didn't get a chance to call today but after tonight's meeting perhaps Mr. Brown, Mrs. Rose and Mr. Campos and Dr Ruggles could meet to get a date on the calendar.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence received by Council.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

The next item on the Agenda was a Resolution approving design work and new signals by Pennoni \$31,000

The following Resolution was introduced by Mr. Edinger

17-2024

The above Resolution was approved on motion by Mr. Edinger and Mr. Pintabone by the following vote?

Before the vote, Mr. Hopkins spoke about the intersection where the new design work will be done.

Yeas: Panto, Pintabone, Rose, Ruggles, Sultana, Brown, Edinger (7)

Nays: None (0)

Bill No. 1 – An Ordinance amending Section 285-42 - Parking Garage Fees was introduced by Mayor Panto and ordered processed for adoption.

Dr. Ruggles states he has a question on two items on this Bill. On Exhibit A look at 1 a and b defines the time frame there will be a \$1 and a \$3 fee. It leaves out the month of April. Does it belong under “a” with a \$1 fee or “b” with a \$3 fee.

Mr. Campos states it should go to April 30, we will make the correction for the next meeting.

Dr. Ruggles also pointed out under 2 b South Third Street Garage parking for Government employees shows y:00 to 5:00. Correction will be made to the ordinance at a later date.

Bill No. 2 - An Ordinance amending 2023 Health Funds was introduced by Mr. Brown and ordered processed for adoption.

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The next item on the Agenda was a Resolution approving Salary and Wage for the Code and Planning Supervisor.

The following Resolution was introduced by Mrs. Sultana.

18-2024

The Resolution was approved on a motion by Mr. Pintabone and Mr. Brown by the following vote:

Yeas: Ruggles, Sultana, Brown, Edinger, Panto, Pintabone, Rose (7)

Nays: None (0)

PUBLIC COMMENT

Melody Rogers, 710 W. Berwick St. Mrs. Rogers directed a question to Dave Hopkins. For Iron and Berwick St. accidents at this location all the time. Wants to know how to get a four-way stop there. Mr. Hopkins answered, I couldn't hear Hopkins response because he was not at a mic. Berwick and Center, needs crossing guard as well. Mrs. Rogers spoke to Easton School District, Chief Scalzo about this. Crossing guard also needed at Packer and Berwick, Iron and Berwick and Seitz and Berwick Sts. Due to speeding traffic, students cannot cross the street. Mayor Panto and Mr. Hopkins stated a third party is contracted to hire crossing guards. Mr. Pintabone interjected stated the School District is ordained to identify where the guards are needed.

Mrs. Rogers has tried a few times from different parties to get crossing guards, but still has not been successful. She is very concerned for the welfare of the children. Mr. Pintabone advised Mrs. Rogers to bring this to the school board.

Mayor Panto stated she has his support and will put it in the budget for next year

Sal Pugliese, 2225 Hackett Ave in Palmer Township. Mr. Pugliese is frustrated with the corner of 13th and Elm St. The road is very narrow and can't handle 53 foot trailers, a tractor and a tow truck. Has had many incidents because the trucks cant get thru. And they (Easton Auto Body) are "dumping back there". Notified the city many times, nothing gets done. He called the EPA Now he is being harassed has his truck on his private property which is licensed and insured but not inspected. He is afraid he will get ticketed for \$1000. Doesn't have money to fix the truck.

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No one regulating Easton Auto Body with their dumping. Mayor promised Mr. Pugliese he will look into this.

Artie Ravitz, 144 Church St. In October Council decided not to discuss two resolutions proposed about a cease fire in the Middle East. Shortly after, he decided to go to Israel. He met the Mayor of the town. The Mayor of that town asked Ravita and explained what our City Council did not to put the onerous on Israel for the invasion. That Mayor wanted to write a letter thanks to Mayor Panto and Council. Mr. Ravitz read the letter aloud.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m. on motion of Dr. Ruggles and Mr. Pintabone by the following vote:

Yeas: Rose, Ruggles, Sultana, Panto, Brown, Pintabone, Edinger (7)

Nays: None (0)

Karen Roscioli
City Clerk