

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2024**

Call to Order: Council met in a Regular Meeting session on Tuesday, September 10, 2024 in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 6:12 p.m.

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

Roll Call: Bruno-present; Colombo-present; Nilles-present; Ondishin-present; Perry-present

Minutes of Previous Meetings: The minutes of the August 13, 2024 Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: Alterra Recycling Co. to discuss proposed occupation of the old Dorr-Oliver Building for plastics recycling.

James Horrox, Director of Recycling Development for Alterra Recycling Co., stated Alterra Recycling is based out of Akron, Ohio, where their corporate office is located. Also, present were Bill Alcon- Chief Development Officer, and Omar Terrie- Head of Public Relations and Public Affairs.

Horrox said he is very familiar with our area and people.

Alterra is looking to build and operate an advanced recycling center. Horrox stated they identified a potential location which is a brownfield site in an industrial-zoned area. It is a justice 40 incentive community along with EPA climate and economic justice screening areas. Alterra would provide 100 high-skilled jobs for the community. He said this would bring about 150-170 construction and engineering jobs in the area. Horrox stated the project would take about 3 years and the total investment is \$300,000,000. He stated this is the first facility that Alterra is planning, along with two or three more throughout the nation. Alterra would process about 80,000 tons of plastic per year, keeping it out of landfills. Alterra has met with CAN DO, United Mine Workers, Mayor Cusat's office, and Congressman Cartwright's office and have received written support from each office.

Omar Terrie, Head of Public Relations and Public Affairs, welcomed City Council members to tour the site. He said Alterra partners with, in Akron, Ohio- Akron Urban League, Akron Boys and Girls Clubs, Akron Public Schools, Keep Akron Beautiful, The Akron Marathon Organization, Greater Akron Chamber, and Elevate Akron.

Bilal Khan, Chief Development Officer, said they hire people who come from different backgrounds. Alterra operates under the strict rules of the EPA. He stated Alterra has never had an audit done. Alterra operates under the U.S. Clean Air Act.

Perry asked what impact the recycling center, in the old Dorr Oliver building, would have in the neighborhood with the noise and smell. Horrox stated, "this is a concern". He stated Hazleton is similar to Akron, Ohio. He said Alterra is strictly regulated for whatever pollutants would be emitted into the air. He said Alterra would ship their material, outbound, by rail tankers and there will be no truck outbound truck traffic, only inbound traffic.

Ondishin asked if Alterra only does plastics. He asked if they recycle any fluids. Horrox said no fluids, only plastics.

Horrox stated Alterra wants to be transparent about their operations. He said the plastics process is sizing, sorting, shredding and preparing plastics.

Ondishin asked how the product comes to the facility. Horrox stated, "by truck loads".

Perry asked if the City residents would be able to have their plastics recycled. Horrox said yes.

Bid Opening: None

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): Dee Deakos, 43 West Mine Street, Hazleton, spoke of Resolutions 2024-41 & 2024-42. She asked if the bids were opened in front of City Council. Atty. Logsdon stated the bids were opened in the Community Development office. Deakos asked why and stated they should be opened publicly.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

ORDINANCES:

(1ST READING)

Ordinance 2024-15

An Ordinance Repealing Chapter 354, ARTICLE I of the Code of City of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, "Vacant and Abandoned Property Registration", and Replacing with a New Chapter 354, ARTICLE I, to be Entitled, "Registration of Foreclosing Mortgages and Vacant Property" **(1st READING)**

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon said a representative from Hera Property Registry is present to speak.

Kevin Sidella, National Municipal Consultant for Hera, said Hera Property Registry performs vacant property registries for about 185 municipalities around the country, with 40 of Pennsylvania municipalities. He said Hera would like to change the City ordinance to be "in-line" with the other municipalities ordinances. He said the City ordinance needs to expand to homes that are in foreclosures. Hera registers about 10,000 properties, nationwide, per month.

Ondishin asked if Hera registers commercial properties. Sidella said yes, commercial and residential properties. He stated the City of Wilkes-Barre made \$36,000 last year.

Perry asked who would have access to the registry. Sidella said City employees, elected officials,

and the police department. Perry asked how this registry is accessed. Sidella said the registry is on-line.

Bruno asked how long the agreement is for. Sidella stated it is a two-year agreement. He said there is a 60-day agreement if the City would like to be removed from the program.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1ST READING

Ordinance 2024-16

An Ordinance Authorizing the Erection of Stop Signs and Create a 4-way Intersection at the Corner of 9th Street and Pardee Street
(1ST READING)

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Mayor Cusat said it should be a four-way stop sign. He said the Hazleton School District is asking for a four-way stop sign.

MOTION TO AMEND:

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

MOTION TO AMEND PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Roll Call (AS AMENDED): Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY AS AMENDED ON 1ST READING

(2ND AND 3RD READINGS)

Ordinance 2024-11

An Ordinance Establishing a Parking by Permit Only Zone on East Diamond Avenue and Cleveland Streets (2nd READING)

MOTION TO REMOVE FROM TABLE:

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

MOTION TO REMOVE FROM TABLE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon stated he changed the permits in the ordinance. Mayor Cusat said there needs to be a policy in place as to who could apply for a permit if it is permanent. Nilles stated the City would distribute the permits. Mayor Cusat said several items need to be amended in the ordinance.

Nilles suggested table the ordinance. Mayor Cusat said City Council needs to have a WORK SESSION to create a policy, and then write the ordinance.

MOTION TO TABLE:

Presented by Ondishin. Seconded by Bruno.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE TABLED

Ordinance 2024-12

An Ordinance Establishing a Parking by Permit Only Zone on West 6th Street (2nd READING)

NO MOTION TO REMOVE FROM TABLE- ORDINANCE FAILS

Ordinance 2024-14

An Ordinance Amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Hazleton, Part II, Chapter 350, Property Maintenance, Article II, Quality of Life (2nd READING)

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Mayor Cusat said the fee could not be raised to \$2,000. He said the magistrate office fee is \$1,000 maximum.

MOTION TO AMEND:

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Nilles.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

MOTION TO AMEND PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY AS AMENDED

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 2024-38 A Resolution Requesting Luzerne County Local Share Account Grant Funds for Fire Station Water Remediation & Exhaust Removal Upgrades for the City of Hazleton Fire Department

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Nilles.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2024-39 A Resolution Requesting Luzerne County Local Share Account Grant Funds for One Multipurpose Utility Vehicle for the City of Hazleton Department of Public Works

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Colombo.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2024-40

Modifying Consolidated Plan for CDBGB Program Fiscal Year 2020

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Perry asked why this is for the year 2020. Mayor Cusat stated this is "old money". The City finished the hockey rink and had to move the money to another budget. He said the street signs were "over budget".

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2024-41

A Resolution Authorizing the City of Hazleton to Award Bids for the City of Hazleton City Hall Chimney Improvements Project

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Perry stated the contract was awarded to Caretti Restoration and Preservation Services, LLC.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2024 – 42

A Resolution Authorizing the City of Hazleton to Award Bids for the City of Hazleton City Hall Roof Repair/Replacement Project

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Ondishin asked who approves the bids for City contracts. Mayor Cusat stated the City engineers were at City Hall to compare the company applications and bids, along with several contractors present. Perry stated these bids were opened in the Community Development office. Bruno asked what the alternates that were added and deducted. Mayor Cusat said he asked for a price for a metal roof. He said this was a deduction because the contractor could not put a metal roof on the "swell". Perry said Barry Isett really "scrutinizes" the bids. City Council members asked for a breakdown of the bids. Mayor Cusat stated there is a spreadsheet in Community Development.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2024-43

Modifying Consolidated Plan for CDBG-CV Program Year 2020

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Mayor Cusat said there was some COVID money left over and the administrative part of the money. He said this money was moved to the CAN-DO Park downtown. Perry asked if the park was finished. Mayor Cusat stated there are a couple more phases left to do. He stated after the first grass cutting, the park could be turned over to the City.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

New Business: None

Old Business: None

Comments from the Audience: Dee Deakos, 43 West Mine Street, Hazleton thanked Colombo and Ondishin for talking to the DPW to get her issue completed.

Deakos spoke of the City parking. She asked what the active hours are for the downtown parking meters. Mayor Cusat said he believes the times are 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. He stated the City Code Book is on the website, and to check there for the times. Deakos said the handicapped parking meters are in the middle of the block. Deakos said this “defeats the purpose”. Mayor Cusat said any handicapped placard is good for two hours at any meter.

Deakos said the City should consider an LSA grant for street signs. Mayor Cusat said the City has been making street signs with a vinyl cutter. She suggested another LSA grant for parking signs stating, “No parking from here to corner.” She suggested another LSA grant to get solar panels for City Hal, new Police Department building, and the City garage.

Todd Tini, 1501 E. Broad Street, Hazleton, spoke of the EMA program for Luzerne County. He asked if there was a major disaster, who is trained to help. He said he researched the Community Emergency Response Team, part of FEMA and Homeland Security. Nilles said there is Luzerne County EMA and a FEMA representative for the City of Hazleton. Tini asked why there wasn't a program, put “into play”, for this community. Tini said this is not posted on Luzerne County website. Nilles said the City Fire and Police Departments are automatically on the response program. Police Chief Schoonmaker stated that if Hazleton City is busy, then West Hazleton borough will respond, as well as Hazle Township. Atty. Logsdon said, on the Luzerne County website, it is listed that Luzerne County has an Emergency Operation Center in times of disaster, and an Emergency Management Coordinator. Nilles told Tino to talk to Lucy at Luzerne County EMA. He said, twice a year, Luzerne County EMA performs disaster drills.

Carmen Longo, 200 West Kiefer Ave, Hazleton, asked if “anyone has a solution for this”. He handed Mayor Cusat photographs and a “zip drive” regarding issues at the West Court Playground. Perry stated he watched some people playing softball, at the playground, and saw nothing out of the ordinary. Ondishin said if he sees anything illegal, he needs to call the City police. Schoonmaker said every time the police officers respond to the playground, the officers find no alcohol. Longo said these activities have been going on for 10 years.

Comments from Mayor: Mayor Cusat stated there will be a 911 Memorial Mass at Holy Annunciation Church at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Cusat said Eckley Paving is not making PENN DOT-approved asphalt for the rest of the year. He said the City will use cold patch to patch some potholes. Mayor Cusat said \$600,000 was spent on paving in the City.

Mayor Cusat stated Conahan Drive will be completed in 2025.

Mayor Cusat said the City won a People's Choice Award, for Best Event, for Rockin' the Mountain Event.

Mayor Cusat stated the City's extra Conahan Street's milling's will be transported to City View Park for leveling.

Comments from City Administrator: None-absent

Comments from Council: Nilles asked when the Parking Sticks will be installed in the City. Mayor Cusat said he and Schoonmaker met with the representative and should be installed shortly.

Schoonmaker said they moved the time up, so they are installed before winter. He said they verified the City locations. Mayor Cusat said the City gave them a list of locations that would be good, i.e.- by schools, and fire hydrants. Schoonmaker said there will be about 25 locations the sticks will be placed. Mayor Cusat said some locations will need to have foundations in concrete.

Nilles asked where the City is with the audits. Mayor Cusat said the City received the draft audit for year 2021. He said the City draft for year 2023 should be received by December, 2024.

Perry stated the City needs more housing. He said there are more people moving into a single home.

Ondishin thanked Mayor Cusat for their Rotary Event at City View Park. He said the DPW helped them. Ondishin asked if part of City View Park could be paved. Mayor Cusat said the area of the ice cream stand and mini golf, funds will pave the area where the cars are parked.

Nilles asked if someone could talk to the U.S. Postal Service on Wyoming Street. He said the City gave them permission, several months ago, to paint parking spots. He said nothing is up to code.

Colombo thanked the City Fire, Police and Code Departments for all their work.

Colombo said the City crosswalks are being painted. He asked if there could be cones placed on Poplar and 15th Streets for the children to cross to school. Schoonmaker said he will do some research to get some cones to place on the streets.

Adjournment: Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.