

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

March 23, 2016

Easton, Pa
Wednesday
March 23, 2016
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. 3rd Street, Easton Pa., to consider any business that may lawfully be brought before the body and to conduct Public Hearings regarding a request to vacate a portion Church Street, for the 2015 CDBG Program, and to receive the Mayor's State of the City Address.

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Brown, Edinger, Melan, O'Connell, Ruggles, Vulcano, Panto (7)
Absent: None (0)

Also in attendance were Thomas A. Hess, City Clerk, Tony Bassil, City Controller, William Murphy, City Solicitor and Joel Scheer, Assistant City Solicitor. There were seventeen other persons present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion of Dr. Ruggles and Mr. Melan, the Agenda was approved by the following vote:

Yeas: Brown, Edinger, Melan, O'Connell, Ruggles, Vulcano, Panto (7)
Nays: None (0)

ACTION ON MINUTES

On motion of Mr. Brown and Mrs. Vulcano the March 9, 2016 Council Meeting minutes, as submitted, were approved by the following vote:

Yeas: Edinger, Melan, O'Connell, Ruggles, Vulcano, Panto, Brown (7)
Nays: None (0)

PUBLIC HEARING

Proposed vacation of a portion of Church Street

At 6:02 p.m., Mayor Panto opened the Public Hearing and turned it over to Dr. Ruggles, who read the following:

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“On February 11, 2016, the City received petitions from Dana Nederostek and Hong Yu, owners of 22 N. 6th Street, requesting the vacation of a portion of Church Street between N. 6th Street and Hester Street. The City also received Consents to Vacation of Church Street west of N. 6th Street from North 601 LLC and the Easton Housing Authority adjacent property owners, who would be affected by the vacation.”

“In accordance with 3rd Class City Code, the following was done:

1. Bill 8, An Ordinance vacating Church Street from N. 6th Street to Hester Street was introduced on February 24, 2016 and placed on the City’s Web Site for public review.
2. Hand Bills were placed at three locations on Church Street between N. 6th Street and Hester Street on March 1, 2016, which notified the public of the proposed vacation of that portion of Church Street and informing them of a Public Hearing to be held on March 23, 2016 regarding this matter.
3. Legal notices were placed in the Express Times and on lehighvalley.com once a week for three weeks on March 2, 9, and 16, 2016, informing the public of the considered vacation and of the date of the Public Hearing

“Tonight this Public Hearing is being held to receive any public input on this matter.”

“Attorney Cohen, Counsel for the requesters, is in attendance to address Counsel and to answer any question which Council or the audience may have.

Attorney Daniel Cohen, 400 Northampton Street, Attorney for the petitioners, came forward and said that the petition was self explanatory but for the purpose of the record, he said that he would like to present a series of photographs regarding the building located at 22 N. 6th Street which showed the before and after what the owners have done with the property. He said that his clients bought the property in 2013, have gone through all the City’s approval processes and plan to open a dance studio at that property. He said that a problem has developed over the years that the portion of Church Street, between N. 6th Street and Hester Street has become a totally crime ridden area. He said that his clients desire to enclose that area of Church Street with fencing, but would allow access by the Housing Authority and for the neighbors of the property on N. 6th Street. He said that his clients would be at the property during the day, and if the neighbors needed access to Hester Street, they could go to his clients building to have them grant access to them. He said that after hours the neighbors would have to contact the police to gain access. He said that this closure is also supported by the Chief of Police from his letter dated March 23, 2016, which he read into the record, (see attachment). He said that lighting was being planned along the proposed vacated portion of Church Street and a Knox Box would be place on site for the purpose of Police, Fire and Public Service departments’ access.

Mr. Brown asked where the fencing would be located.

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The fenced in area was described by Attorney Cohen, and said that it was to be erected to restrict foot traffic on a regular basis.

Mrs. Vulcano asked if the property could be access from Northampton Street.

Attorney Cohen said that the rear of the property could be accessed by pedestrians.

Dr. Ruggles asked questions regarding the water runoff from the building, which were answered by Ms. Nederostek, one of the owners of the building.

Dr. Ruggles asked for any comments from the audience.

Gene Lattig, 28 N. 6th Street, said that he was concerned that N. 6th Street residents would not have access to the rear of their properties on Hester Street.

Attorney Cohen said that his clients would be in the building during the day, and they could allow the residents access if needed, and that the residents could contact the Police Department if they had to gain access at other hours.

Mayor Panto asked Attorney Cohen if it was acceptable to his clients, to have it in the record that the neighbors to the property on N. 6th Street would have access to the rear of their properties once the area is fenced off.

Attorney Cohen said it was acceptable.

There were no other questions or comments from Council or the audience.

Dr. Ruggles closed the hearing at 6:14 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING
2015 CDBG, CAPERS, PROGRAM

At 6:15 p.m. Mayor Panto opened the Public Hearing and turned it over to Mr. O'Connell, who read the following:

“The purpose of this evening’s hearing is to obtain public comment on the 2015 Comprehensive Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for the City of Easton.”

“The CAPER plan reports on the 2015 CDBG activities that were undertaken during the period of January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015. The report provides a summary of the resources and accomplishments and status of actions during the year to implement the goals of the Consolidated plan and evaluate the progress of each agency receiving CDBG funds. Such activities include support for non-profit public service agencies economic development

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activities, the acquisition rehab and resale of homes, street improvements, playground improvements at EANC, and building improvements for EACC.”

“HUD does not require City Council approval of the report.”

“The City of Easton intends to submit the report to HUD no later than March 30, 2016.” Tina Roseberry, Director of Planning, said that the report was on the Redevelopment Authority Web page, and on the City’s Web-site. She said that the CAPER took a look at all of the projects that were completed in 2015, and spoke regarding some of the projects. She said that the only project that was not done was money that was allocated for the loan program and two of those loans were going out to the Easton Public Market and said that HUD does allow a little bit of time if they do not get it done all in one year.

Mr. O’Connell asked Ms. Roseberry to speak on programs for the homeless which she did.

Mr. O’Connell asked for questions or comments from the audience, which there was none.

Dr. Ruggles asked about the two loans that will be given to the Public Market.

Ms. Roseberry said that there applications had not been received as of his date, but that GEDP would be governing those loans.

Dr. Ruggles and Mrs. Vulcano asked how that fell under CDBG funds.

Ms. Roseberry said that it was a business loan program that GEDP has offered for years. She said that a little of CDBG funds could be used for Economic Development activities.

Mayor Panto said that he, Dawn Ferrante and Ms. Roseberry had decided that the program, since they are CDBG funds, would be done through the City rather than through GEDP, which makes the funds available throughout the City and not just for downtown.

There were no further questions or comments.

Mr. O’Connell closed the hearing at 6:21 p.m.

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

At this time the Mayor presented his State of the City Address.

PUBLIC COMMENT
Agenda Items Only

There were no remarks from the audience>

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CONSENT AGENDA

On motion of Dr. Ruggles and Mrs. Vulcano, the following items were adopted by the following vote:

Bill 9, (Ordinance 5542) Amending the 2016 General Fund Budget. This Bill amends the 2016 General Fund Budget by increasing Revenues and Expenditures by \$60,306.00

Bill 10, (Ordinance 5543) Establishing the Civil Service Board. This Bill eliminates the Police, Fire, Health and Technical Civil Service Boards and replaces them with one Civil Service Board.

Resolutions 43-47, which approved Certificates of appropriateness for 5 N. 3rd, 201 Ferry, 433 Ferry, 226 Northampton and 245 Northampton Streets.

Resolution 48-2016, which approved appointments to the New Civil Service Board.

Yeas: Vulcano, Panto, Brown, Edinger, Melan, O'Connell, Ruggles (7)

Nays: None (0)

REPORTS RECEIVED BY COUNCIL

The following report was received by Council:

- (a) Easton Fire Department Monthly Fire Report for February 2016.

The Mayor accepted the above report on behalf of Council.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Brown, Chairperson of the Finance Committee, reported that the Finance Committee meeting had been held on March 22, 2016, and spoke regarding legislation which he would have for later in the meeting regarding establishing a budget for Other Post-Employment Benefits, for amending the 2015 General Fund, 2015 Health Benefits and the 2015 Property & Casualty Insurance Fund Budgets.

Mrs. Vulcano, Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee, said that earlier in the day an Economic Development Committee of the West Ward Neighborhood Partnership, was held, said who had attended and what had been discussed.

Mr. O'Connell, Chairperson of the Planning and Code Committee reported that a Planning and Code Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, March 22, 2016 and thanked all members for attending. He said that they met with Director Roseberry and discussed the Comprehensive Plan.

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Mr. Melan, Chairperson of the Public Safety Committee, spoke regarding legislation which he would have, for later in the meeting, regarding an Ordinance to repeal the Taxicabs section of the City Codes. He reported that a Public Safety Committee meeting had been held on March 22, 2016 and told what had been discussed. He invited all to attend a brief prayer service in Centre Square, on Friday, March 25, 2016 at 3:00 p.m. for the City's fallen Police Officers.

Dr. Ruggles, Chairperson of the Public Works Committee spoke regarding legislation which he would have for later in the meeting regarding a Resolution approving a Right-of-Way Encroachment Agreement and for authorizing an application for a Northampton County Open Space Grant.

Mr. Edinger, Chairperson of the Administration Committee reported that the search continues for candidates for the City Administration position, and said that resumes would be accepted for another month.

Mayor Panto said that the City has received numerous resumes for the position. Mayor Panto said that he, Dr. Ruggles, Mr. Edinger, Mr. Redding, Mr. Murphy and two City citizens would make up the interview and selection committee.

Mr. Murphy reported that before the meeting Council had met in Executive Session and had discussed two litigations; County of Northampton vs. City of Easton #2014-115110 and County of Northampton Deputy Sheriffs Association vs. City of Easton #2014-12201. Mr. Murphy said that the Solicitors continue to meet with any City officials on Wednesdays at 8:30 in their office in City Hall.

Mayor Panto reported that the President of the United States had approved the Declaration of Emergency for the State of Pennsylvania because of the snow storm in January so some of the City's funds spent on that storm will be reimbursed. He said that he was informed, this afternoon that the Governor will not veto the budget and allow it to go through. He reported that Mr. Murphy and special Counsel for the Police Facility had met on the legal documents needed for the new Police station.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence received.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no Unfished Business.

NEW BUSINESS

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A March 17, 2016 memorandum, regarding Council Agenda Items, was received from David Hopkins, Director of Public Works.

Bill 11, Amending Ordinance 5469, Amending Article III, Traffic Control Map, of Chapter 560, Vehicles and Traffic, of the Code of the City of Easton, Pa., was introduced by Dr. Ruggles and ordered processed for adoption.

This Bill would add the 900 block of Spruce Street onto the list of parking restrictions on Tuesday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for Garbage Pick-Up.

An undated memorandum, regarding the repeal of the taxi cab licensing ordinance, was received from Lt. Matthew Lohenitz.

Bill 12, Repealing Chapter 539, Taxicabs, of the Code of the City of Easton, Pa. was introduced by Mr. Melan and ordered processed for adoption.

This Bill would repeal Chapter 539 in its entirety from the City's Codes.

A March 18, 2016 memorandum, regarding the creation of Fund 305 to account for Other Post-Employment Benefits, was received from Cassandra Williams, Director of Finance.

Bill 13, Providing revenues and appropriating specific sums to be required for the Other Post-Employment Benefits Fund during the Fiscal Year 2016 was introduced by Mr. Brown and ordered processed for adoption.

A March 18, 2016 memorandum, regarding proposed 2015 Budget Amendments, was received from Cassandra Williams, Director of Finance.

Bill 14, Amending the 2015 General Fund Budget was introduced by Mr. Brown and ordered processed for adoption.

This Bill would amend the 2015 General Fund Budget by increasing revenues and expenditures by \$750,000.00

Bill 15, Amending the 2015 Health Benefits Fund Budget, was introduced by Mr. Brown and ordered processed for adoption.

This Bill would amend the 2015 Health Benefits Fund Budget by increasing revenues and expenditures by \$600,000.00.

Bill 16, Amending the 2015 Property Insurance Casualty Fund Budget, was introduced by Mr. Brown and ordered processed for adoption.

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This Bill would amend the 2015 Property Insurance Casualty Fund Budget by increasing revenues and expenditures by \$125,000.00.

The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Resolution for approving a Right-of-Way Encroachment Agreement between the City of Easton and Greg Melhem.

The proposed Resolution was introduced by Dr. Ruggles.

Mr. Melan said that the agreement was for The Standard, but throughout the Agreement it stated Drinky's.

Mayor Panto said that the agreement did contain the address.

Mr. Melan said that he did not believe that Mr. Greg Melham was the owner of the property; he believed that it was owned by a corporation which was not indicated in the agreement and wanted to know if that made a difference.

Mr. Murphy said that the documents would have to be reviewed.

Mr. Melan said that Mr. Melhem signed the documents as the owner and he believed that the business is owned by a corporation.

Mr. Murphy said that would make a difference.

On motion of Mr. Brown and Mr. Melan the above Resolution was tabled, until the matter could be reviewed, by the following vote:

Yeas: Vulcano, Panto, Brown, Edinger, Melan, O'Connell, Ruggles (7)

Nays: None (0)

The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Resolution which would authorize the filing of an application for a Northampton County Open Space Initiative under the Park Acquisition and Development Program for a grant.

The following Resolution was introduced by Dr. Ruggles:

49-2016

The above Resolution was adopted on motion of Dr. Ruggles and Mrs. Vulcano by the following vote:

Yeas: Panto, Brown, Edinger, Melan, O'Connell, Ruggles, Vulcano (7)

Nays: None (0)

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PUBLIC COMMENT

(On any item)

Kurt Ehly, 305 W. Monroe Street, asked to be informed about the proposed granting of the Right-of-Way Encroachment Agreement, which Dr. Ruggles and Mayor Panto did. He also made comments regarding encroachments.

Mr. Ehly also asked question regarding the Park Grant application that Council had approved and the proposed use of those funds.

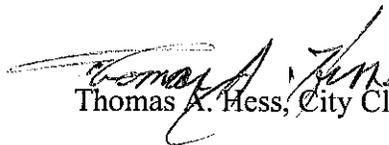
Dr. Ruggles said that the funds would be used for a specific park on the South Side of the City at the Neighborhood Center on Philadelphia Road.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m., on motion of Dr. Ruggles and Mr. Brown by the following vote:

Yeas: Melan, O'Connell, Ruggles, Vulcano, Panto, Brown Edinger (7)

Nays: None (0)


Thomas A. Hess, City Clerk



State of the City 2016
Mayor Sal Panto, Jr.
Easton PA

Members of the City Council, Cabinet Members, Honored Guests, and friends of Easton.

I am pleased to present the 2016 State of the City Address.

First I would like to congratulate our newest Council members Melan and O'Connell and veteran Council members Vulcano, Brown and Ruggles and City Controller Bassil I would like to thank them for their support and cooperation. We have made the purposeful effort to move our city forward and represent our citizens in a meaningful way.

In an era when local government leadership is too often defined by rancor, discord and political struggles, our team is a shining example of cooperation, disagreement with respect, and hearts that are absolutely focused on the community and our outcomes, as opposed to politics.

I would like to ask all the members of my Cabinet to stand and be recognized. This is our team, and their talents, skills and commitment are making a difference in Easton.

The State of the City is one of my favorite annual events because it gives me the opportunity to share some of the outstanding things we have going on in our community, while also trying to forecast the opportunities and challenges that are ahead.

Our past eight years have been filled with challenges and opportunities and today Easton's momentum is unparalleled. It wasn't that way eight years ago. On the verge of Act 47 state take-over, together we developed a financial recovery plan that forced us to reduce costs, increase collections and make our city as efficient as possible using as much OPM (Other People's Money) as possible.. As I said, Easton's momentum is unparalleled and we continue to be recognized regionally for all of the progress we've made in recent years, in spite of the tough budgets and economic times. I believe that bleak chapter in our history is behind us and we have worked hard to position Easton for the future.

Let us keep in mind that we are still operating under the effects of the Great Recession, the worst economic catastrophe since the Great Depression. Economic forecasts are mixed but improving slowly. Certain indicators of an upswing in the economy are up significantly, while other areas, such as sustainable job creation, are down or stagnant.

When the voters elected me more than eight years ago, we promised a clean and safe city with fiscal responsibility that would curtail the ever increasing costs to our residents. I am proud to stand before you tonight and say that we have passed a balanced budget eight years in a row without raising the real estate tax rate in spite of escalating increases in healthcare and pensions. Nor have we repeatedly raised other costs to our residents. Our crime rate continues to decline and our economic development program continues to soar.. We have not waivered from the goals of 2007.

Our RatingsDirect report dated September 28, 2015 stated that we have maintained our "A+ rating and stable outlook" for the Bonds to be issued yet this year. It further states that the City of Easton has "strong management, with good financial management policies and practices." It goes on to further state that Easton has a "strong budgetary flexibility" and reports that we have strong liquidity based on our reserves. The main negative cited was the "weak economy" of our area.

We are not resting on our laurels. A status quo approach is not sustainable. We will continue our investment of finances and resources in economic development, community development and our infrastructure. More than anything, we must increase the earning capacity of our residents. We continue to be lowest in annual earnings per resident and have the highest unemployment rate in the valley.

Crime is the top priority of any city. I am not naive, I know it is not in our power to eradicate crime completely, but it is in our power – and it is our duty and our responsibility – to provide a safe environment for all our citizens. Tonight, I am proud to report that our men and women who serve our city in the Easton Police Department have fulfilled that pledge. 2015 saw another drop in our crime rate and an overall decrease of 10.77% percent with a notable decrease in UCR "Part 1 violent crimes decreasing by 15.80%. Total calls for service decreased as well by almost 2%. I know there are skeptics who don't believe this but let me point out that the City of Easton is no longer eligible for Department of Justice grants because our crime rate is too low. Also, through its tireless efforts in working with the Department of Justice, our police department has been released from the department's over sight dating back 10 years ago.

This did not happen by accident. We deployed our Patrol Officers to conduct directed patrols throughout the City. During these patrols the officers walked or biked their beats and became a familiar presence, a practice that will continue this year. Easton is leading the way in urban policing and crime reduction, and we are making our city safer for all of our residents and businesses. Our department continues to be called upon by surrounding departments and the state police for assistance.

While we are on the topic of public safety, I want to recognize that, as a country, we've had some discourse lately about police brutality and abuses of power. I understand that is an issue in some places in the country. This is a complex issue with many issues and challenges. But, I want to be clear that, in Easton, we have tremendously professional police officers who impress me both in the incredible restraint they show in their work and in their dogged ability to capture their suspects. If you are hoping to continue your criminal enterprise, I can tell you with much certainty that if you do the crime in Easton you will do the time.

Our professional fire department continued to maintain a response time of 3 minutes and 56 seconds and a total of 327 fires were investigated and more than \$5 million of property was exposed to risk with total losses at \$587,000 for a total percentage of property saved at just over 89%.

Fighting fires and emergency medical response is not the only aspect of our fire department. Last year more than 4,900 children and 2,800 adults were involved in their educational and prevention programs.

Just as importantly, our firefighters were also involved in several charitable endeavors including raising more than \$14,000 for Muscular Dystrophy Association, Give Burns the Boot and their own Operation Warm which provided needy children with brand new winter coats distributed to needy children in all three of our elementary schools.

With our continued focus on eliminating blight in our city and creating affordable housing for families, I recommended to City Council to separate the Department of Planning and Codes into two

departments. The creation of the Department of Code Enforcement expanded the role of the Chief Code Administrator to that of a Director. With these changes came a refined focus on improving quality of life and quality of neighborhoods through engaging property owners and residents with cooperative relationships.

In addition to the daily enforcement, the summer 2015 saw the first round of evening outreach. During the long summer days, Code Compliance Officers were out in the neighborhoods to meet with property owners who normally aren't available during the day to discuss code violations and avenues to correct them. As part of this effort, Rental Compliance Officers scheduled rental inspections after normal business hours to accommodate landlords and tenants who were not normally available without missing work time. With the new budget all code officers were increased from 35 to 40 hours a week to provide even more inspections.

Rental Officers performed approximately 3,000 initial and follow-up rental inspections in 2015 and we are increasing the number of Rental Officers again this year. We had one in 2008 and now we have 3 as we place a higher standard on our landlords. Proactively we also began a Landlord Training Program to educate landlords and promote neighborhood safety. A nationally recognized consultant was retained and more than 800 landlords were invited to participate as well as key stakeholders

More than 1,900 building permits were issued in 2015. A new software systems and now allows Code Officers to invest more time in the field working with residents to help build cleaner and safer neighborhoods. Additionally, with the investment in new technologies, such as iPads and mobile printers, the department is now better equipped to quickly respond to the needs of the City and to provide more services.

Our Health Bureau issued 189 annual licenses, 224 special event licenses and handled 40 health complaints. Their role was also expanded to assist Code Compliance Officers with health and sanitary issues. The Bureau of Health works tirelessly in ensuring that residents and visitors have a healthy experience at City Events and at our many great restaurants as well as addressing residential issues like lead paint and bed bugs.

The other department segregated was the Department of Planning and Codes. Their most important endeavor last year was the completion of the city's Comprehensive Plan. Entitled "Transform, Unify and Thrive" this plan provides the path of success for the next 20 years. Excellent economic development has also kept this department busy with plan reviews, special exceptions and land development reviews and zoning.. The estimated value of development for 2015 was in excess of \$50 million bringing us to more than \$450 million of public and private dollars invested in the last eight years.

Community and Economic Development is our path to continued success and has always been a high priority for this Administration.. The goals are the creation of jobs, retention of jobs, increasing the tax base and increasing the population of our city. We have concluded another great year in this department and from the largest project in the city to the least, they are all important to achieving our goals and keeping real estate taxes at least level.

We can all be proud of our largest economic development project – The Silk Mill. The city owned the property when I took office in 2008. And like most things in Easton at that time, no one gave it much hope. Using OPM, "Other People's Money" we were able to get grants in excess of \$8 million to first have a Master Plan developed to see what the best and highest uses were for the dilapidated mills. The Master Plan not only provided for a structural engineering report for all of the buildings and the underground tunnels, but it also provided for projected use of the structures based on attracting the creative class to the site to live and work. We then tested our theory and retained Arts Market to provide a study to see if an arts-related use would be successful. More studies and more grants followed. We used these grants to remediate the soil, lead paint and asbestos. The critics continued. Many said tear it down and put up a shopping center. We knew we needed to do the due diligence before we could even get a developer interested in such a large project. But we stood by our goals and were inspired by the words of our recently deceased friend Karl Stirner. – "We will fail ...if we fail to think big!"

Another parcel that many said to tear it down and create parking is 118 and 120 Northampton Street. Working with the Redevelopment Authority we invested in securing the exterior and then placed an RFP to developers. Today this parcel is under construction by a private developer. The apartments will add to our population goals as well as two new store fronts.

Our housing rehab program continues with eight more homes rehabilitated for single family use. Working with the West Ward Neighborhood Association, CACLV, The Lehigh Valley Land Trust and others even more residential units and facades have made our neighborhoods cleaner places to live.

This year we will be paying very close attention to abandoned and foreclosed properties and looking at ways to prevent and minimize this from happening. We have already been able to offer help, advice, and resources through a number of workshops and we will build on that success with ongoing support in 2016. Easton City Council has approved additional borrowing of \$500,000 in our next bond issue to continue this program now that the feds and state are eliminating the needed dollars. We also expect to have local banks participate and build the fund to one million dollars. These once blighted and vacant homes will become owner occupied homes for working families.

Downtown Easton continues its remarkable evolution. With City Council's support of the \$1 Million grant we all await the opening of our Easton Public Market which will occur soon. The market's success is based on a diverse group of vendors which will provide year round indoor market to complement the ever growing and hugely successful outdoor market – the oldest outdoor market in the country and voted number one.

Coupled with the two other Greater Easton Development Partnership (GEDP) programs -- the Main Street Program and The Ambassadors -- downtown Easton is alive and well. Whether you visit for dinner, a show, some of amazing art galleries and museums or just to visit and walk around and experience the vibes that are in our urban core, Downtown Easton has much to offer including our locally owned specialty shops.

The long vacant unemployment building on Ferry Street, the long vacant Heritage Lanes building as well as the mostly vacant Wells Fargo Building have all been sold and are under construction or in then planning stages.

The former Express Times building has been sold and the empty lot, or missing tooth as urban planners like to call them will be home to our much needed new police facility and the developer is looking to additional uses on the site.

A premier premier building in our downtown, the Governor Wolf Building, is almost complete and residents are moving into the 48 upscale apartments.

Without a doubt the most visible department in the city is also our largest. It is the Public Works Department that most residents and visitors see the result of their labor. This department completed Easton Neighborhood Center improvements; working with Lafayette College who provided the

funding the Karl Stirner Arts Trail was connected to the campus safely; they also were the oversight for the construction of the new City Hall as well as provided for the move and many of the tasks associated with the new building; successfully completed the conversion of Fourth Street to two-way traffic; completed work on the Simon Boulevard at the Silk Mill; completed the North Third Street parking lot upgrades and too many more to list. In addition they have a lot more in store for this year.

The Human Resources Department was enlarged to include a full time Compensation and Benefits Manager. The departments goals continues to be to recruit, motivate and retain the best employees to sustain a high performing workforce that also provides for continuity through succession planning while working together with the other members of senior management to encourage collaboration, innovation and partnerships at all levels.

The department has also retained training for all employees and has successfully recruited from more than 990 resumes and applications for new hires with an attention to diversity in our workforce.

As you can see my message is very positive because that's where our city is right now. That is why my message is entitled "Don't Stop Believing." We have come far but we have a long way to go. This is a time to be proud of our accomplishments but also to re-dedicate ourselves to taking Easton to the next level.

I am proud to report that tonight, our transformation has begun, and the state of our city is strong. We look forward to this new year with optimism and good will and a deep, abiding faith that together, we are creating an Easton that is rising to new heights. The diversity of our city creates a rich tapestry that gives us a unique opportunity unlike many other communities.

This brings me to what will be an important project for 2016. This year we will begin the process of marketing and re-branding our City. We must do away with the misconception that Easton is not a safe place to live. We have a great lifestyle to offer and we want our residents and visitors to spread the word.

Our branding initiative will support our redevelopment efforts. As more people understand the opportunity that Easton presents, our ability to attract more investors will expand exponentially. Easton is indeed a great place to live and work and that is the platform that we want to use to engage potential residents, investors and yes, even our own community. We have to see ourselves the way we want others to perceive us.

Easton is a city of neighborhoods, and they are the foundation of our future prosperity. The biggest challenge confronting our neighborhoods is the scourge of decades of disinvestment and the hundreds of vacant homes left behind. They are a detriment to our neighborhoods and our residents' housing values.

Now, I'm eager to move ahead with all of the great plans for this city. Those plans will lead us on an amazing journey. It's a journey that paints a bright and exciting future for Easton but one that is not without its challenges..

In 2015 we planted over 200 new street trees and this year we will hire the first full time arborist for the City. This individual will also help with our sustainability and resiliency programs

We are embarking on the initiative for energy efficient street lighting, traffic lights are complete, buildings now have more efficient lighting, City Hall is LEED certified

The City has implemented an integrated pest management program which has significantly reduced the use of chemicals used in parks and grounds maintenance

Currently methane at the WWTP is used to heat buildings, in 5 years the goal is to use methane to produce electricity and make the WWTP completely energy independent, and in the future we may be able to power our fleet with processed methane

The City government is currently using 50% renewable energy, we could seek to be 100% in two years

We are implementing and will be expanding our stormwater management best practices – Sullivan Park 2014 state winner.

Materials recovery efforts have moved forward with recycling efforts and we are still the only municipality in the region to offer the RecycleBank program which rewards our residents for recycling.

The City and our sewer authority have invested more than \$10 million in the past 5 years in process upgrades at the WWTP

The City is and will continue to be a partner in the urban farm and other community garden efforts as well as the veggie van and other efforts that provide fresh produce to our residents.

This year we also plan to:

- Construct our new police facility on North Fourth Street
- Expand city-wide surveillance cameras
- Review and update the Historic District Ordinance as well as the Zoning Code once the new Comp Plan is approved by City Council
- We will always seek OPM, Other People's Money through county, state and federal grants,
- Our continued efforts in eliminating blight in our neighborhoods and the implementation of our \$1 MM Housing Rehabilitation program primarily in our West Ward
- We are currently working with developers on the following projects
 - Black Diamond
 - Southside townhouses
 - Heritage Lanes
 - Alpha Building
 - Wells Fargo building
- As part of our marketing effort we will be implementing our Gateway signage and neighborhood identification signage program as well as a larger presence on the web and social media.

Ladies and gentleman, I cannot stand here and talk only about the good things happening in our city. Make no mistake, everyday we have challenges, real challenges that are the result of others inaction or refusal to address the issues so important to the future of our city.

Yes, I am talking about things like municipal pension reform which the state legislature refuses to address. I know these are tough decisions and they are politically sensitive issues. But local municipalities, not just cities, are creatures of the state and we cannot correct these huge annual increases without state action. And remember, we are not talking about current employees. We are not talking about cutting their pension benefits. We are talking about pension reform for new employees only. If we are so lucky to get pension reform it won't help the local officials that are lobbying for it, but it will help local municipalities in the future when new hires retire. Imagine what we could do if we didn't have to pay an additional \$6 million to our unfunded liability. We could decrease taxes, increase spending on infrastructure, parks and streets.

We could even address the homeless and other social problems. Homelessness is an overwhelmingly broad societal issue impacting communities across the nation. As a nation, we have a lot of work to do to change the economic, substance abuse and mental health circumstances that too often lead to homelessness. We also need to take a close look at some of the legal restrictions that too often tie the hands of local governments to maintain health, safety and order in our communities. Our approach to homelessness in Easton is, and will continue to be, compassionate, but it will not be delusional.. With the state and federal government cutting social and human service funding we as a City must look to ourselves to solve these social ills of society. We need to provide the funding that is so important to reducing the number of homeless in our city.

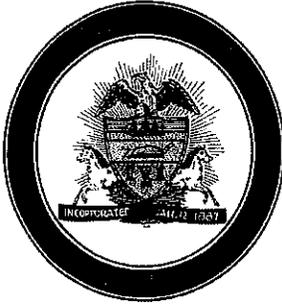
Tonight, I pledge the City's continued support for our schools, and I ask all Eastonians, those who live in the city, and those who own businesses and properties in our city, to commit as well. Easton will not achieve its full potential until we educate all of our children and give them the future they deserve, and my administration will do everything in its power, working in close partnership with the Board of Education and the Superintendent, to make that happen in Easton schools, and I commend Superintendent John Reinhart and the Board of Education for their work.

As I said yesterday at the exciting announcement of the Easton Hospital clinic in Paxinosa School – we cannot arrest our way out of crime and drugs. We need to address the problem by starting with the education of our youth.

I say to you that the State of the City is strong, we have advanced immeasurably since 2008 when you entrusted me with the role of your Mayor. 2016 promises to be even more rewarding as we continue to work together. We are stronger when we work together, we achieve more when we work together, we can change the world when we work together. This evening I leave you with more wise words from Dr. King - We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.

We need to keep the momentum moving forward and I believe that the plan we have in place will do just that. Once again I commit to serve you with integrity, character, respect and accountability.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today, and for all that you all do in our community. It is the honor of a lifetime to serve as your Mayor, but I couldn't do it, I would never do it, without people like you stepping up alongside us and serving one another. That collective willingness to serve and sacrifice, in a nutshell, is the state of our city. Thank you very much. Thank you! May God bless you, the City of Easton and the United State of America. Good night.



EASTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
Records and Traffic Division
25 S. 3rd St. Easton, PA 18042
Phone: 610-250-6664 Fax: 610-250-6775
Lt. Matthew Lohenitz

The Easton Police department supports vacating the parking lot and adjacent area to the rear of 22 N. 6th St., this location has long been a problem area for the citizens of Easton as well as the Easton Police Department. It is a well-hidden, poorly lit area that has lent itself to illicit activity. The area is now being explored as one which will be cleaned up and measures will be taken to restrict that type of activity.

The police department recommends the area be fenced off and if any type of controlled access is installed, the city must have access to that area for purposes of police patrol and potential public works issues that may arise. The police department also recommends that the area is illuminated to prevent persons from secreting themselves in that area for illicit purposes.

Chief Carl Scalzo #1036
Chief Carl Scalzo

[Signature]
Lt. Matt Lohenitz



CITY OF EASTON

PENNSYLVANIA

March 17, 2016

MEETING NOTICE

The meeting of Easton City Council has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 23, 2016, for general business and to conduct two Public Hearings regarding the 2015 CDBG Program and regarding a request to vacate a portion of Church Street between N. 6th Street and Hester Street.

The meeting will be held in Council Chambers, located on the 3rd Floor of City Hall, 123 S. 3rd Street, Easton, Pa. and will begin at 6:00 p.m.

All meetings of City Council are open to the Public and are accessible to persons with disabilities.


Thomas A. Hess
City Clerk

CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA

Stated Session
Wednesday
March 23, 2016
6:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. INVOCATION
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
4. ROLL CALL
5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
6. ACTION ON MINUTES – March 9, 2016 Council Meeting Minutes
7. PUBLIC HEARING – Vacation of a portion of Church Street
8. PUBLIC HEARING – 2015 CAPER (CDBG)
9. MAYOR’S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS
10. PUBLIC COMMENT (Agenda Items Only)
11. CONSENT AGENDA
 1. Bill 9, Amending the 2016 General Fund Budget.
 2. Bill 10, Establishing a Civil Service Board.
 3. Resolution approving a Certificate of Appropriateness for 5 N. 3rd Street.
 4. Resolution approving a Certificate of Appropriateness for 201 Ferry Street.
 5. Resolution approving a Certificate of Appropriateness for 433 Ferry Street.
 6. Resolution approving a Certificate of Appropriateness for 226 Northampton Street.
 7. Resolution approving a Certificate of Appropriateness for 245 Northampton Street.
 8. Resolution approving appointments to the Civil Service Board.
12. REPORTS RECEIVED BY COUNCIL
 - (a) Easton Fire Department Monthly Report for February 2016
13. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
 - (a) Finance (Kenneth Brown)
 - (b) Economic Development (Sandra Vulcano)
 - (c) Planning and Code (David O’Connell)
 - (d) Public Safety (Peter Melan)
 - (e) Public Works (Roger Ruggles)
 - (f) Administration (James Edinger)
 - (g) Report of City Solicitor (Attorney William Murphy)
 - (h) Report of Mayor (Salvatore J. Panto Jr.)

-Over-

14. CORRESPONDENCE
15. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
16. NEW BUSINESS
 - (a) Introduction of Legislative Bills
 1. Bill 11, Amending Ordinance 5469, Amending Article III, Traffic Control Map, of Chapter 560, Vehicles and Traffic of the Code of the City of Easton, Pa.
 2. Bill 12, Repealing Chapter 539, Taxicabs, of the Code of the City of Easton, Pa.
 3. Bill 13, Establishing the Other Post-Employment Benefits Fund Budget.
 4. Bill 14, Amending the 2015 General Fund Budget.
 5. Bill 15, Amending the 2015 Health Benefits Fund Budget.
 6. Bill 16, Amending the 2015 Property & Casualty Insurance Fund Budget.
 - (b) Resolution approving a Right-of-Way Encroachment Agreement.
 - (c) Resolution authorizing application for a Park Grant.
17. PUBLIC COMMENT – (Any Matter)
18. ADJOURNMENT