

Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa.
May 25, 2011

Easton, Pa
Wednesday
May 25, 2011
6:00 p.m.

City Council met in stated session at the above date and time at the Easton Area Community Center located at 901 Washington Street, Easton, Pa. 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, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, (by phone), Panto (7)
Absent: None (0)

Also in attendance were Thomas A. Hess, City Clerk, William Murphy, City Solicitor, Joel Scheer, Assistant City Solicitor and W. Glenn Steckman, City Administrator. There were approximately forty other persons present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion of Dr. Ruggles and Dr. Warner the agenda was approved by the following vote:

Yeas: Panto, Warren, Warner, Vulcano, Ruggles, Fleck, Brown (7)
Nays: None (0)

ACTION ON MINUTES

On motion of Mr. Fleck and Mr. Brown the May 11, 2011 Council Meeting minutes were approved as submitted by the following vote:

Yeas: Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, (7)
Nays: None (0)

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CITIZENS RIGHT TO BE HEARD (Agenda Items Only)

Gwen Crouse, 145 Northampton Street, Easton, Pa. said that she was in attendance because she thought that she had to be at the meeting regarding her Certificate of Appropriateness for 145 Northampton Street.

Mayor Panto explained that she did not have to attend the meeting.

The following persons spoke regarding the proposed Domestic Partnership Ordinance, and urged Council to adopt the Ordinance.

Andrew Shanker, 1020 W. Chew Street, Allentown Pa.

Liz Bradbury, 427 N. 9th Street, Allentown, Pa.

Tim Hare, 667 Ferry Street, Easton Pa.

Earl Ball, 667 Ferry Street, Easton, Pa.

Art Ravitz, 706 Wagner Lane, Easton, Pa.

Julie Zando-Dennis, 1032 Lehigh, Easton, Pa.

REPORTS RECEIVED BY COUNCIL

The following reports were received by Council.

- (a) Monthly Fire Report for April 2011

Mayor Panto accepted the above report on behalf of Council.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Brown, Chairman of the Finance Committee spoke regarding legislation which would be before Council later in the meeting.

Mrs. Vulcano, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee reported that the Economic Development Department was very actively marketing business properties throughout the City, and reported that she was a member of an Ad Hoc Committee regarding Safe Harbor.

Mayor Panto said that community clergy were working together to keep Safe Harbor open.

Dr. Ruggles, Chairman of the Planning Committee spoke regarding legislation that would be before Council later in the meeting.

Mr. Warren, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee spoke regarding legislation which would be before Council later in the meeting. He spoke regarding parking meter time limits, and asked if this concern could be placed before Council at the June 8, 2011 Council meeting.

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Mayor Panto said that this was being addressed in the StreetSmart Agreement.

Mr. Warren said that the May 24th Public Safety Committee meeting had been canceled, and that another meeting could be scheduled for sometime in June, and congratulated the Teachers Union for making concessions to save teacher positions.

Dr. Warner, Chairman of the Public Works Committee express her appreciation for holding the Council meeting at the Community Center. She reported that the yearly House Tour was a success, and said that the main beneficiary was the Main Street initiative but that the Community Center would also receive a grant for their building fund. She also spoke regarding legislation that would be before Council later in the meeting.

Mr. Fleck, Chairman of the Administration Committee spoke regarding Legislation that would be before Council later in the meeting, and said that he would be meeting with Mr. Steckman to discuss proposed revenue avenues for the City.

Mr. Murphy, City Solicitor, had no report

Mr. Scheer, Assistant Solicitor, had no report.

Mayor Panto announced that the June 8, 2011 Council meeting would be held in the Crayola Factory Auditorium, located on the first floor of the Factory in Centre Square, that a Public Hearing, regarding the Neighborhood Improvement District would be conducted and that an Executive Session would be held at 5:30 p.m. to discuss personnel issues. He said that the Easton Suburban Water Authority has provided a time table for water repairs throughout the City. He said that permanent trenching would begin on the week of June 6th, and once that it was completed, by the beginning of September, all new milling and street pavement should be done in South Side and the West Ward sections of the City. He said City has been restoring several properties in the West Ward and spoke regarding those properties. He reported that the Bushkill Street Bridge project should be completed by July 1st, and spoke regarding that project. Mayor Panto also spoke regarding the repainting of the Northampton County Courthouse.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No. 13, (Ordinance 5312), Amending the Personnel Code by providing the same health and other employment benefits to employees with the same sex domestic partners as it provides to employees and spouses was moved by Mr. Fleck, seconded by Dr. Warner.

All members of Council spoke in support of this proposed Ordinance and why they thought that this Ordinance was needed.

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On motion of Dr. Ruggles and Mr. Fleck, Bill 13 was amended in the following manner by the following vote:

In Section One of the proposed Bill the word "Codes" was included after the word "Personnel". In Sub-Section B, the word "future" was included after the word "and" in the second sentence.

In Sub-Section C5 the words "on the other Domestic Partner" were eliminated at the end of the Sub-section, and replaced with the words "to both Domestic Partners"

In Sub-Section C6 the following words were added at the end of the sub-section "If Pennsylvania recognizes same sex partners."

Section Six was amended to read as follows: "This ordinance shall apply to same sex domestic partners insofar as State law prohibits such couples from entering into a marriage that is recognized by the law of Pennsylvania. In the event the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania recognizes same sex marriage, this ordinance shall become null and void and of no further force and effect. In that event, domestic partners who are covered by the ordinance will have a ninety (90) day period of continued coverage in order to facilitate a marriage.

Yeas: Panto, Warren, Warner, Vulcano, Ruggles, Fleck, Brown (7)

Nays: None

On motion of Mr. Fleck and Dr. Warner, amended Bill No. 13, was adopted by the following vote:

Yeas: Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto (7)

Nays: None (0)

Mayor Panto said that there would be a public signing of Bill No. 13 on June 6, 2011, in Centre Square at 12:30 p.m.

Ordinance 5312 amends the Personnel Code by providing the same health and other employment benefits to employees with the same sex domestic partners as it provides to employees and spouses.

Bill No. 14, (Ordinance 5313), Amending Ordinance 5281, State Highway Aid Fund Budget, was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Mr. Fleck by the following vote:

Yeas: Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance 5313 amends the 2011 State Highway Aid Fund Budget by increasing Revenues and Expenditures by \$106,000.

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Bill No. 15, (Ordinance 5314) Amending Ordinance 5284, Health Benefits Fund Budget for 2011 was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Mr. Fleck by the following vote:

Yeas: Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance 5314 amends the 2011 Health Benefits Fund Budget by decreasing Revenues and Expenditures by \$105,193.31.

Bill No. 16, (Ordinance 5315), Amending Ordinance 5286, 2011 Unemployment Insurance Fund Budget was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Mrs. Vulcano by the following vote:

Yeas: Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance 5315 amends the 2011 Unemployment Fund Budget by decreasing Revenues and Expenditures by \$779.63.

Bill No. 17, (Ordinance 5316), Amending Ordinance 5287, 2011 Workers Compensation Fund Budget was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance 5316 amends the Workers Compensation Fund Budget by increasing Revenues and Expenditures by \$12,025.34.

Bill No. 18, Amending Ordinance 5291, 2011 General Fund Budget, was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Mr. Warren by the following vote:

Yeas: Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance 5316 amends the General Fund Budget by increasing Revenues and Expenditures by \$328,907.00

CORRESPONDENCE

Council received no correspondence.

NEW BUSINESS

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Bill No. 19, Amending Article V of Chapter 110, Pension, of the Code of the City of Easton, Pa. was introduced by Mr. Brown and ordered processed for adoption.

This Bill would amend Chapter 110, Pension of the City Codes, by amending sections to reflect vesting of pension at 12 years.

Dr. Ruggles asked why this Bill was being put forward.

Mr. Steckman said that this amendment to the Pension Code was a result of an Arbitration Award that the Council had approved approximately six months ago which ordered amendments be made. .

A May 16, 2011 letter regarding Certificates of Appropriateness was received from Christine Ussler, AIA, Historic District Commission Consultant.

The next seven items on the Agenda were proposed Resolutions for approving Certificates of Appropriateness for 7 N. 3rd, 114 N. 3rd, 39 S. 6th, 145, 437, and 525 Northampton, and 219 Spring Garden Street.

There being no objections all seven proposed Resolutions were voted upon with one vote.

The following Resolutions were introduced by Dr. Ruggles:

58-2011
59-2011
60-2011
61-2011
62-2011
63-2011
64-2011

The above Resolutions were adopted on motion of Dr. Ruggles and Mr. Fleck by the following vote:

Yeas: Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, (7)

Nays: None (0)

A May 16, 2011 memorandum regarding a DUI Grant was received from Police Chief Lawrence R. Palmer.

The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Resolution which would authorize the application for a DUI grant.

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The following Resolution was introduced by Mr. Warren:

65-2011

The above Resolution was adopted on motion of Mr. Warren and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto (7)

Nays: None (0)

A May 18, 2011 memorandum, regarding City Council Agenda Items was received from David Hopkins, Director of Public Works.

The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Resolution that would approve an Inspection Agreement with McTish Kunkel & Associates for the PCTI project along S. 3rd Street.

The following Resolutions were introduced by Dr. Warner:

66-2011

The above Resolution was adopted on motion of Dr. Warner and Mr. Warren by the following vote:

Yeas: Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown (7)

Nays: None (0)

The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Resolution that would approve a Lease Agreement, between the City and StreetSmart Technology for Phase 1 Deployment of a 21st Century Parking Management System.

The following Resolution, tabled on May 11, 2011, was brought back before Council on motion of Mr. Brown and Mrs. Vulcano by the following vote:

Yeas: Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown (7)

Nays: None (0)

The following Resolution was introduced by Mr. Warren:

67-2011

Mr. Warren said that felt that this agreement would help with parking enforceability and pro active parking policies, and commended the Administration for all of their work on this matter.

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Dr. Ruggles thanked Police Captain Carl Scalzo for his assistance on his understanding of the agreement. He said that he had concerns with the implementation of the program and explained his concerns.

Captain Scalzo answered Dr. Ruggles questions, and other Council members made comments on Dr. Ruggles' concerns.

The above Resolution was adopted on motion of Mr. Warren and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck
Nays: None

CITIZENS RIGHT TO BE HEARD

Kevin Deely, 5842 Main Street, Center Valley, Pa., thanked Council for adopting the Domestic Partnership Ordinance, and spoke briefly on the School Board and Teachers Union concessions and issue.

Arthur Ravitz, 706 Wagner Lane, Easton, Pa., spoke regarding the cutting down of trees throughout the City.

Earl Ball, 667 Ferry Street, Easton, Pa., commended the Ambassador Program for the work that they did around town, and encouraged the citizens to support the program.

Noel Jones, 800 Ferry Street, spoke regarding, requirements of the Home Rule Charter, and better notification to the public regarding Council meetings.

Patrick Pauldin, 137 S. 5th Street, Easton, Pa., spoke regarding the beautification program in the West Ward of the City.

Penny Wolfe, 218 W. Burke Street, Easton, Pa. suggested advertising meetings in the Bugler. She also asked for an update on the proposed Skate Park

Julie Zando-Dennis, 1032 Lehigh Street, Easton Pa., thanked the City for the implementation of the Street Sweeping Program, spoke regarding promotion of City meetings, and spoke regarding the traffic concerns when citizens cross Larry Holmes Drive to use Riverside Park

All Council members offered comments to the above questions and comments.

Dr. Warner gave an update and summary of the proposed Recycle Bank Program.

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Lynn Holden, 325 N. 10th Street, Easton, Pa., spoke regarding issues with Raritan Valley Trash workers.

Noel Jones, 800 Ferry Street said that a lot of residents were having problems with Raritan Valley Trash workers.

Mayor Panto spoke to students in the audience and reminded the audience that the Mayor's Summer Camp would run from July 11, 2011 until July 14, 2011 and explained how students could apply to take part in the program.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m. on the motion of Mr. Fleck and Mrs. Vulcano by the following vote:

Yeas: Vulcano, Fleck, Brown, Warner, Panto, Warren, Ruggles (7)

Nays: None (0)

Thomas A. Hess, City Clerk