

STATED MEETING - CITY COUNCIL – DECEMBER 9, 2014

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held on Tuesday, December 9, 2014 in Council Chambers, 120 North Duke Street, (Rear Annex) Lancaster, PA, at 7:30 p.m., with President Graupera presiding.

The Council led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present – Mr. Reichenbach, Mr. Roschel, Ms. Sorace, Mr. Soto
Ms. Williams, Ms. Wilson, President Graupera – 7

The minutes of the meeting of Council for November 25, 2014 were approved by a unanimous roll-call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Former city Mayor Arthur Morris, 434 W. Chestnut St., addressed council members for the second consecutive meeting regarding the steel pedestrian bridge that spanned the railroad tracks at the former Armstrong floor plant. Morris called for the bridge to be preserved on-site as an important reminder of the city’s industrial history. Franklin & Marshall College officials responded to a letter from Morris. They referenced information panels mounted on the bridge describing the history of the Armstrong floor plant. College officials, however did not indicate a willingness to retain the bridge at the site. Morris asked council members collectively or individually to support his effort to keep the bridge on the redeveloped property.

Morris again spoke in support of the incremental property tax increase proposed in the mayor’s 2015 budget proposal. He also, again, cited the graffiti on city sidewalks to promote the Lancaster County Community Foundation’s ExtraOrdinary Give. Despite frequent rains, the graffiti remains very visible, Morris said. He called on the city to require foundation representatives to remove the graffiti.

REPORTS REQUESTED BY COUNCIL – David Cruz, chairman of the city Human Relations Commission, noted the 50th anniversary of the founding of the city Human Relations Commission. Cruz said the commission received 38 calls in the last six months from city residents complaining of discrimination in housing, employment and lending. Although there has been an increase in calls to the hotline, the commission’s review process remains slow. The commission has one part-time investigator.

Cruz said the commission has established a facebook page and twitter account to present the commission on social media.

He also said there is one vacancy on the commission and eight on the board of directors, and asked for council action to fill those vacancies.

At the request of Councilwoman Wilson, board Chairman Mark Stoner said there will be an event at Tellus360 on Feb. 21 to mark the commission’s half-century anniversary.

Councilman Reichenbach praised the commission efforts and asked the volunteers to continue their work. He expects their efforts to yield significant progress.

Councilwoman Sorace asked Cruz to send commission meeting and position information to council regarding vacancies, so council members can seek candidates to fill them.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

PUBLIC SAFETY – No report

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE – No report

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE – Councilman Reichenbach reported that a City Revitalization & Improvement Zone board will not meet in December.

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Councilwoman Sorace reported that the finance committee met Dec. 6 to review departmental budgets for 2015. Enterprise fund budgets were reviewed along with the city's general fund budget. Representatives of the mayor's office; Lancaster Office of Promotions; bureaus of Police and Fire; and departments of Economic Development & Neighborhood Revitalization and Public Works reported on the current year accomplishments and priorities for 2015.

Sorace said taxing reforms are needed at the state level and praised Mayor Gray for publically raising awareness of the situation through the media.

She said council will vote on the 2015 budget next week. The proposal calls for raising property taxes by .98 mills/7.5 percent. The increase will raise the annual city property tax bill by \$74 for average city homeowner.

The increase is necessary to continue providing the same level of essential service to city residents. City officials are faced with increased costs of delivering those services.

Sorace also made a motion to add Resolution 49 to the agenda. The resolution authorizes the administration to hold an auction to dispose of unneeded city property.

The motion was seconded by Councilman Reichenbach and approved by a unanimous roll-call vote.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING COMMITTEE – Councilman Soto reported the committee met December 1 to review Resolution 48, which will be subject to a vote later in the meeting.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – Councilwoman Williams made a motion to reappoint of Constantine Mandros and Dean Lee Evans to the city Traffic Commission.

Councilwoman Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Administration Resolution No. 48-2014, (the title) was read by the City Clerk as follows:

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF A TWENTY-SIXTH YEAR CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CLG) GRANT APPLICATION WITH THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION, BUREAU FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$18,000.00, TO BE USED FOR VARIOUS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PURPOSES.

Councilman Reichenbach made the motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Councilman Soto.

Randy Patterson, director of Economic Development & Neighborhood Revitalization, explained the grant has two programmatic elements. The first will create a program with Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology to train students to repair historic wooden windows and other wood features. The second will fund training sessions with small contractors. The annual, two-hour sessions will instruct contractors on issues related to replacement windows, repair of older homes and the city's historic district ordinances. Those programs will be funded with \$6,000 from the grant. The remaining \$12,000 will fund part of the salary of the city's Historic Preservation Specialist.

Resolution No. 48-2014 was unanimously approved by a roll-call vote.

Administration Resolution No. 49-2014, (the title) was read by the City Clerk as follows:

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE DISPOSITION, BY AUCTION OR OTHER MEANS, OF CERTAIN PERSONAL PROPERTY IN THE STREETS DEPARTMENT GARAGE LOCATED AT 750 FAIRVIEW AVENUE.

Councilman Reichenbach made the motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Councilman Soto.

Councilwoman Sorace explained the resolution was needed to dispose of found bicycles and items unneeded by the city. The auction will be held December 20.

City Clerk Janet Spleen said the city auction had not been held since 2005. The city has joined with the county in its auction in recent years. This auction is needed to dispose of items in storage in city buildings recently sold to Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology, Spleen said.

Resolution No. 49-2014 was unanimously approved by a roll-call vote.

REPORT OF THE MAYOR – Mayor Gray said he had no report beyond the announcement that Chief of Staff Pat Brogan will serve as celebrity bartender at Characters Pub on December 17. Tips will go to the Transitional Living Center, a homeless shelter.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT – No report.

COUNCIL COMMENTS – Councilman Reichenbach thanked Administrative Services Director Patrick Hopkins for his participation in a live, web-based discussion on pension reform held by LNP Media Group. Hopkins related the situation faced by the city and noted the problem has been growing for years. Reichenbach also said he is heartened the issue is getting attention.

Reichenbach also said he would be going to the upcoming Lancaster Intermunicipal Committee meeting. Manheim and East Hempfield townships recently left the organization. The meeting will discuss the future of the LIMC and cooperation among municipalities in the central area of the county.

President Graupera recognized students from Lancaster Catholic High School and representatives from the current Leadership Lancaster class in the audience.

President Graupera adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

John E. Graupera, President

Attest:

Bernard W. Harris Jr.
City Clerk