

**FOREST CITY BOROUGH
MINUTES
TUESDAY APRIL 2nd, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER: (President DeGonzague, presiding).

President DeGonzague called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone. He then asked everyone to join in the “Pledge of Allegiance.”

ROLL CALL:

Present: President DeGonzague, Council Members Bernie Scalzo, Nick Cost, Tracey Lazier, Robert Lesjack, Sarah Woody, Mayor Glinton, Secretary/Treasurer Dennise Yankauskas, and Solicitor McAndrew. Joining by phone – Councilwoman Amy Bean.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

President DeGonzague opened the floor for public comment. None was offered.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ADMINISTRATION: (Tracey Lazier)

Councilwoman Lazier offered a motion to accept the Minutes from March 4th seconded by Councilman Lesjack, all responded “Aye”, none opposed.

Council members reviewed the Treasurer’s Report for March 2024. Councilwoman Lazier offered a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report for March 2024. Councilman Lesjack seconded the motion. The roll call vote was seven in favor, none opposed.

Councilwoman Lazier made a motion to adopt Resolution #10-2024 RTK Officer appointment of Dennise Yankauskas. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Woody. The roll call vote was seven in favor, none opposed.

Councilwoman Lazier made a motion to adopt Resolution #11-2024 HNB Loan - New Roof Project. The motion was seconded by V.P. Cost. The roll call vote was seven in favor, none opposed.

Councilwoman Lazier mentioned the 2023 Financial Audit was out for review and for council members to get statement of financial interests to the Secretary/Treasurer by May 1st, 2024.

PUBLIC WORKS: (Bernard Scalzo)

The Public Works report for March 2024 was offered. Councilman Scalzo read the following into the record: Cleaned out water run-off in the Vision Park, cleaned storm drains on Dundaff Street, Zero-turn mower ready for the season, fixed two front tires on the back hoe, cleared up falling trees on Higgins and Railroad Streets, put swings up, removed dead trees and put-up fixtures in restrooms all at Kennedy Park, removed meter from Main Street and put meter parking only sign back up, changed brushes on sweeper broom. Invoiced Union Dale Borough for \$300 for use of Jet sewer truck. Councilman Scalzo made a motion for Yard waste pickup on May 14th & 16th, the motion was seconded by V.P. Cost. The roll call vote was seven in favor, none opposed.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS: (Sarah Woody)

Councilwoman Woody made the motion to accept the resignation of part-time cleaning person Amanda Zang effective 02/02/2024, Councilwoman Lazier seconded the motion. The roll call vote was seven in favor, none opposed.

Councilwoman Woody made the motion to advertise for a part-time cleaning person, Councilman Lesjack seconded the motion. The roll call vote was seven in favor, none opposed.

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COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: (Amy Bean)

Councilwoman Bean read the “preliminary” final report on the façade program. Councilwoman Bean announced The Forest City Outdoor Action Team next meeting is April 4th, 2024 at 6 p.m.

PARKS & RECREATION: (Nick Cost)

V.P Cost announced that the Easter egg hunt had about 300 hundred children that came out for roughly 4000 eggs filled with goodies by volunteers from the community. V.P. Cost thanked everyone for their kindness and dedication. V.P. Cost announced the vendor markets up- coming schedule. V.P. Cost noted to the public about dogs at Kennedy Park, that if you bring your dog to pick up your dog feces please kindly; with bags provided around the park. V.P. Cost would like to ask for some FCPD presence at our events, also would like to keep the community involved with the park and ongoing events.

V.P. Cost clarified the \$5,000 donation by the GFCBA was for the Pocket Park on Center Street and apologized for the miss communication.

COMMUNITY SAFETY & HEALTH: (Robert Lesjack)

No updates

CODE ENFORCEMENT (Robert Lesjack)

Councilman Lesjack stated there were (2) applicants for the position of Code Enforcement that where interviewed, Personnel Committee recommend Joseph Unis for the position of Code Enforcement and Zoning Officer. Councilman Lesjack made the motion, seconded by Councilwoman Woody. The roll call vote was seven in favor, none opposed.

Councilwoman Woody made the motion to adopt Resolution #12-2024 Code Enforcement & Zoning Officer appointment, seconded by Councilwoman Bean. The roll call vote was seven in favor, none opposed.

MAYOR’S REPORT: (Mayor Christopher Ginton)

The March 2024 police report was distributed for review. Mayor Ginton asked for approval for the purchase of parking tickets at the price of \$589. V.P. Cost made the motion, seconded by Councilman Scalzo. The roll call vote was seven in favor, none opposed.

Mayor Ginton announced DEA take back of medication on April 27th, 2024 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Forest City Area Emergency Services on Railroad Street.

SOLICITOR’S REPORT: (Solicitor McAndrew)

Solicitor McAndrew advised council to reopen the agenda with a motion, second and roll call; to add time sensitive item to the agenda that came in very late in the day on April 2nd, 2024.

NEW BUSINESS: (President DeGonzague)

V.P. Cost made a motion to reopen April 2nd, 2024 agenda to add a time sensitive item to the agenda that came in very late in the day on April 2nd, 2024, seconded by Councilman Lesjack. The roll call vote was six in favor, one opposed.

V.P. Cost made a motion to approve a payment to PPL in the amount of \$25,852.00 to install temporary poles and reroute wiring on Center Street due to installation of scaffolding for roof work. V.P. Cost also stated work could not commence until PPL received the check. Councilman Lesjack seconded the motion. The roll call vote was six in favor, one opposed.

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CORRESPONDENCE: (President DeGonzague)

President DeGonzague read a thank you email from Gus Fahey from Valley in Motion to the Mayor and Outdoor Town Action Team.

Announced was the Third Annual 5k & Community walk for the late Donny Teague on May 11th, 2024.

Announced was information about the CDBG funds application.

CLOSING PUBLIC COMMENT: (Items other than those covered by the agenda)

Resident Carla Stackhouse of Erie Street talked in detail about Ordinance #522. We have added Addendum I as part of the permanent record of these minutes.

Resident William Orasin and John Kowalewski applauded and thanked Council for the hiring of the Code Enforcement Officer.

Chairperson of parks and recreation asked about clarification about GFCBA \$5,000 donations; V.P. Cost had mentioned it was a miss communication and the money was meant for the Center Street Pocket Park. Also questioned the \$200 donation in March's minutes for the Borough to give parks and rec \$200. V.P. Cost stated that he was told the money could not be given by the prior Secretary/Treasurer. Solicitor McAndrew that was not the case. A motion was made at prior meeting no further action needed.

Councilwoman Bean wanted to clarify some things that has been brought to her attention in an email that she received; it states that the Main Street Coordinator was fired. This statement is not true. She wanted to clarify for the record, the Main Street Coordinator was not fired.

Councilwoman Bean also questioned the mayor, if he is in favor of the town/people why doesn't he support any borough events most recent Christmas and Easter. Christmas he was at Montrose event.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: (President DeGonzague)

President DeGonzague announced the next regularly scheduled Council meeting will be Monday, May 6th, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

President DeGonzague asked for a motion to adjourn. V.P. Cost offered a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Scalzo, all responded "aye," none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

ADDENDUM I

On March 4, Council voted to enact changes to Ordinance #522 regarding Parking and Traffic. Some of these changes directly affect the safety of living and traveling on Erie Street and I do not believe that council considered the issues these changes will cause.

No one notified my family of the proposed changes. I'm sure you followed the letter of the law, but I don't believe that you followed the spirit. Advertising in the newspaper made sense in an era where the majority of people read the paper regularly, but it doesn't cut it in the digital age. I don't know many people that read the paper anymore. Sending notification of changes via mail might not make sense in a large city, or even in an area where a large number of residences were affected; however, that does not seem to be the case here. From what I can see, only homes on the truck route, and on Erie Street are affected. I think that's less than 10 residential properties located on the new truck route, and my residence is the ONLY property actually on Erie Street. My family are THE ONLY residents of Erie Street.

Councilman Scalzo attempted to advocate for the Borough residents affected by changes to this ordinance and I thank him for actually caring about his constituents. Unfortunately, Councilman DeGonzague blew him off, first by stating these changes were the direct result of complaints by residents of "some" of those streets and THEN by basically saying that it didn't matter since some of the changes would not take place immediately.

Well, Mr. President, I'll look you right in the face now and tell you that NO resident of Erie street asked for this change and the only problem faced on that street prior to the change was the fact that some people refused to follow the law and the FCPD didn't enforce it.

Had you actually made a REAL, HONEST attempt to notify my family, I certainly would have been present to give input and raise concerns regarding this change. NO ONE asked for our input regarding the changes on Erie Street, despite the fact that we've lived there for 33½ years and could have provided a

great deal of insight. No one gave us that opportunity and that's a shame, because NOW, there are issues.

You changed the direction of the one way on Erie street. While this change most directly affects the safety of MY family, we aren't the only ones. It also jeopardizes the people coming off the Rail Trail at the Erie Street Trailhead, as well as the neighborhood kids who ride their bikes on Grand Ave and Erie Street and play at the Erie Street Trailhead.

1. Erie Street has a section that is a steep hill with a blind curve. Traveling north, you are above the rest of the street and have some visibility of any vehicles stopped on Erie street or traveling the wrong way. This is not the case if you are traveling southbound. You're truly driving blind around that curve. Northbound traffic can also clearly see any vehicles exiting the driveway on the side of 600 Railroad Street onto Erie Street. You cannot see that driveway until you are on top of it when traveling southbound. You also cannot see vehicles stopped on the top section of that hill, or going the wrong way.
2. Vehicles traveling down the hill in a northbound direction are generally decelerating, especially on the curve. Vehicles traveling up the hill are naturally accelerating in order to navigate the hill, so traffic on Erie street will be traveling faster than it has been. I have grandchildren who live with me, as well as pets, and traffic on that street already regularly travels too fast to stop if one were to run out in front of a vehicle.
3. Vehicles are leaving Mikloiche's business between 7:30 and 8:00 am. This is also the same time my grandchildren are leaving my house to walk to the bus stop. When traffic is moving north, they are walking toward traffic and can see if a vehicle is coming at them. When traffic is going north, they are walking with their backs to traffic and cannot see vehicles until it's too late - and the vehicles also cannot see them.
4. In winter, traveling north on Erie and then west on Grand is already a challenge. Neither of those hills are as steep as the hill we'll need to travel southbound. When that hill is slippery, which is often during a normal FC winter, it is extremely hazardous. If you're traveling north, and you slide, you are facing the direction of the slide and can steer into it. If you are traveling south and begin to slide, you are sliding backwards down the hill. That is, of course, IF the vehicles can make it up that hill in the first place. Erie street has not always been one way. I have experience traveling that road both ways. Even when we could go up the hill, we didn't do it often since it was dangerous, especially in the winter, when it was often impossible. I also have recent video of a tractor trailer trying to get up

the hill in the winter. He tried to make the hill going southbound illegally and got stuck between the two hills. He couldn't go up the hill southbound and he couldn't go backwards to Grand. He spent a good 40 minutes driving back and forth trying to manage one of those things before he was successful at backing up to Grand. The whole time he was sliding all over and it was a miracle that he did not jackknife, tip over, or slide into my house or vehicles. Safety aside, this impacts my family's ability to leave our home in the winter. As I said, previously, traveling northbound from my home in the winter is challenging enough. Traveling south is going to be more difficult if not impossible. I guess it didn't matter since the only people in this town who have NO choice but to travel that road multiple times a day, 365 days a year, are members of my family.

5. The changes to this ordinance also added a stop sign on Center Street at Railroad traveling West. Center street does NOT intersect Railroad traveling west - it travels west beginning at Railroad Street. I think you made a mistake and typed west instead of east, which is plausible, as Railroad Street also doesn't meet Higgins traveling east but the ordinance has a stop sign there. Either that, or you're making southbound travel even more difficult by placing a stop sign on Erie at Railroad. How in the name of all that is good and holy is a vehicle stopped on that road going to get moving again if the road is icy?

