FEBRUARY 7, 2024
REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK HELD ON FEBRUARY 7, 2024 AT 5:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

Please be advised that the notice requirements of the Open Public Meeting Act have been complied with and satisfied in that the annual notice, which gave sufficient notice of the time and place, and conduct of all public meetings of the Municipal Council of the City of New Brunswick, has been filed with the City Clerk, has been placed on an appropriate bulletin board in City Hall and has been transmitted to the official newspaper for the City of New Brunswick, namely The Home News Tribune.

The City Council met with six (6) voting members of the City Council present.

Salute to the Flag..... Leslie R. Zeledón
Pause for a moment of reflection and silence.

Staff in attendance:

Public Information Officer Bert Baron
Deputy Clerk Shalon T. Bennett
Assistant City Attorney Joseph Catanese
New Brunswick Parking Authority Harry Delgado
Deputy Director of Human Services Edmund DeVeaux
Planning Director Daniel Dominguez
City Administrator Michael Drulis
Superintendent of Water Department Eric Ekoue
Assistant City Administrator Brandon Goldberg
Deputy Chief of Fire Department Hasahya Hirya
Lieutenant James Hoover
Police Officer Jamal James
Utility Business Manager Michael Licameli
Recycling Coordinator Erin Maguire
Administration Susan Mollica
Fire Safety Official Victor Ortiz
Finance Staff Angel Roman
Public Works Salvatore Salsa
City Attorney TK Shamy
Fire Department Cheryl Smith
Social Services Lisa Troulis
Human and Community Services Michael Tublin
Director of Engineering and Public Works Thomas Valenti
Director of Water Department Alexei Walus
City Clerk Leslie R. Zeledón

On motion of Council Member Sicora Ludwig, seconded by Council Member Gaskins and carried,

the minutes of the previous Council Meeting held on December 28, 2023 were approved and adopted as engrossed.

Meeting called to order by Council President Rebecca Escobar with Council Members Anderson, Castaneda, Ferguson, Gaskins and Sicora Ludwig present. Council Member Fleming was absent.

REORGANIZATION

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CALLS FOR NOMINATION FOR COUNCIL VICE-PRESIDENT

On a motion of Council Member Sicora Ludwig, seconded by Council Member Gaskins, and carried, John Anderson was nominated and elected Council Vice-President on February 7, 2024. There were no other nominations for Council Vice-President.

Roll Call:

Aye: Anderson, Castaneda, Ferguson, Gaskins, Sicora Ludwig, Escobar
Nay:
Abstain:
Motion carried.

City Clerk Leslie R. Zeledõn administered the oath of office to Council Vice-President Anderson. Council Vice-President Anderson thanked his fellow Council Members for allowing him to serve as Council Vice-President. Council President also welcomed the newest Council Member Matthew B. Ferguson. Council Member Ferguson stated he was looking forward to serving on the Council and learning. CM Ferguson also thanked everyone.

PUBLIC HEARING

O-012402	**AMEND THE MANAGEMENT SALARY ORDINANCE**

Council President Escobar opened the Public Hearing on the above ordinance.
Public Comment: Mr. Kratovil, Ms. Moore, and Ms. Elliot inquired on the above ordinance. Mr. Drulis, Mr. Goldberg and Council President Escobar responded.
On a motion of Council Member Sicora Ludwig, seconded by Council Member Castaneda and carried, the above ordinance was adopted on Final Reading on March 6, 2024.

Roll Call:

Aye: Anderson, Castaneda, Ferguson, Gaskins, Sicora Ludwig, Escobar
Nay:
Abstain:
Motion carried.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

O-022401	**AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE GRANTING OF A RIGHT-OF-WAY AND SKYBRIDGE AERIAL EASEMENT AGREEMENT TO ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL, INC. AND RWJ PROPERTY HOLDING CORPORATION, OVER, ON AND ACROSS A PORTION OF THE CITY'S RIGHTS-OF-WAY KNOWN AS SOMERSET STREET & LITTLE ALBANY STREET** RE: RUTGERS CANCER INSTITUTE OF NJ BLOCK 51, LOT 2.01 – SOMERSET STREET BLOCK 24.01, LOT 1.01 – LITTLE ALBANY STREET

On a motion of Council Member Gaskins, seconded by Council Member Sicora Ludwig, and carried, the above ordinance was adopted on first reading and held over for Public Hearing on February 21, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers in City Hall.

Roll Call:

Aye: Anderson, Castaneda, Ferguson, Gaskins, Sicora Ludwig, Escobar
Nay:
Abstain:
Motion carried.

O-022402	**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND SUPPLEMENT THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK, TITLE 10, VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC, CHAPTER 10.20 – HANDICAPPED PARKING, SECTION 10.20.010 – SCHEDULE 39 – "PARKING ZONES FOR HANDICAPPED PERSONS"** <u>ADD:</u> 20 MAPLE STREET, APT. 1A 264 SANDFORD STREET

On a motion of Council Member Gaskins, seconded by Council Member Sicora Ludwig, and carried, the above ordinance was adopted on first reading and held over for Public Hearing on February 21, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers in City Hall.

Roll Call:

Aye: Anderson, Castaneda, Ferguson, Gaskins, Sicora Ludwig, Escobar
Nay:
Abstain:
Motion carried.

O-022403	**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND SUPPLEMENT THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK, TITLE 16, LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, CHAPTER 16.24 – SITE PLAN REVIEW, SECTION 16.24.080, MINOR SITE PLAN** RE: SMOKING LOUNGES AND NIGHT CLUBS

On a motion of Council Member Gaskins, seconded by Council Member Sicora Ludwig, and carried, the above ordinance was adopted on first reading and held over for Public Hearing on February 21, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers in City Hall.

Roll Call:

Aye: Anderson, Castaneda, Ferguson, Gaskins, Sicora Ludwig, Escobar
Nay:
Abstain:
Motion carried.

O-022404	**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND SUPPLEMENT THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK, TITLE 17, ZONING** **SECOND READING TO BE HELD ON MARCH 6, 2024 AT 5:30 PM** RE: EXPANDING THE C-2A ZONE AT A PARCEL ON HARVEY STREET

On a motion of Council Member Gaskins, seconded by Council Member Sicora Ludwig, and carried, the above ordinance was adopted on first reading and held over for Public Hearing on March 6, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers in City Hall.

Roll Call:

Aye: Anderson, Castaneda, Ferguson, Gaskins, Sicora Ludwig, Escobar
Nay:
Abstain:
Motion carried.

O-022405	**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND SUPPLEMENT THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK, TITLE 5, BUSINESS LICENSES AND REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 5.09 – CANNABIS LICENSING AND REGULATION** RE: SECTION 5.09.040, NUMBER AND LOCATION OF PERMITS

On a motion of Council Member Gaskins, seconded by Council Member Sicora Ludwig, and carried, the above ordinance was adopted on first reading and held over for Public Hearing on February 21, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers in City Hall.

Roll Call:

Aye: Anderson, Castaneda, Ferguson, Gaskins, Sicora Ludwig, Escobar
Nay:
Abstain:
Motion carried.

O-022406	**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND RATIFYING THE ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN ABANDONED PROPERTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ABANDONED PROPERTY REHABILITATION ACT (*N.J.S.A.* 55:19-78 *ET SEQ.*) BY THE EXERCISE OF THE POWER OF EMINENT DOMAIN**

On a motion of Council Member Gaskins, seconded by Council Member Sicora Ludwig, and carried, the above ordinance was adopted on first reading and held over for Public Hearing on February 21, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers in City Hall.

Roll Call:

Aye: Anderson, Castaneda, Ferguson, Gaskins, Sicora Ludwig, Escobar
Nay:
Abstain:
Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. A letter from Francisco Puntiel requesting escrow account money be returned.
2. A letter from John Campbell regarding missing school crossing/pedestrian sign on Suydam Street.
3. A letter from Department of Community Affairs regarding 2023 Director's Table.
4. A letter from State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control regarding Disciplinary Proceedings against Bar Rood Bos LLC; t/a Mikes Courtside Sports Bar and Grill, License Number: 1214-33-090-012.
5. A Notice from Franklin Township regarding Public Hearing on Zoning Board use variance application held Thursday February 1, 2024 @ 7:30 p.m.
6. A letter from State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control regarding Disciplinary Proceedings against Anil Inc.; t/a Kilmer Liquor License Number: 1214-44-089-005.
7. A letter from State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Division of Local Government Services regarding Emergency Application – N.J.S.A. 40A:4-46.
8. A letter from DELTA Environmental Services regarding Remedial Action Protectiveness/Biennial Certification for 97-99 Jersey Avenue.

9. A letter from Brock & Scott PLLC regarding Notice of Complaint Filing Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 46:10B-49-3, at 284 Paul Robeson Boulevard.
10. A letter from State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Emergency Management Program Bureau of Communications & Response Services regarding Suspected Hazardous Substance Discharge Notification NJDEP case number 24-01-30-0955-57.
11. A Notice from New Jersey Transit regarding proposed changes to Rail, Bus, Light Rail, Access Link and bus contract carriers' fares.
12. A letter from Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission (D&R) regarding 200 Livingston Avenue Apartment Building.
13. A notice from City of New Brunswick Planning Board to property owners within 200 feet regarding public hearing that will be held by The Planning Board on February 12, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.
14. A notification from RAS Robertson, Anschutz, Schneid, Crane & Partners, PLLC Law Offices regarding filing of Summons and Complaint in Mortgage Foreclosure at 264 Somerset Street.
15. A letter from State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Contaminated Site Remediation & Redevelopment regarding Ground Water Remedial Action Permit Modification at 200 & 298 Jersey Avenue.
16. A letter from Alexa F. Scarpaci of Gross Polowy LLC regarding notice of pending foreclosure at 292 Sanford Street.

FOLLOW UP- GEORGE STREET REIMAGINED

Council President asked DMR representative, Michael Pikowski to give an update to answer questions from the last meeting regarding the presentation of 4 option plans for the concept of "George Street Reimagined".

PRESENTATION OF CONCEPTUAL PLANS FOR ALEC E. BAKER PARK

Asst. Business Administrator Brandon Goldberg gave an overview of the renovations. Mr. Goldberg stated there is 1.9 million dollars in grant funding available to make the renovations of the park, the city is looking to open 3 entrances to the park, making it more accessible from different sections of the town, upgraded fields, adding splash pads, inclusive playground, picnic areas, dog park and fruit trees. A survey will be available on the city website for public participation. Charles Bergman commented he was in support of the change and lives near Baker Park. April McClous thanked the city of the option of public participation, asked about sustainability and inquired on the use of recycled materials. Danielle Moore thanked Mr. Salsa and asked if water fountains would be included. Mr. Salsa of the Parks Department responded. Dominik Laufer asked if the existing trees will remain, shade is needed and asked to not to cut down any healthy trees. Charlie Kratovil thanked the Parks and Gardens Commission for applying for the grant and suggested the surveys to be in Spanish and English. Doris Elliot suggested to keep the baseball field and possibly having a multi-use field for soccer.

RESOLUTIONS

Public Comment: Ms. Moore inquired about R-022419. Mr. Drulis responded. Ms. Elliot inquired about R-022419. Council President responded. Mr. Kratovil inquired about R-022405, R-022419 and R-022420. Lt. Hoover, Council President and Mr. Shamy responded.
Resolutions R-022401 through R-022443 except for R-022441- **PULLED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR**, moved by Council Member Sicora Ludwig, seconded by Council Member Gaskins and carried were adopted, on consent, by the Municipal Council.

Roll Call:

Aye: Anderson, Castaneda, Ferguson, Gaskins, Sicora Ludwig, Escobar
Nay:
Abstain: Castaneda R-022434
Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

FOLLOW UP- Council President asked Mr. Drulis to provide an update on the Climate Action Plan. City Administrator Michael Drulis provided a brief overview on the city's Climate Action Plan, stating the city has been granted funding and is currently in the last stage with Greener by Design and looking for the plan to be adopted by July of 2024. Council President Escobar spoke in regards to the drug crisis, partnerships for drug prevention programs, within the city and surrounding organizations. Mr. Devoe updated the council on the homelessness outreach program, Code Blue program, the Dignity Center and the prevention round table.
Robert Vasquez a high school student at New Brunswick High School spoke in support of allowing students of the age of 16–17-year-olds to vote at the School Board Elections. CM Castañeda, CM Gaskins and CP Escobar thanked the student for his time and advocacy. Danielle Moore asked if the city was a sanctuary city, alleged non-citizens of not being arrested when committing crimes, a tracker on her phone and the process for her at the court. April McClous spoke in support of allowing 16–17-year-olds the right to vote for School Board Elections, spoke in favor of bike lanes for George Street Reimagined, forms of transportation, bus shelters, composting and homelessness. Doris Elliot asked how to get involved. Mr. Kratovil congratulated CM Ferguson on his appointment, supports civic engagement, requested a meeting with PIO Baron, inquired on disciplinary actions and information on Fire Director Rawls.
On a motion regularly made, seconded and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

Leslie R. Zeledón
City Clerk

Rebecca Escobar
Council President