

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
OCTOBER 12, 2022**

**MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER**

A regular meeting of the Council of the City of Chester was held on the above date at 10:02am with Deputy Mayor William Morgan presiding. A prayer was said followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called and the following were present:

Elizabeth Williams
Portia West
Stefan Roots
Deputy Mayor William Morgan
Mayor Thaddeus Kirkland (**Absent**)

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Roots, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as submitted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, West, Roots, Deputy Mayor Morgan. Nays: 0.

Deputy Mayor Morgan asked if anyone in the audience had any comments on Agenda items only.

The City Clerk proceeded with the reading of the Resolutions.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the following individual has requested a handicapped parking zone:

1. Joyce C. Morse, 2513 W. 7th Street, Chester, PA 19013

WHEREAS, after a thorough investigation by the Department of Public Works, it has been determined the aforementioned individual has met all of the required criteria and has a need for said handicapped parking zone.

NOW, THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby authorize the proper City officials to install a handicapped parking zone in the 2500 Block of W. 7th Street in the City of Chester.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, West, Roots, Deputy Mayor Morgan. Nays: 0

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby ratify the appointment of Khaliir Barrett, to the position of Laborer, Department of Public Works, effective October 11, 2022, no benefits, for 40 hours per week and with a sixty (60) day probationary period.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, West, Roots, Deputy Mayor Morgan. Nays: 0.

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby ratify the appointment of Ronald Allen, to the position of Laborer, Department of Public Works, effective October 11, 2022, no benefits, for 40 hours per week and with a sixty (60) day probationary period.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, West, Roots, Deputy Mayor Morgan. Nays: 0.

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby ratify the appointment of John Robertson, to the position of Laborer, Department of Public Works, effective October 11, 2022, no benefits, for 40 hours per week and with a sixty (60) day probationary period.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, West, Roots, Deputy Mayor Morgan. Nays: 0.

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby ratify the appointment of Aamir Simpson, to the position of Electrical Inspector, License and Inspection Department, effective October 3, 2022, no benefits, for 37.5 hours per week, and with a ninety (90) day probationary period.

FURTHER, said individual will be benefit eligible after sixty (60) days of employment.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, West, Roots, Deputy Mayor Morgan. Nays: 0.

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby appoint Sam Williams, as a member of the Chester Economic Development Authority, to fill the unexpired term of Bonita Taylor, term to expire December 31, 2023.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, West, Roots, Deputy Mayor Morgan. Nays: 0.

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That in accordance with recommendations of the Chester City Planning Commission, dated September 14, 2022, and reviewed by the Delaware County Planning Commission on September 15, 2022, it does hereby grant final approval to Chester Charter Scholars Academy to construct a 5,720 sq. ft. addition to the existing school building as shown on a plan prepared by Pennoni & Associates, 1900 Market St. Phila., PA 19103, dated August 26, 2022.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted.

Councilman Roots says I would like to ask the people representing the Chester Charter Scholars Academy just to give a brief overview of what this addition is because we don't see it here.

Robert Scott, Attorney for the Project and Michael (inaudible) representing Linn Architects the Architect for the Project. Mr. Scott says the school is currently using some modular units and this is an addition that will provide additional classroom space. Mr. Michael says the space will be used for educational support services mainly (Math, Reading, Science).

Deputy Mayor Morgan says when is the project slated to begin and how long (inaudible) finish date.

Mr. Michael says we are ready to begin as soon as we get a building permit and approval of the land development. The process I'm not sure...it could be maybe twelve months.

The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, West, Roots, Deputy Mayor Morgan. Nays: 0.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Delaware County Council has established the Delco Greenways Grant Program to be utilized by the municipalities of Delaware County; and

WHEREAS, the Delco Greenways grants may be used by the municipality for the improvement or acquisition of recreation land or planning services for such activities; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chester, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, desires to participate in the Delco Greenways Grant Program to fund Chester Creek Trail - Parker Manor Connector; and

WHEREAS, the municipality will have available any and all funding needed to complete this project.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

1. That the City of Chester, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, hereby approves the filing of an application for the Delaware County Municipal Grant Program Assistance; and
2. That the City of Chester is hereby authorized and directed to execute and file the appropriate forms with the Delaware forms with the Delaware County Planning Department.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted.

Councilman Roots says I would like for Mike Galante to come up and explain just what this is all about. We're expanding the Trail System of Chester but a little more detail would be warranted.

Mike Galante says this Delco Greenways Grant is round 3 we're applying for. We previously applied for Greenways Grant round 2 to construct a section of Crozer Park Trail that is completely designed and permitted. That section is going to extend from Incinerator Road at Chester Township over to Kerlin Street. This section of the trail is called Parker Manor Connector (it goes through that neighborhood across from Kerlin Street) will go down 13th Street to the Creek up to the I-95 Bridge. So that is the Section that we are applying for now. Ultimately once this trail is completed it will be a full connection from Crozer Park down through to Eyre Park. There are also bigger plans to connect the trail through the downtown to the East Coast Greenway. We also apply for other grants like DCNR so that there is no cost to the City.

Councilwoman West says and this has been in the works for a while.

Mike Galante, City Engineer says we've been working on this project for design and permitting since around 2014.

Councilman Roots says ultimately what will happen is it will be a place to take a long walk throughout the City, probably 5-7 miles.

The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, West, Roots, Deputy Mayor Morgan. Nays: 0.

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does approve and order payment of a series of bills and refunds as prepared by the Department of Accounts and Finance and as shown on Expenditure Approval List dated October 4, 2022 and October 7, 2022 attached hereto and made a part hereof, subject to approval from the Department of Accounts and Finance.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted.

Deputy Mayor Morgan says that yesterday we had Deliberative which is a little different because we had the Holiday, so members of Council did not have a full good amount to view the Expenditure List. We got it yesterday evening. So, I'm asking if anyone on Council have any questions.

The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, West, Roots, Deputy Mayor Morgan. Nays: 0.

Proclamation – White Cane Day (see attachment #1)

Ayanna King, COVID-19 Support Specialist, gives a COVID-19 Update (see attachment #2)

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilwoman Roots says yesterday there was an event in Darby called Delco Night Out. The young lady who has a restaurant here put it together name is Sugg. It was an assembly of Black Businesses. It was so well represented by Chester Entrepreneurs...Artists...Nasir Leach was one of the Mc's. CMP was there broadcasted LIVE!! That event is planning to go from Community to Community. I saw Councilman Morgan there as well. What did you think about it?

Deputy Mayor Morgan says I thought it was awesome and phenomenal. I did see a lot of people that represented the City of Chester.

Councilman Roots says we did complete that KABOOM Playground in Sun Village Park. I would like to thank Duane Lee, Public Works Department who did a phenomenal job helping us with the logistics.

Councilwoman West says NONE.

Councilwoman Williams says I would like to send get well wishes to my Firefighters that were injured this weekend...Firefighter Lamont, Captain Ryan and Captain Paul. I would like to make a request that the Receiver presents the Agreement that he made with Widener University and he signed on September 1. I would like him to present that at a City-Wide Meeting so that everyone in the Community can know what he signed with Widener University in reference to the City of Chester.

Deputy Mayor Morgan says I think Councilwoman West's Department is doing a great job in the Community. One of the projects is the City lights and it is 98% completed. Our Streets are Bright!! Next, he says (**see attachment #3**). Last Council Meeting there was a little confusion and discussion on what was said or what was had or approved upon...Members of Council that were present at that Meeting decided to Table a RFP to look for a Parking Manager to manage the Parking in the City of Chester such as the meters and other on street parking excluding Widener University. It was Tabled for further discussion. We did have a meeting with the Receiver's Team to discuss our questions, comments and/or concerns. We were able to get some things answered. So please look out for more information regarding the next steps that the City is looking to take or not to take with the Parking within the City of Chester. I think the City does have a parking issue. Jobs, jobs, jobs...we have vacant job/career opportunities here in the City of Chester...check the Website www.chestercity.com. Last week the Philadelphia Union announced a huge investment into the Waterfront and to the Community, the youth and to families as they are taking the first

(inaudible) at trying to look to develop the underdeveloped Chester Waterfront that we have. I'm thankful that members of Mayor and Council was a part of those discussions, also the Chester Upland School District, the Philadelphia Union and other stakeholders and we've been able to do a great job for over the past four years to try and come up with something like this.

Councilman Roots says the Philadelphia Union is not getting any tax breaks nor is the City writing a check, no public funds from us.

Public Comment

Candy Bantum says I am very grateful to be able to hold my position at the Blind Center for 40+ years. I think it's incredible that the City Council of Chester does recognize the White Cane Proclamation being it's a national thing. I challenge everyone in here that once night fall hits tonight turn your lights off and see what you can accomplish. You will be amazed at your own individual ability. So, take good care of what you have and use it before you lose it!

Monica Jones says thank you for continuing White Cane Day!

Thomas Campbell says thank you for recognizing White Cane Month because it is truly a very valuable thing for visually and blind people that are using our canes. It is so important that people recognize the importance of visually impaired and blind people because their trying to live a life that all of us are taught to get through each and every day! Just be respectful to each and every blind person that walks through with a cane!!

Zulene Mayfield says I've not heard yet a plan from Council as to what you are doing to avoid a bankruptcy and or what you're going to do in an event that the City does go into bankruptcy. I've heard no other comments other than Mayor Kirkland that bankruptcy is not what we want. But there is no plan that has been given to the Residents as to what you are actively doing to either avoid it (inaudible). How do we ride a wave through bankruptcy and what does this mean to the Community? We need an explanation and/or a plan. People are uneasy about bankruptcy. Silence is not good enough. We need to hear something from this Council.

Deputy Mayor Morgan says I don't think any member of Council wants to go through bankruptcy and I'm sure the Community doesn't want us to go through bankruptcy. There have been things done over the few years to try and avoid that. We are in a deep hole. One that we won't get out of overnight unless there is a big dump of money into our bank accounts or into the Pension. Things we have done is changes to our Healthcare with Retirees and Actives. As you know we don't have the amount of man or woman force as we once had here at the City of Chester. We had a big layoff. So, there are things that we have done to try and avoid that. In conversations that you may have seen in our MFRAC Meetings, I know that Mr. VJ Kapoor, in August or September, gave a very thorough one-hour presentation on bankruptcy in the City's financials' stability currently right now. I think even in a MFRAC Meeting prior that he gave some options as to what we can do to try to avoid that. One of the ones was looking at the Retiree Pension plan specifically the Police Retirement Plan. Another one was looking at the Chester Water Authority but as you know we are in litigation currently with that. Quite frankly we need a large amount of money to ride the ship in the right direction.

Ms. Mayfield says I'm not talking about what comes from the Receiver, the people did not elect them, you are elected and I think you owe this Community some explanation and a Plan of Action. As far as ARPA funds, how much has been set aside so that our Small Business Owners can come and get those fundings through grants and or loans. What outreach has been done so that they know that money is there...earmarked for them and it's available. They are struggling!

Deputy Morgan says in the first meeting we didn't dive into it that much of the budget. We wanted to provide more detail as to what the American Rescue Plan could be used for. We do have money in the budget for Businesses. Not only for operation uses but potentially looking to clean up their business inside or exterior. We also gave out money to the Business Community in 2020 with the COVID Relief Funds and we ran that through Entrepreneur Works.

Anita Littleton says I would like to ask again if you all have agreed unanimously to not allow working class people to submit our questions via email for those who cannot attend these meetings. Things that are happening in the City, there are supposed to be procedures or policies where the Residents should be on the top of the list to be informed (inaudible) to engage about their input, our questions about anything that is happening in the City. That doesn't seem to be welcomed. I've been to several meetings that have happened here that the City is supposed to notify the members that (inaudible) is the Daily Times. Not everyone has access to the Daily Times. You talk about being transparent. Communication is really key. What is going on with the phone

systems here. Are we as Residents here are we going to get return phone calls? I've called L&I. I've called about picking up some trash. Will the voicemails be updated? How is Residents supposed to deal with that?

Councilwoman West says are you saying you are not getting return phone calls from my Department, Public works.

Ms. Littleton says I'm not really sure. Whoever it is about picking up trash and so yes.

Councilwoman West says is it trash that the Vendor has missed.

Ms. Littleton says it was some rubbish. I've made over five phone calls and no one has returned my calls.

Deputy Mayor Morgan says how recent were these phone calls and can you provide us with the dates and times so that we can look into it and you said no one answered the phone and you left a voicemail.

Ms. Littleton says in the past couple of weeks and okay and yes, I left a message for L&I.

Deputy Mayor Morgan says (he was trying to see what type of trash Ms. Littleton was referring to for Councilwoman West and Ms. Littleton explained that it was grass and Councilwoman West says okay). You talked about transparency. I think that this Council has been very transparent over the years. We have come into the ages of technology of websites and internet. So yes, sometimes it requires for us to put information in public circulation such as the newspaper the Daily Times. But that's not our only place that we put information. We also use our Social Media, such as Facebook and we also have a E-Newsletter. Ms. Amanda Johnson, every month, probably the first day of every month, there is a E-Newsletter with a ton of information from the prior month and things that are upcoming of the month.

Ms. Littleton says are you talking about Community Events...meetings that you have to have for public input.

Deputy Mayor Morgan says are you a subscriber to our Newsletter.

Ms. Littleton says I believe so. I check the site regularly.

Deputy Mayor Morgan says the Newsletter sends you an email every month of everything that has happened from the previous month and for the upcoming month of things that are happening. So please if you're not a subscriber or anybody else that needs to subscribe that doesn't have the information readily accessible in a newspaper please subscribe to the newsletter because that is another way that we get information out besides Facebook and the newspaper.

Councilwoman Williams says Ms. Littleton, I want you to understand that we're not trying to ignore anybody. But every last person sitting up here is doing our own work. We're doing our work (inaudible).

Ms. Lacy says I also have the same question regarding transparency. Will the Council allow the constituents to submit our questions via email/on line chat for the upcoming meetings? Do you guys post the Agendas for the meetings on your website? I was looking for today's Agenda and it wasn't on the website.

Deputy Mayor Morgan says yes, they are posted on our website. We are going to talk about that and look to see how we will move forward (emails/on line chat for meetings). Unfortunately, I won't be able to provide a concrete answer on that but we will discuss that.

Ms. Lacy says the traffic and the speeding on 9th Street between Barclay and Fulton. I witnessed a woman get hit by a car...thank God she was okay. But something has to be done. There needs to be a traffic pattern on 9th Street between those two schools. The cars are flying down that street. So many cars run through that red light all hours of the day. I'm asking Council to do something about the speeding...get cameras out there...the Police out there. Get something out there on these streets.

Police Commissioner Gretsky says cameras is something that we are looking into. I am down Police Officers. As soon as my numbers get up that is one of the first things I'm going to address.

Deputy Mayor Morgan says Councilwoman and myself was on a call with PennDOT a month or two ago and we discussed some traffic calming and safety measures that can happen around the School area. There were some discussions that they were looking to see what immediate options that they had to try and help with that. I'm hopeful that something can happen immediately. I'm glad that the individual was not injured.

Councilwoman West says it's a State Road too and we have to go through PennDOT and the State to be able to do certain things on 9th Street. But we are looking into that. The few little things that we could do we did do.

Arnold and Hora Thomas says thank you Councilwoman Portia West and Councilwoman Williams for working with us, helping us and showing us that she cares more than once. We have a serious rodent problem and it is being bred through 2119 West 10th Street. The lady hasn't put her trash out over three weeks. There are about 40 bags of trash. I have pictures on my phone that I would like to share with you. I have caught eleven rodents/mice in my house. We are very clean, clean people and we shouldn't have to go through this. We dealt with L&I and we spoke to Mr. Collins last Thursday. He promised to bring a truck and pick up the trash on Friday. He didn't. There is a lot of animals in that trash. So, we need help! The City has tagged the house. We had to go and get an Exterminator. Everyone is complaining about rodents in the neighborhood and it smells!!

Deputy Mayor Morgan says if we know are they cleaning out the house for the individual to move or they're just cleaning it out to (inaudible because Mrs. Thomas begins to speak)

Ms. Thomas says they're trying to live there.

Gary Collins says you and I spoke and we have posted the property. We tried to come up with a plan to, (because we were told the Resident is mentally unstable), we have no way of knowing that. So, we came up with a plan to try to (inaudible) as best as we could. I went to the house and she opened the door and I could see back to the kitchen. I spoke with our COO and so we came up with some ways that maybe the City can help the situation by using some monies to send a clean out crew to clean out the rest...the basement. If I got to put in a work order to have the trash removed from the back. So, we have a plan in motion that may help this situation. We don't want to do this all the time but since the person is...(there was a conversation going on so the rest of his statement is inaudible). So, we are in the process of doing something about the situation. Something that may not involve dragging the person out of their home at this particular time. The situation may be over very soon.

Deputy Mayor Morgan says we will convene and see what we can do to try and help with immediate removal of the trash bags being that it is in the yard. It is on private property but we will see what we can do to try and make that happen.

Police Commissioner Gretskey says October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. We do have a satellite Office in our Police Department for that on the 3rd Floor. If you need any type of information please stop by and make an appointment. Also, to the Upper East End Residents who I met with at Widener University meeting last week, I do have a plan in place and we have to detail setup for this Saturday. It is Widener's Homecoming. I (inaudible) a lot of complaints but we will be prepared. I will be meeting with Chester High School Staff in reference to Chester High's Homecoming that will be the following Saturday, on the 22nd, we will have a plan in place so that everyone will have a safe fun day. **NOBODY DOES IT LIKE CHESTER HIGH'S HOMECOMING!!**

Deputy Mayor Morgan says GO CLIPPERS! THEY'RE 6-0!! SO GO SUPPORT THOSE STUDENT ATHLETES!

****Public Comment addresses are in the City Clerk's Office**

There being no other business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 11:29am.

Respectfully submitted,

OCTOBER 12, 2022

Candice Newsome, City Clerk