

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
10 East Church Street – Town Hall  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
Tuesday, February 2, 2016 – 7:00 PM

INVOCATION

Father Alexandros Petrides, of Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, offered the invocation which was followed by the pledge to the flag.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

President Reynolds called the meeting to order. Present were Michael G. Colón, Eric R. Evans, Shawn M. Martell, Olga Negrón-Dipini, Adam R. Waldron and J. William Reynolds, 6. Bryan G. Callahan was absent.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of January 19, 2016 were approved.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

*Intermodal Proposal*

John Whelan, 11 West Second Street, Unit 341-Riverport Building, noted it came to his attention today that Council was considering a proposal to co-fund a study of whether or not it would be possible to put in an Intermodal. Mr. Whelan stated he would refer to it as a bus depot. He does not agree with the idea of installing any kind of bus depot in a residential area. When we refer to the Riverport building or any other condo building, we refer to them as apartments or condos. Mr. Whelan advised this happens to be his home and added that there are 172 units in that building so there are 171 other units that are also homes to other people. Basically, what you would be doing is voting on a proposal and if you approve that proposal you would be floating an idea of putting a bus depot in his backyard. Mr. Whelan informed that would be no different than putting a bus depot in your backyard, if you own a single family home. He would also say that it would have a significant impact on the value of the homes in that building. Only now are we beginning to creep back up after the crash back in 2008. To install such a thing would certainly be devastating to the home values. Mr. Whelan added that more importantly to him, as he said before, that building and unit is his home and you would be considering funding this idea and this would be devastating in more ways than one in this is a neighborhood to the 172 units. Mr. Whelan mentioned he is at this meeting to say that he hopes that in your wisdom that you would not even think of proposing to even suggest and even investigate the idea of putting in such a thing in his backyard. He noted Council should think if someone else floated this idea and wanted to put a bus depot in their backyard. He reiterated that his unit is his home and the home to 171 other people. Mr. Whelan is at this meeting to ask Council to please not even consider the idea or even investigating the opportunity.

President Reynolds knows that there are several individuals here to speak about the Intermodal proposal. The public would all have a chance to speak. President Reynolds knows that Council has many questions on this and offered the Administration the opportunity to speak for a few minutes regarding the proposal and provide some background.

Ms. Karner stated she could give a background and asked if President Reynolds would like her to take questions at this time.

President Reynolds remarked he would like her to explain what Council would be voting on tonight and give a little bit of background. He reiterated the public would have an opportunity to speak regarding this Agenda item.

Ms. Karner remarked what is on the agenda tonight is the approval of a contract under the Ordinance that requires us to come to Council for contract approval. This is a contract approval for Maser Consulting and this would be to do feasibility of the specific location. Ms. Karner wanted to start out by saying that this has not been predetermined to be the location we are looking to put a

facility at. There has been a lot of looking at the south side under the past Administration on where to place a facility that has been tagged as an Intermodal and tagged as a bus station. Currently our services on the south side are associated with the trailer that is located on Mechanic Street. If you are standing on New and Mechanic Streets and you look to your left there are two temporary structures. One is a police substation and the other is a station where you can purchase bus tickets and so forth. Mr. Karner mentioned what we were awarded back in 2008 was federal funding through LANTA to the City to do planning for some kind of permanent structure improvements associated with bus transportation. There was a massive facility that was proposed. She believes it was a 1,000 car parking deck as well as a retail center and an Intermodal, probably not dissimilar to what we see in Easton today. That has morphed into something much smaller for what our needs are. Ms. Karner mentioned we have seen and heard a lot of anecdotal stories from folks that there is mostly the Lehigh student population that uses this facility on Mechanic Street. We have seen a decrease in services by the private companies that transport for long distances but we believe we really need to bring a third party in to freshen up that analysis and really look at the feasibility of moving this facility to a location like Riverport on the south side. Ms. Karner stated until we bring this professional in to talk to the residents at Riverport and understand what the ridership looks like and what the traffic is that is associated with this and what the structure itself can accommodate, this is all with the assumption that we are talking about a ticket booth and a couple of bathrooms. Ms. Karner informed this would be nothing near the grand scale that we had seen proposed previously. It is really about bringing them in to help us with that analysis; it is not something we have the capacity to do in house.

President Reynolds noted it will be easier if the public asks questions during their five minutes and certainly when we get to the Resolution the agenda we would turn to the Administration at that point to make any additional comments. This would be hopefully to answer any outstanding questions or at that time Members of Council can certainly ask questions as well.

Ms. Karner pointed out that they too have a lot of questions so we probably do not have questions that are dissimilar from what the residents and the folks on the south side have. This is a way of being able to pose those questions to a third party that will really look at this for us in a way that we could not look at it ourselves. Ms. Karner welcomes the questions from the residents so we can address them in the long term.

Tom Donchez, 11 West Second Street, Unit 325-Riverport Building, stated he grew up on the south side of Bethlehem and is very familiar with it. He is very fond of the south side and mentioned that he owns a condo at the Riverport complex. Mr. Donchez reported that his son also owns a condo at the Riverport complex so he has a vested interest in this discussion. He noted they bought their condominiums in 2007. It has been a rough ride with the housing bust that we all have gone through. The Riverport Association which he is a part of, has done a really good job of managing its way through and maintaining that facility. We have lost a lot of owners along the way; we have bounced off the bottom and are working our way back up. The trend is positive and we have maintained it very well. Mr. Donchez noted we have a good group of owners and tenants that are very interested in the south side. They would not be there otherwise and we want to do the right thing and that is why he is at this meeting tonight. Mr. Donchez informed a previous speaker spoke about Riverport. It is a residential complex of 172 one and two bedroom condominiums. It also contains two large commercial units, the former Starters space and the active Steel Fitness Center. We are looking forward to the rebirth of the former Starters space and are very happy to have a thriving Steel Fitness located at Riverport. Mr. Donchez added that Riverport also leases 262 spaces in the adjoining garage for the residents of Riverport. We pay for those spaces monthly under a 20 year agreement with the Bethlehem Parking Authority and the two commercial units utilize the remaining spaces in the parking garage. That is very important for them. That is where their customers park and the idea of a bus station there puts those empty spaces that Steel Fitness and Starters would use in jeopardy. Mr. Donchez believes it is a mistake to focus only on Riverport and for that reason Council should not approve the expenditure. We believe there are other sites on the south side of Bethlehem, particularly closer to Lehigh University that would make more sense for the bus companies and for the citizens of the south side. It is his understanding that Council is not evaluating any other sites besides Riverport. Mr. Donchez then wanted to describe why he opposes the idea of a bus depot at Riverport. He mentioned that bus traffic will travel to park and idle on the doorsteps of 172 condominium units resulting in traffic noise and emissions that are not compatible with a densely constructed residential community in close proximity to busses. Mr. Donchez noted this makes no sense to them. He stated that parking spaces used by travelers will not be available for Steel Fitness and the prospective new tenant of the former Starters. They will have a hard time finding parking once the Fahy Bridge begins

reconstruction, thus harming two commercial spaces. It is likely we will see travelers getting on and off the bus, wandering around the open premises of Riverport and the open courtyard to that community and that should not be acceptable to anybody. Mr. Donchez added that bus access to and from Second Street will be difficult and possibly dangerous. He also believes that the two bus companies are not in favor of relocating the bus station to Riverport, primarily because they do not like the traffic flow and do not like that street because it is hard to get on to. Mr. Donchez added that mostly their customers are Lehigh University students. Finally, locating the bus station at Riverport may have a negative impact on the perception and ultimately the property values at Riverport, reversing the hard earned positive trend we have seen over the past two years and that would be a shame. Mr. Donchez noted for these reasons we would oppose a bus station relocation to the doorstep of the Riverport residential complex and we urge Council not to approve the expenditure.

Alicia Pereira, 11 West Second Street, Unit 130-Riverport Building, mentioned she does not have much to add that has not been said already. She thinks everyone here has been expressing their opinions but she wanted to correct something. It is not 172 people; it is 172 units so it is hundreds of people, voters and children that live in these residences. Ms. Pereira added that you are looking to do a feasibility study but she can say right now, the feasibility should be no, you should not put a bus terminal in front of people's homes and that is what this study is going to look at. She has seen and used the terminal in south Bethlehem. It is small, but she does not think you need to move it to somewhere like Riverport. She added that there are plenty of better locations for a bus station rather than moving it into someone's home. Ms. Pereira pointed out there have been issues. All of the people at Riverport pay to support that parking structure and now you would be adding insult to injury not only making them pay for the parking structure but making them sit there in smog and bus fuel. She does not think that is acceptable. She added that there have been issues with theft and burglary and very little has been done. She feels this is adding insult to injury and thinks this should be taken off the table.

Peter Crownfield, 407 Delaware Avenue, stated he was not even aware that this was coming up but he finds this interesting that this is being considered. He added that when Breena Holland and others spoke about the project and possibility of people parking there instead of having this huge monstrosity of a structure, she was told that was too far for people to walk. But now we are asking to walk an extra three or four blocks. Students from Lehigh are the primary users of this bus terminal. Mr. Crownfield noted the logic of this is entirely escapes him and to spend money to study how to do it is just a waste of taxpayer's money.

Mike Fegley, 11 West Second Street, Unit 338-Riverport Building, mentioned he is a new resident of Bethlehem and that he moved down from the country. He and his wife are professionals in their 40's and they are the demographic that you want to draw to Bethlehem, especially the south side. If you put a bus depot in there you might as well zone it Section 8 because you are devaluing everything. Mr. Fegley noted that you will not draw in people like him, others here tonight and people that are helping revitalize the south side. We are your largest non-student residents, non-subsidized residents on the south side in that particular area. Mr. Fegley informed we are the people supporting the restaurants, the shops, keeping it safe down there and walking the streets. Nothing does better for revitalization when you see young families and young people and people of all demographic walking around the neighborhoods as opposed to hiding inside. He added, you are making a grave mistake by forcing a bus station into this area. Mr. Fegley pointed out he is in the fuel business and he can say you that if you put busses out front, there is no way that those fumes are not coming inside that building. They will be sucked in by our ventilation units and it would be an environmental disaster. Mr. Fegley hopes that Council does not go forward with the feasibility study and listen to the people here tonight. Keep in mind that all of us here only found out about this around 3PM today and we are just a small sample of the people that live there. Obviously we do have a very concerned residency so he hopes that Council does the right thing and find somewhere else to put the bus depot because you are wasting your time on all of the revitalization efforts you have put in over the last ten years if you are going to devalue past efforts. Mr. Fegley reiterated that if you put a bus station in there you devalue the building, you devalue one of your largest structures down there and it should be one of your bigger success stories as time goes forward. This is especially with the way Riverport has been revitalized. Mr. Fegley added that he moved here because his children go to school here now at Moravian. He and his wife enjoy the contrast from the country. We moved down from the New Ringgold area which is farm country. It is nice now to be able to walk to things. Mr. Fegley noted they would never consider buying a place with a bus station. Like the previous gentleman said, the commercial spaces would be non-viable if you have travelers park there because travelers do not give you anything to your local economy; they park and they leave. Mr. Fegley stated they

come back and they go home, they are not spending anything at the restaurants, bars and local shops. They are not supporting anything that has popped up in the neighborhood over the last ten years, but the residents are.

Riverport Resident, 11 West Second Street, Unit 104-Riverport Building, stated he wanted to express disinterest in the idea like others have mentioned before, due to implications that would be on the residences and the property values. He does not think there is too much he could touch on that others have already.

Rich Vermillion, 11 West Second Street, Unit 118-Riverport Building, stated he too moved here with his wife and son from the country. He mentioned that his son is at the Lehigh Valley Charter School for the Arts. They were looking at renting an apartment and were not sure where to live because they were new to South Bethlehem so they explored and found Riverport. Mr. Vermillion mentioned they have been living there since August and it is one of the best decisions they have made because his son can walk to school. He walks out the parking garage every day to school. Mr. Vermillion informed he has concerns about this plan and as a resident and as a parent he would ask Council to reconsider the bus depot at Riverport.

Melanie Onesto, 11 West Second Street, Unit 305-Riverport Building, mentioned that she is also on the Board of Directors. She thinks everyone has done a great job in trying to express to you how unhappy they would be with the idea of a bus depot at Riverport. Overall, what does a bus station bring? It brings trash, transient people, and cigarette smokers. We are trying hard to improve that area. She thinks that is what the City would want. Ms. Onesto queried why put a bus depot in an area where so many units are so expensive and everyone spends so much money being there and have suffered enough with all of the economic issues we have had there. We are trying very hard to make it better so to have the City say too bad, we are going to put a bus terminal there, that does not make sense. Ms. Onesto hopes that Council makes a good choice for us.

Salman Riaz, 11 West Second Street, Unit 227-Riverport Building, mentioned that he owns his condo; he does not live there but rents it out. They loved the place from day one and bought the property back in 2006. They really believe in the revitalization of South Bethlehem and mentioned that they do rent it out and have never had any issues with any of the tenants. All of their tenants fall in love with the condo and the area and do not want to leave. Mr. Riaz stated this will be a disaster if you decide to move forward with this. He added that this would become a nightmare for landlords like him; they would not be able to rent in the future. From an investment perspective he would say that this would be a huge negative so please seriously consider to not moving this forward. Mr. Riaz related that this is the first time he has attended a Council Meeting. He is normally very busy but the moment he got the email three hours ago he dropped everything and came to this meeting; that is how concerned he is.

Stephanie Altieri, 11 West Second Street, Unit 336-Riverport Building, stated she is wondering who came up with the idea to put a bus station at Riverport. Obviously, that can be answered later but why Riverport when there are plenty of other spaces that are not a residential community. Ms. Altieri noted that carbon monoxide would be filtered right into the courtyard at Riverport which would linger in the air because there is basically no escape. Again, there would be littering, loitering, vandalism and who would pick up the cigarette butts and who will maintain that. She wonders if that would be the Parking Authority but does not believe they will. Ms. Altieri agrees with everyone that this is a terrible idea so she hopes that Council opposes it.

Courtney Barco, 11 West Second Street, Unit 314-Riverport Building, noted she found out about this as she was finishing her first day of work. As you all know that is a very stressful day but more stressful to find out that a place that she loves dearly and rents out is very alarming. She knows that Council has heard many passionate pleas to reconsider this. This is summarized as a place to just add bathrooms and a ticket sale booth. We do live close to two major Cities and many have ventured to Philadelphia and New York. She continued you have maybe utilized the bus stations and subways in both cities, but those are not just places to use the bathroom and buy tickets. They are typically a very high traffic area and they reflect the use they are given. Ms. Barco mentioned it is a good thing for a large area because it cuts down on a lot of things. However, we are not discussing ramping up transportation within our City; we are discussing ramping up leaving. She understands that it does have its own industry but it is not just bathrooms and ticket sales. It increases foot traffic for people who do not even live in that area or are utilizing our resources and that is a sad thing. Ms. Barco added this would ramp up fumes and not many of you live in Riverport but it is a very beautifully restored building. She currently lives

in a unit that has an exterior wall only but she cannot open her windows. She relies entirely on heating and air conditioning, which means whatever is outside her building, will come into her apartment. She would have no escape of that and bus fumes would be included. She continued when there are trash days you can smell it. Ms. Barco stated that is alarming to her personally. Also, she is very active and she lives very close to the D & L Trail which is an awesome thing we have in our community. She walked over to this meeting this evening; she feels very safe and she is a young female. That is something to say to be able to walk places in the dark and to run in the dark and she feels this all would be compromised heavily if a bus were to be there. So while you are considering a place to put this she would like Council to consider the impact of what this would bring to our area.

Tom Pallotti, 11 West Second Street, Riverport Building, stated many have gotten up and talked about personal reasons why having a transport station at the condominium complex would be a bad idea. He agrees with all of those things but he also wanted to highlight the economic implications of having this transport station at this complex. Mr. Pallotti noted this is one of the few areas on the south side that attracts professionals, who spend money at the local businesses. Mr. Pallotti stated he pays taxes to the City and he probably would not live in Bethlehem if he did not live in Riverport. Mr. Pallotti informed that the bus depot would have a huge economic implication and would drive these residents out of that complex.

4. OLD BUSINESS.

A. Members of Council

None.

B. Tabled Items

None.

C. Unfinished Business

None.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

A. *Director of Budget and Finance – Recommendation for Award – Engle Hambright and Davies*

The Clerk read a memorandum from Mark Sivak, Director of Budget and Finance recommending a contract with Engle Hambright and Davies, Inc., for self-insured Workers' Compensation program management services. The term of the contract is January 1 through December 31, 2016. The fee for the contract is \$62,500.

President Reynolds stated Resolution 9 A is on the agenda.

B. *Housing and Community Development Planner -- Recommendation for Award – Maser Consulting*

The Clerk read a memorandum from Allyson Lysaght, Housing and Community Development Planner recommending a contract with Maser Consulting for the Bethlehem South Side Intermodal Site Study – Riverport. The term of the contract is February 3 to December 31, 2016. The fee for the contract is \$90,450.

President Reynolds stated Resolution 9 B is on the agenda.

C. *Director of Planning and Zoning– Recommendation for Award – Christie M. Davies, SRA*

The Clerk read a memorandum from Darlene Heller, Director of Planning and Zoning, recommending a contract with Christie M. Davies, SRA for completion of a real estate appraisal report pursuant to transfer of a parcel of the south Bethlehem Greenway related to construction of the Route 412 connector road. The term of the contract is February 5 to March 4, 2016. The fee for the contract is \$1,500.

President Reynolds stated Resolution 9 F is on the agenda.

6. REPORTS

A. *President of Council*

1. *Councilmanic Appointment – Olga Negrón-Dipiní– Bethlehem Area Public Library Board*

President Reynolds appointed Olga Negrón-Dipiní to membership on the Bethlehem Area Public Library Board effective until January, 2017. Mr. Colón and Mr. Martell sponsored Resolution 2016-023 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Mr. Evans, Mr. Martell, Ms. Negrón-Dipiní, Mr. Waldron, Mr. Colón and Mr. Reynolds, 6. The Resolution passed.

2. *Councilmanic Appointment –Cathy Reuscher– Bethlehem Area Public Library Board*

President Reynolds appointed Cathy Reuscher to membership on the Bethlehem Area Public Library Board effective until January, 2018. Ms. Negrón-Dipiní and Mr. Colón sponsored Resolution 2016-024 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Mr. Evans, Mr. Martell, Ms. Negrón-Dipiní, Mr. Waldron, Mr. Colón and Mr. Reynolds, 6. The Resolution passed.

3. *Councilmanic Appointment – Cathy Reuscher– Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council*

President Reynolds appointed Cathy Reuscher to membership on the Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council effective until January, 2019. Ms. Negrón-Dipiní and Mr. Colón sponsored Resolution 2016-025 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Mr. Evans, Mr. Martell, Ms. Negrón-Dipiní, Mr. Waldron, Mr. Colón and Mr. Reynolds, 6. The Resolution passed.

4. *Councilmanic Appointment – R. Michael Topping – Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council*

President Reynolds reappointed R. Michael Topping to membership on the Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council effective until January, 2019. Mr. Martell and Ms. Negrón-Dipiní sponsored Resolution 2016-026 to confirm the reappointment.

Voting AYE: Mr. Evans, Mr. Martell, Ms. Negrón-Dipiní, Mr. Waldron, Mr. Colón and Mr. Reynolds, 6. The Resolution passed.

5. *Council Liaisons and Appointees*

President Reynolds announced the following City Council Liaisons and Appointees for 2016-2017:

Bethlehem Council of the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC)  
President J. William Reynolds - Appointee

Bethlehem Authority  
Shawn M. Martell - Liaison

Bethlehem Housing Authority  
Michael G. Colón- Liaison

Library Board  
Olga Negrón-Dipiní – Appointee

Parking Authority  
Bryan G. Callahan - Liaison

Recreation Commission  
Eric R. Evans – City Council Appointee

Redevelopment Authority  
Adam R. Waldron - Liaison

Blighted Property Review Committee  
Adam R. Waldron - Appointee

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission  
Adam R. Waldron - Appointee for the year 2016

B. *Mayor*

1. *Administrative Order – Dennis Domcheck – Bethlehem Authority Board*

Mayor Donchez appointed Dennis Domcheck to membership on the Bethlehem Authority Board effective through January, 2021. Mr. Martell and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution 2016-027 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Mr. Evans, Mr. Martell, Ms. Negrón-Dipini, Mr. Waldron, Mr. Colón and Mr. Reynolds, 6. The Resolution passed.

*Incident in South Bethlehem; Fire Contract Arbitration; Weekend Snowstorm*

Mayor Donchez informed he wanted to commend Police Chief Mark DiLuzio and the excellent job that our Police Department did over this past weekend with the shootings and the cooperation we received from the Pennsylvania State Police and the Allentown Police Department. This was outstanding Police work, outstanding Detective work and that led to the arrest. Mayor Donchez noted it is hard to believe that the one individual who received eight bullets survived but it is just a great compliment to the professionalism of our Police Department and if Chief DiLuzio wants to make additional comments he certainly can. Mayor Donchez noted we did receive the arbitration award from the Arbitrator regarding the Fire contract. Mayor Donchez believes that Members of Council received all of that this afternoon. Mayor Donchez then wanted to make a few comments regarding the snow storm. Mayor Donchez informed that we received 31.5 inches of snow. He continued usually we only get 34 inches a year but we got this all in one shot. He remarked the City did an outstanding job led by Michael Alkhal, Director of Public Works and also the Parks Department and Water Department. Mayor Donchez thinks that the fact that we declared a snow emergency effective Saturday morning at 7 a.m. and made it known by 4 p.m. Friday afternoon was important. The reason for doing that was to allow people who lived near the parking garages in center city in to move their cars into the garages for free. He must say that Kevin Livingston, Director of the Parking Authority was very cooperative. People were not charged and he thinks that helped the situation. Mayor Donchez continued to say, when you look at 250 miles of streets which equates to 600 lane miles that is a lot to plow. Mayor Donchez thinks the men did an outstanding job considering the circumstances and he is thankful for the melting snow during the last few days also. We did use probably this time, more than last year or even two years ago, quite a few email blasts. We are building up a City data base. We are over 400 email addresses now, and we use Facebook, Twitter, and the City's Facebook and his personal one just to try to get the message out. They also use 69 News and the City's webpage. Mayor Donchez added that Blake Kleintop, IS Website Manager was very cooperative and quick with getting information on the website. Mayor Donchez stressed that overall there was an excellent job done even though on top of that we had water main breaks. When you have water main breaks you need to divert resources away from snow removal. Mayor Donchez advised that considering 31.5 inches of snow, most people were very understanding. Obviously we did get some phone calls about people wanting their streets plowed immediately but for the most part people were very understanding. He would like Mr. Alkhal to make some additional comments.

Mr. Alkhal stated that this was a substantial snowstorm and it required everything we could throw at it in order to respond. It created some significant challenges and inconveniences and some of those inconveniences continue on to this day on some streets in some neighborhoods. Mr. Alkhal noted that they fully understand that. We worked around the clock as soon as the storm event began with 12-hour day and night shifts and we immediately went into snow removal Monday night and continued to do the plowing operations and following up on issues. Some of the challenges that they encountered that made the job difficult were

because during the storm they had to concentrate on the main streets and some of the secondary streets that are heavily used. Mr. Alkhal mentioned they had very little opportunity to get into some of the narrower side streets or alleys. By the time they could get to them typically there was 2 ½ feet of snow there and if they were narrow you could only get a small piece of equipment through there to plow and it was impossible to plow them at that point. We had to switch over to equipment that we do not typically deploy in snow operations that included front end loaders. So the pace got slower towards the end of the response. Mr. Alkhal added that we also as the Mayor mentioned, had several water main breaks that diverted resources that we had to get back into the operation. He added that they had a lot of vehicles that were getting stuck during the operations and had to assist emergency services during the operation in responding and following plows in order to respond to emergencies. Mr. Alkhal noted despite all of that we had, within 24 hours of the end of the snow probably 99% of the streets were plowed. On Tuesday morning he had to send three inspectors to look for streets that they might have missed. Mr. Alkhal noted we have about 850 streets in the City and they found 11 alleys that day that were not plowed, 24 hours after the snow stopped. He feels that is a reasonable indicator that we worked hard and that the crews stayed on it and we opened things up fairly quickly, given the circumstances. It was not perfect by any stretch but the main and secondary roads were no problem. In some neighborhoods where there are parked cars on both sides; even to this day we may have one lane or one lane and a half plowed through them. We face a dilemma after we plowed that after plowing one lane, if we go back there we would plow in people's driveways so we want to stay away from that. Mr. Alkhal advised there are still some difficult conditions even now; we are almost a week away from the event. He added that with snow removal starting Monday night we engaged private contractors as well as our in-house resources and did the snow removal starting with some of the main streets, our business districts and worked our way out. He added that our in-house groups also went and removed snow and assisted the school district so they could open schools, removing snow around all the schools, churches, funeral homes and other key public places. Mr. Alkhal thinks overall given what we had, this is the type of storm that your operations should be geared towards snow removal as opposed to just plowing. We did fairly well. He stressed that the crews worked very hard and especially in terms of plowing. We freed up the City in a very good time. He continued overall we should be pleased with what was done and of course, if you lived on the alley that was plowed 24 hours after the storm or beyond that your opinion may be that the operation was ridiculous. We do log everything and put that in Action Tracking in terms of complaints. He added we certainly did get a lot of complaints but the majority of complaints were getting into alleys and opening them up and the widening of streets and the plowing of driveways shut or throwing snow on sidewalks. Mr. Alkhal added that the complaints tended to be about individual's needs such as people saying their alley was not plowed, etc. Mr. Alkhal advised they also had a significant amount of compliments via emails and phone calls and the majority of those were more general in how they could travel around the City. He honestly thinks that is more representative of the way to judge the operation. He can understand the frustration of someone where we did not get to them later in the process, that is important and we do try to do better every time. Mr. Alkhal pointed out that they will have a debriefing about this whole event even though he hopes we do not have two and a half feet of snow very often. We will look at the operation and evaluate everything we did and see if we did everything as well as it could be done within of course financial constraints.

Mr. Alkhal mentioned during snow removal there was an incident with regard to traffic on Tuesday night and he wanted to clear that up. We were with our in-house crews on the Fahy Bridge removing snow in the north bound lanes and they were to get off the bridge at 3:00 p.m. no matter where they were in the process. They did get caught up longer than that because there was snow in the middle of the street when they realized it was 3:00 p.m. and they needed to pull up and go and come back later. The gridlock that was created Tuesday night was predominately because of two or three incidents along Third Street, and one vehicle on the Minsi Trail Bridge that was disabled or in an accident. Mr. Alkhal noted as you can imagine at that time on Tuesday night we were still doing removal on Fourth Street and were almost done with that and did not yet do Third Street. Third Street was one lane in each direction, and there was nowhere to go because the parking areas had snow on them. So getting to those vehicles and those accidents was hectic and took a long time. That was primarily the reason for the traffic issues that were created that night. Mr. Alkhal stated overall he believes it was a good operation and hopefully we will not have to do this again anytime soon. As far as the amount of money and resources that we had to spend on this operation he would say the main plowing operations, just overtime, material and gas, excluding Police and other things without counting regular time, we are probably looking at somewhere between \$300,000 and \$500,000 for this one storm.

Mr. Evans thanks Mr. Alkhal and his staff for the work they did. It is difficult to demand expectations. We all know the size of the snow yet we expect to be out and moving around quickly, but from what he was able to see in his neighborhood, it felt it was better than fair work that they did. Mr. Evans noted the main roads that needed to be travelled on were plowed and it was a matter of time before the others got plowed. Mr. Evans queried about the 40 pieces of equipment, and asked if they were all out on the roads.

Mr. Alkhal reported they were all out; we had at least 40 units per shift out, especially at the front end of the operation. That went down a little bit towards the end of the operation because typical conventional plows were not effective once we got into the narrow streets that had two and a half feet of snow. We might have scaled down a little bit because we had plenty of manpower for it but the suitable equipment was the issue at the time.

Mr. Evans asked if there was any equipment damaged during the storm.

Mr. Alkhal noted the Mechanical Bureau had to hustle during the entire storm and soon after for several days fixing and putting pieces of equipment back in service. He continued even over the weekend we had to knock on the shops doors trying to track down someone to get parts to fix a front end loader because some of the businesses we deal with for parts were closed. Mr. Alkhal stated yes, they did have damaged equipment but nothing major, although they did have a number of things happen and had to hustle to get equipment back into the operation.

Mr. Evans asked if the equipment that was down was able to be repaired and put back on line or was that permanently damaged.

Mr. Alkhal stated no, just about all of it is back up and in service.

Mr. Evans noted that Mr. Alkhal mentioned the expenses being about \$500,000.

Mr. Alkhal calculated very quickly just the contractor costs and our in house overtime added up to \$300,000. He added that does not include gas, repairs, towing, and does not include the regular time that would have occurred whether we had or not had the snow. That is why he is saying it is somewhere between \$300,000 and \$500,000.

Mayor Donchez interjected that Fire Chief Robert Novatnack is our Emergency Management Coordinator for the City and he is keeping track of the expenses. There is a chance we may be reimbursed for a certain percentage of this from the State.

Mr. Evans queried what was budgeted for this year for snow removal.

Mr. Alkhal stated we budget for snow operations outside of what is regular.

Mr. Evans noted this would be under Liquid Fuels and under the General Fund.

Mr. Alkhal reported for an average winter it is about \$600,000 for material and overtime.

Mr. Evans mentioned he thought the cost for an average storm that we get, such as the one last year was perhaps \$20,000.

Mr. Alkhal informed that a substantial storm that keeps us going for several shifts is about \$50,000 but that is about it.

Mr. Evans thanked Mr. Alkhal for his work on this because when he drove around the City for days he saw equipment moving and with the line of dump trucks this was a lot more labor intensive and slow to remove this versus just plowing. Mr. Evans added he has seen when driving around the schools that the plows seem a little hesitant to go back and revisit some of the roads that have a lot of snow on the sides, now that they are melting away. Is there the fear of plowing the driveways closed?

Mr. Alkhal stated that is one of reasons and he has been talking to the crews repeatedly. Once things calm down we are down to that remaining main issue. Soon after the plowing when the snow was still very high, it was a combination of even our bigger plows, depending

on how wide the street was plowed, they would difficulty pushing the snow. You would be pushing it against cars as well as plowing in driveways. Mr. Alkhal added in order to not frustrate the residents further, if we were going to do that it would be a slow process because we would plow it and we ourselves would probably have to open up the driveways. In fact, we may do that starting as early as tomorrow in some of the areas of higher concern. For example on the west side, we could not get the roads as wide as we liked, in particular the Rosemont area. He just looked at this today and noted we could definitely push the snow now because it has melted to the degree that a typical plow could push it back further. Mr. Alkhal stated if we do we cannot in fairness plow in those driveways and expect them to shovel back out. So we ourselves would have to address that.

Mr. Martell stated he wanted to also express his gratitude for the work done. Many times the Streets Department along with Parks and Public Property are the unsung heroes and you do not hear anything until things go haywire and then you hear a lot. Mr. Martell believes given what occurred with the 31 inches of snow that is not something we can prepare for. We look at cities around the area and they were closed for a week; we were able to get back after three days. That is a testament of how well of a job you did. Mr. Martell noted it was mentioned that private plowers were brought in on Monday night.

Mr. Alkhal stated that snow removal is the only thing we hired outside contractors for.

Mr. Martell queried if that was done in the past.

Mr. Alkhal noted we have the resources in house to deal with the plowing itself. Anything can be done better and faster if you want to spend the money for it. Mr. Alkhal is very concerned about how we are doing the street repairs and street paving and hopes we could save money to divert to that to try to catch up on repairs and paving. This is always a balancing act but in house we can handle the plowing completely on our own. We hired a large contractor to come and help us with mainly snow removal.

President Reynolds thanked Mr. Alkhal and his department as well. He added that Mr. Alkhal and his crew have worked some long hours and his portrayal of the streets and alleys that were not plowed as of 24 hours afterwards is accurate. President Reynolds noted two of those eleven alleys that Mr. Alkhal referenced are where he lives on the side and in the back of his home. President Reynolds mentioned in the future we need to at least look into finding a way for more of an interactive communication. When people call and they leave a message that a street or alley has not been plowed you do get a crew out there almost right away. We have gotten more information out on Twitter and Facebook. President Reynolds does think that having a more interactive presence through social media should be something we look at in the future. He stated we understand if someone cannot take those responsibilities on and maybe there is not a logical place to fit this in here unless we can do something with the budget. President Reynolds knows there are other cities that have found ways to let people know exactly what we are doing. He knows that some of the men out there were working 16 hour shifts and they put up with a lot from the residents with pushing the snow around. When someone finds out that someone has been on one of these plows for 14 hours the patience level would be different. President Reynolds thinks it would be good for morale in getting information out there to let everyone know in every medium possible. President Reynolds noted that Mayor Donchez told him there were many phone calls on Saturday.

Mayor Donchez noted that 911 receives on an average on Saturdays and Sundays around 450 calls each day for a total of 900 but with this storm on Saturday and Sunday they received almost 2,000 calls.

President Reynolds stressed that is a tremendous amount of phone calls coming in, and expressed that is a piece of information that would be helpful for the public to know so that they can better understand why an alley was not plowed. It gives some type of reference to what was going on. In many ways we did an excellent job but in the future we might be able to think of other ways to provide updates to the public throughout the snow operations. President Reynolds thinks that more and more people are turning to social media and as time goes on more will get their information from those sources. President Reynolds does know that the Administration and all the staff and the Department Heads worked long hours and people lost patience with 31 inches of snow but most people know that you did everything you could so he just wanted to say thank you.

7. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL READING

None.

8. NEW ORDINANCES

None.

9. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approving Contract – Engle Hambright and Davies*

Ms. Negrón-Dipiní and Mr. Martell sponsored Resolution 2016-028 that approved a contract with Engle Hambright and Davies, Inc. for Workers' Compensation Program Management Services.

Voting AYE: Mr. Evans, Mr. Martell, Ms. Negrón-Dipiní, Mr. Waldron, Mr. Colón and Mr. Reynolds, 6. The Resolution passed.

B. *Approving Contract – Maser Consulting*

Mr. Evans and Ms. Negrón-Dipiní sponsored Resolution 9 B to approve a contract with Maser Consulting, P.C. for the Bethlehem Southside Intermodal Site Study-Riverport.

President Reynolds mentioned before he turns to discussion he will invite the Administration to speak. Many people came here tonight to speak about this and had many questions so he would let Ms. Karner or Mayor Donchez respond or make a statement.

Ms. Karner did anticipate questions but she would say that the comments from the public have resonated. It is not something we take lightly when it comes to identifying a location. The position that she finds us in this moment is that we looked at public sites and what we do expect to see is the continued deterioration of the trailer in the current location and potential opportunity for additional development along that stretch associated with the Greenway and amenities for the Greenway. Ms. Karner noted that they find themselves in a position of quite not knowing what is going to happen next when it comes to this facility. She added that we are not in the position of acquiring additional property for the development of an Intermodal or bus station or how you want to categorize it, for placement of a facility like this. There are many outstanding questions so until we engage someone to help us ask and answer those questions we do not know what we are dealing with. Ms. Karner noted that the dilemma that she feels she is contemplating before you is that if we do not move forward to look at this site she is not sure we will have an opportunity to provide this kind of service to the south side for much longer. She knows she is not helping Council by presenting it that way but she is happy to answer any questions.

President Reynolds queried how much this study will cost.

Ms. Karner stated it will be about \$90,000.

President Reynolds asked where that \$90,000 would originate from.

Ms. Karner noted that we were awarded as a City via LANTA an FTA grant years ago and we have done some analysis of the south side in which we used our own money to do that which is part of the 20% match we are obligated to put forward on this proposal. Ms. Karner added that we have not budgeted for and have no expectation of having to spend any City money for this project. It is all part of the draw down of the grants because we have expended so much of our own money to date.

President Reynolds queried if there is a time when that grant runs out.

Ms. Karner replied yes, January 1, 2017 it will run out.

President Reynolds asked how long these studies generally take.

Allyson Lysaght, Housing & Community Development Planner stated they are saying 6 to 9 months.

President Reynolds knows it was said that other locations were considered but is there a possibility of another time, if the State is willing to pay for something like this, to look at alternative locations. President Reynolds knows it was said that other sites that are currently owned by the City or Parking Authority were ruled out for different reasons.

Ms. Karner noted that the Third and Fourth Street locations were off the table just from a traffic perspective. If you are moving people around the south side we have a hard enough time as it is along Third and Fourth Streets. We do not have a lot of property owned by the City or the Parking Authority on Third and Fourth Streets but you look at locations that are slightly removed to make it easier to accommodate something like this. Ms. Karner added that left us with where we currently are located on Mechanic Street and would be Riverport Garage. There are these prospective decks on the south side and some of the challenges is accommodating a bus to pull in. That is not what we are talking about with this kind of facility. We are talking about something that remains to the exterior of the property so there is really not the opportunity on Graham Place at this point.

Mayor Donchez thinks that the original site that was looked at maybe four or five years ago by the previous Administration was the site on Third Street below Evans Street and below the townhouses.

Ms. Karner stated that is correct.

President Reynolds mentioned that is across from the Community College.

Mayor Donchez replied no. The site was across from the old World Headquarters below the new townhouses, the 700 block of Evans Street where he grew up. That was going to be the whole block and he thinks that was one location that was being seriously considered going back about three or four years ago. Mayor Donchez noted that he was on the LANTA Board at that time and he remembers discussing that issue.

Ms. Karner stated that is correct. In 2011 they released an analysis of thirty different locations on the south side. They were factoring in a much larger project at that time so they only looked at a lot that could accommodate a deck that was targeted for 1,000 cars.

President Reynolds remarked theoretically even if it would be a situation by which you would want to put it here, who would pay for it.

Ms. Karner noted it is the Parking Authority's property and it would be a Parking Authority project. She added that the City delegates the responsibility for the parking functions to the Parking Authority and so we kind of stepped in because we are the entity of the sub-recipient of this grant. It is something where we would work closely with the Parking Authority and have been in communication with Mr. Livingston but it would be their project to implement at that point.

President Reynolds mentioned we heard different things about who utilizes these busses but queried if anyone from the Administration has reached out to Lehigh University. He knows that some of the traffic is associated with Lehigh and we know how much land Lehigh owns.

Ms. Karner stated they have had some conversations with Lehigh but not to the point of asking if they have any land available to do this. It is more about anecdotal, who is riding these busses. We are hearing from residents from Lehigh that there are lots of folks associated with students that are going home for or coming back from break, or coming for the school year. It is one of the reasons we want to engage and consult to really get a better handle on what we are talking about and to work with those transportation companies that are seeing these folks on a regular basis and would know the kind of facility that we need. Ms. Karner added that what we expect is that it is not a significant ridership, just as a result of anecdotal conversations. She does worry a little bit about where we are going off the beaten path to pick them up and how high up on Lehigh's property. It is her hope that if it is really a lot of Lehigh students coming down that we can get them to run their own transportation further into the south side, which they currently are not doing at all.

President Reynolds noted we have heard the concerns tonight about the location but will the study look at how much a facility will cost for the Parking Authority. He inquired is it possible to look at different locations even if they are ones that the City does not own.

Ms. Karner stated certainly they could always pull back and look at a much broader area. We will always be confronted with the same thing they were confronted with as a result of the 2011 analysis, and that is where you will get the resources to acquire the property and build the facility.

President Reynolds queried if it is possible for Council to get a copy of the 2011 information.

Ms. Karner replied absolutely.

President Reynolds does not recall that conversation with the previous Administration.

Ms. Karner found that documentation from a public meeting of the Community College in September of 2011. She continued that was the most recent information and trying to put the pieces together sometimes is challenging. So between what we can find in house and the fact that Maser had done the analysis before, is why we recommend they do this study.

President Reynolds mentioned that getting this information in our hands and looking at this is important. He will certainly listen and defer to his colleagues regarding the possibility that we could table this and get more information to at least look at what would be included in the feasibility study and what has been done leading up to this point.

Ms. Karner stated they are willing to share that and added that anything that Council wants to look at they will share. She cautions that the September 2011 analysis was on the 1,000 car deck. What you will see is a much larger thing, and she wanted to be clear that we are not pursuing that at this point.

President Reynolds asked if there is information in there about why other public and Parking Authority sites would not be feasible.

Ms. Karner advised there is the one on the Mechanic Street lot because they were not large enough to accommodate the deck.

President Reynolds noted that might be additional information that Ms. Karner could send to Council in a memo.

Mr. Colón thanked everyone that lives at Riverport for coming out to this meeting. He remarked he lives on the west side. His best friend who is married and has a one year old lives in a 300 level unit and we have other friends that live in there that have a grade school age child and another friend is a landlord and rents out his unit. Mr. Colón does understand where everyone is coming from tonight and it is nice when we see neighborhoods mobilize behind a cause and come out together. The Easton bus terminal was mentioned earlier tonight. He remarked he is not familiar with that and asked if there is a residential component to that.

Ms. Lysaght stated no and neither is Allentown.

Ms. Karner stated this is not what they are talking about with this facility. She has not been to the Easton or Allentown facility.

Mr. Colón queried if the bus companies currently using the Mechanic Street facility have given any preliminary feedback.

Ms. Karner noted that is part of the engagement with the consultant.

Mr. Evans then asked about the \$90,000 and has that already been spent in other ways. He is having trouble following the contract. He queried if the \$390,000 noted in the contract memo is the total amount.

Ms. Karner stated that is the grant award. Our obligation is the 20% match. To date, she does not know why historically we always fronted or paid for any analysis we did under this

program, but we spent about \$50,000. If you look at our expenditures, which would be approximately \$140,000, we would be obligated to 20% of that. We have spent in excess of that so what she is saying is that if we were to expend the entire grant amount, yes, there would need to be an additional expenditure but when only looking at what we are contracting for or what is in front of you we have spent more than enough. Ms. Karner mentioned this has been done under the Redevelopment Authority to cover what would be our 20% match on the contract in front of you.

Mr. Evans understands that and the way it is framed now is this study would engage multiple sources, but the idea is studying the Riverport site, and not exploring other locations. We could do that, we could table this and have further discussions and revise this.

Ms. Karner stated absolutely and we would engage the Parking Authority. We looked at them for an acquisition of property to do the facility somewhere else so it would simply be the City that is looking to do that. So yes, we certainly could do that. Ms. Karner wants to caution the only fear she has is that we would not be able to pull off the analysis. At that point we would just say, it is actually a Federal Grant and we will sign off on it and move away towards exploring other possibilities.

Mr. Evans mentioned the role of the Parking Authority in this and inquired if that is just because it is their property or do they have other vested interest in putting this together.

Ms. Karner stated they own the property that it is currently located at and so there is that factor. There is the hope that people are using this as a hub. She wanted to take a step back. One of the things they are saying at Mechanic Street is that the 10 hour meters are not being used so we are not talking about people who are driving to that location to park for 10 hours to take a bus to the City or go home. It does not appear to be that daily rider that is going into the City. Ms. Karner informed that it appears to be more that specialty rider that is coming and going for a specific purpose or one time trip. The best way to phrase that is a Lehigh University student. So ultimately when we look at how best are we going to utilize our resources, it is the Parking Authority property that we then do not have to acquire. So partnering with them on something where there may be an opportunity for additional transient meters in a deck that they use that is underutilized, is really their interest in the site.

Mr. Evans understands the difficulty in finding the right spot. Personally he does not think we have the right spot right now. He is in favor of tabling on this and moving on until we readjust the site. He thinks the search needs to continue. As President Reynolds stated, he is looking to hear what other Members of Council have to say on this subject.

Mr. Martell stated many of his questions have already been asked. He wanted to add some thoughts. It seems as though the fears of the people is regarding the signing off on this study and saying this is what is coming. Mr. Martell queried if Ms. Karner could talk about the process. It was said that it would be six to nine months until we get this study back. There will be a lot of engagement throughout the study after it comes back but could we hear about the process from the Administration's standpoint and whoever else would be involved from there.

Ms. Karner stated it is her expectation that as we move through the process there would be community engagement. It is not a circumstance in which we do have analysis and not bringing the community in on this and then unveil this and say how we are moving forward on this. We will not move forward on a project where there is significant opposition. She does not want to spend money just to further something that the community will always be opposed to. Ms. Karner mentioned at the same time she does not want to lose that opportunity for those folks that use this kind of facility on the south side. There is clearly a need. It has been there for a long time and whether or not that is the student population or the child coming home who lives on the east coast, she does not know the answer to that. Ms. Karner related that until we do some kind of understanding of not just that, but the facility we are talking about she does not know that we will be able to move forward. We could expand the study. We could spend more money to take a look at it, and at the end of the day there is a part of her that says we may just want to plan for a south side without this kind of facility.

Mr. Martell noted that even if the study comes back and it checks all of the boxes you are looking for and if the community gets on board at that point and sees it and agrees with the study, it is not as if construction would start in nine months.

Ms. Karner stated no, it would then be up to the Parking Authority to take over the project at that point. There is a question on whether any outstanding balance could be used for construction. We have not been able to confirm that with LANTA at this point and so it would then become a project in which that becomes part of the Parking Authority initiatives.

Mr. Martell queried if any changes would come before Council or the Planning Commission.

Ms. Karner replied no, because we are talking about, if it is in fact just an office and minor modifications to the structure, it is really just a building permit from a planning perspective. It would really be up to the Parking Authority on whether or not they would be willing to spend the money to do a project like this. Ms. Karner does not want to leave out the bus companies. This is not just something where it would come back and the Parking Authority would move forward. There is that engagement of all of the parties that are players.

Mr. Martell mentioned that the study will look at ridership and feasibility of that location.

Ms. Karner stated it will engage the companies that are providing the services in which they will gather the information on what kinds of numbers we are talking about.

Mr. Martell mentioned we will not be looking at things such as if people brought up issues of how it would affect traffic in the area.

Ms. Karner noted it will, it will look at the maneuverability.

Ms. Lysaght stated we have asked Maser Consulting to give us a full scope of sources so one of the things is a full public engagement meeting schedule because we do want to engage with residents, we want to engage with ridership, Lehigh and the bus companies. The other thing is that they would study sound, vibration, pollution and all of those things that go into any sort of land development plan.

Mr. Martell remarked that he wanted to ask about pollution as well. He then asked about parking. He expressed he imagines it will look into how many people will park.

Ms. Lysaght informed they will do a traffic feasibility study along with this and calculate parking usage.

Mr. Martell thanked everyone for coming out and he does share their questions about this. He is relieved to a degree to hear that the Administration as well shares those same questions. One of the things he is troubled with is how do we get the answers to these questions if we do not go ahead with the study. That is just one thing. We can address the concerns anecdotally as mentioned, but without going forward with the study that is paid for so it seems prudent to him to go along with that. Mr. Martell stated while we certainly would not want to hurt property values and people wanting to move in to the area, he can cite several studies and stories where adding bus stops and adding subway stations and public transportation actually increases property values in an area. It might also bring in more people to patronize those commercial properties. Mr. Martell looks forward to seeing what it says in this study. He is also curious to see what is the current ridership of public transportation in the City and would this change actually increase it, because if it would increase bus usage that would lower pollution. Mr. Martell does have questions and concerns as people have brought up tonight but he is not sure that we have answered them all. He would not be against taking more time to look into this to get this right. He wants people to realize that it is a study to get the answers to the questions that we all have.

Ms. Negrón-Dipiní informed that she has a few questions. She has lived, worked and played on the south side for 18 years. Ms. Negrón-Dipiní is very familiar with and has used this bus station, and has seen students come in and out of the city on the buses. She does hear the concerns of the residents at Riverport and understands that. She noted that Mayor Donchez mentioned that Evans Street was considered as a place for a station.

Mayor Donchez replied is was in the area of the townhouses right below Evans Street that parallels Third Street.

Ms. Negrón-Dipiní queried if Evans Street could still be considered.

Mayor Donchez used Evans Street as a reference; the site is really Third Street right below the townhouses that are on Evans Street.

Ms. Negrón-Dipiní is asking if that site could still be considered to be used for this.

Ms. Karner stated they do not have control of that property. The property is privately owned and is adjacent to the Greenway Commons. We were really trying to look at properties that are either ones that we owned or the Parking Authority owned or that we could acquire.

Ms. Negrón-Dipiní reiterated that she is familiar with this place and has used the bus and she noted that it is an ugly place right now, and even scary. She knows that Lehigh students have presented concerns about how dark it is in that area and even walking to there. She would love to see a change, however with the concerns she heard about Riverport with busses going around there with sharp corners she does not know how they would maneuver the buses. She agrees that many Lehigh students use that bus. Ms. Negrón-Dipiní informed she is excited about doing a study but she thinks that Riverport should not be considered at all. If we are going to do a study we have the \$90,000 and the study should look into another place that could be better. She agrees that we should table this and either find out if there are other places for this because she agrees with the people who live at Riverport and feedback we received from them. It will be even harder for the students to get down to Riverport to pick up the bus. She feels it makes no sense. Ms. Negrón-Dipiní mentioned that if at some point Evans Street was considered even though it is not our or the Parking Authority's property why could it not be looked at again. She thinks this would be a good one to table and look at the other possibilities.

Mr. Waldron queried who owns the building currently on Mechanic Street.

Ms. Karner stated the Parking Authority owns the land and she is assuming that we maintain it. She knows there was talk about us maintaining the police substation that is adjacent to it so it is under the Parking Authority's control. Ms. Karner mentioned that it is a trailer; a temporary structure.

Mr. Waldron queried who is in charge of maintaining it.

Ms. Karner stated the Parking Authority does some maintenance on it.

Mr. Waldron asked why it is their responsibility to provide a trailer for ticket sales.

Ms. Karner advised it is always the hope that they will generate parking revenue as a result of a facility like that. They are struggling. If you go in that area there is not a lot of use of the 10 hour meters which are on Mechanic Street.

Mr. Waldron thinks another site would be better than what is being proposed. He wondered if we could take advantage of the grant to look at another area.

Ms. Karner informed that we can broaden this scope again. We can look at the greater south side as we had done before a little bit different. She is not objecting to the expansion of the scope but it is really what is within our control. There is a significant amount of proposed development on the south side and there is significant difficulty in getting some of the current landowners to talk about selling property for development for purposes that are not within their own master plan.

Mr. Waldron asked what is the volume regarding the number of busses and cars that use the Mechanic Street area.

Ms. Karner reiterated that we were going to hire the consultant to help us understand the ridership and the volume. She knows that inbound is usually dependent upon who is on the bus and where they need to get off and so regarding outbound she thinks it was Bieber that decreased. That was just based off of a brief conversation with them on the number of busses. Ms. Karner noted she cannot not tell you what the decrease has been in that period of time.

Mr. Waldron thinks the concern is the busses and cars and people, not the ticket booth and bathrooms. Mr. Waldron stated that to say we will put a couple of bathrooms and a ticket booth at Riverport is not really the issue. The issue is getting all of the busses, all the additional cars and the additional traffic and people there.

Ms. Karner stated she wanted to be clear, clean and safe has been the mantra of this Administration which is why we have spent time and energy on the Ambassadors which do go down to Riverport. She is pleased to hear the feedback from these folks saying about how clean and safe it has become and how they feel. She credits a large part of that to the Ambassadors and the beat cop activities on the south side as well as the partnership with Lehigh University. Ms. Karner informed that we certainly do not want to do anything that will deteriorate the efforts that we have worked so hard for the last two years. We are in complete agreement with that.

Mr. Waldron noted his thought would be to expand the scope of this and look at different properties and if there is not sentiment to agree on that, he would vote against this.

President Reynolds stated that he agrees with Mr. Waldron and just to sum up some of the comments. He does believe that two things that many people spoke of was the scope of the study and the sites that do not work. He will move to table this, but he does think sometimes in these meetings we say we do not want something and it is hard to go into the reasons why other things did not work. President Reynolds thinks that providing us with information such as this is why certain sites were eliminated and the reasons or this might be a good site but this owner has no interest selling it, would be very helpful to Council. He continued sometimes we live in a world where we say why we do not want to change things and there are a lot of practical good reasons associated with that matter. President Reynolds believes laying out those reasons to us in a memo or giving us this information that could be shared with everybody would be beneficial. He also understands that time is a bit of the essence so he does think if we do table this, which he believe will happen, it would be important to share a timeline so that we know why and when this needs to be approved by Council.

Ms. Karner informed what she is inclined to do is expand the scope and look at the entire south side. She does not consider herself the professional to pick and choose which ones are for sale and not for sale. She asked to confirm that Council would like her to somewhat go back to that global approach on the examination.

President Reynolds replied yes, and with that being said he agrees with Mr. Martell and would like to give the Administration a lot of credit for the goal of finding an Intermodal facility or a place for the buses to go. We have heard before in many ways about how we need more mass transit and we need to create more environmentally friendly ways for people to get to our south side because of more development. This is partly a response to what is going on. President Reynolds mentioned in this debate there are some voices that are often talking about how we need to increase the opportunity for mass transit and surprised they have not spoken up on this. President Reynolds believes the goal of what you are trying to do is finding the right location that is an excellent location. He added that he agrees with the troublesome nature of some aspects of this location and it is unlikely that it will ever come to fruition but he did hear a few comments that he would like to respond to about the value of people who ride the busses. President Reynolds noted the people who use mass transit are like us who own cars. They pay taxes. We have many great neighborhoods on the south side and Ms. Negrón-Dipini referenced that she lives on the south side and stated he too lived on Itaska Street for several years. He knows that several others on Council have lived on the south side and Mayor Donchez grew up on the south side. President Reynolds pointed out there are many good places to live and many good schools to attend on the south side. The idea as we get often times is that something does not fit for a lot of reasons but it is also about finding a place on the south side that works to accomplish these big goals. President Reynolds noted we have many wonderful things on the south side and every neighborhood matters. He wants to say thank you for understanding the value of not only a lot of the debates and conversation we have about the importance of creating mass transit opportunities on the south side but also understanding why people would say this is not a good location. President Reynolds added there are a lot of reasons both geographic and practical about why this might not be the best location. He appreciates the fact that the Administration is trying to come up with a solution that is wise for the short term and the long term with the development on the south side.

President Reynolds made the motion to table Resolution 9 B, approving the contract for Maser Consulting. Mr. Waldron seconded the motion.

Voting AYE on the motion: Mr. Evans, Mr. Martell, Ms. Negrón-Dipiní, Mr. Waldron, Mr. Colón and Mr. Reynolds, 6. The Motion passed.

C. *Approving Records Destruction – Controller’s Office*

Mr. Waldron and Ms. Negrón-Dipiní sponsored Resolution 2016-029 that authorized the destruction of records from the Office of City Controller.

Voting AYE: Mr. Evans, Mr. Martell, Ms. Negrón-Dipiní, Mr. Waldron, Mr. Colón and Mr. Reynolds, 6. The Resolution passed.

D. *Approving Records Destruction – Purchasing Department*

Mr. Waldron and Ms. Negrón-Dipiní sponsored Resolution 2016-030 that authorized the destruction of records from the Purchasing Bureau.

Voting AYE: Mr. Evans, Mr. Martell, Ms. Negrón-Dipiní, Mr. Waldron, Mr. Colón and Mr. Reynolds, 6. The Resolution passed.

E. *Approving Records Destruction – Solicitor’s Office*

Mr. Waldron and Ms. Negrón-Dipiní sponsored Resolution 2016-031 that authorized the destruction of records from the Office of City Solicitor.

Voting AYE: Mr. Evans, Mr. Martell, Ms. Negrón-Dipiní, Mr. Waldron, Mr. Colón and Mr. Reynolds, 6. The Resolution passed.

F. *Approving Contract – Christie M. Davies, SRA*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Martell sponsored Resolution 2016-032 that approved a contract with Christie M. Davies for real estate appraisal.

Voting AYE: Mr. Evans, Mr. Martell, Ms. Negrón-Dipiní, Mr. Waldron, Mr. Colón and Mr. Reynolds, 6. The Resolution passed.

10. NEW BUSINESS

None.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

*Intermodal Proposal*

Stephanie Altieri, 11 West Second Street, Unit 336-Riverport Building, mentioned she is sure that the bus companies that utilize the bus station now would give you a free report of how many riders that go through there, so you would not have to pay a consulting company \$90,000 to find that out. Also, you mentioned that they do not use the parking spaces where the trailer is right now but why not build a permanent structure there that is a little bit nicer and maybe not too big. If the parking lot is empty, utilize that. Ms. Altieri added that why not do a shuttle or use the busses from the Sands Casino and get a shuttle service, if it is mainly Lehigh students that use the bus. It is not that far, it is less than a mile. They can shuttle them back and forth because the busses come there regularly.

Alicia Pereira, 11 West Second Street, Unit 130-Riverport Building, mentioned that she also went to Lehigh University. She noted that if we are going to be spending \$90,000 to do a study why do we not use that \$90,000 to refurbish the site that is already available. She is curious about that, or the \$300,000 that someone alluded to, she wonders why that is not on the table.

Ms. Karner advised this is a planning grant and not a construction grant so as much as we would like to we cannot use the grant for construction.

Ms. Pereira added that she agrees about the comment of bussing people to Riverport so why cannot you just as easily bus people down to the Sands. That is an equal distance for Lehigh students and she is sure it is a much better experience for them there than coming down to Riverport. She thinks that Mr. Martell alluded to that it is a commercial area, but it is not. It is a residential area right now. There are no businesses there that would benefit from having a bus there other than Steel Fitness. She does not think that too many people taking a bus are looking to get a quick work out. Ms. Pereira noted it was mentioned that people are not taking advantage of the parking outside of the current site on Mechanic Street. She mentioned that we pay for over 200 spots at that parking structure on Second Street and if people are not taking advantage of parking at the current site what advantage is it to move it to Riverport. Do you really think more people will start using that parking, if it is Lehigh students? So there is not real benefit and we will end up paying that cost. We already went through an increase to pay for parking but does that mean we will go through another increase to pay for something we do not want. Ms. Pereira mentioned these are things to consider when you are saying things like that because it has an impact on us. She does not see this study as being something about ridership, she sees this study as something about using the Riverport and using the homes as a place for commercial use, which she does not agree with. She added that with including and notifying us, everyone here found out a few hours ago about the potential use of a site that they consider their home for a bus stop. She does not think it would be too hard to let us know this is on the table and it impacts the Riverport which is attached to us so we could come and learn more about this. Ms. Pereira reiterated that a heads up on this would have been nice, that is her opinion. If there is this two-way and this big communication between the Riverport and the Parking Authority she thinks if this is going to continue that maybe it would be nice if we know what the planning involves and has direct impact on us being attached to that building.

*Invocation; Snow Removal*

Stephen Antalics, 737 Ridge Street, commented about the Invocation and noted that it is designed to invoke to a diverse or common group a sense of camaraderie or wellness. The term by definition does not apply to be religious. It also can be silent like at the School Board meetings. So the precedent here has been common now to invite members of the religious profession to speak. Mr. Antalics mentioned he is not a Jew, he is not a Muslim, he is not a Buddhist, he is not an Atheist but he believes in God and many people believe in God. He suggests that for the future if you invite Clergy or a member of a religious profession to address a God, period, because if you have a Jew, a Muslim, a Buddhist or an Atheist in the audience to use the word Jesus Christ which is valid that excludes them. Mr. Antalics added that in some cases it might insult them. So he would urge that either have it be silent or either instruct them to be common to everybody and not exclude anyone who comes to this meeting. Mr. Antalics then mentioned the snow removal and pointed out he has been hearing comments and he did notice on the website or in the newspaper that 12 streets were being cleared of snow, but only two of those streets are on the south side. That caught his attention being a south sider and having a good history of how the south side has been in the past. Mr. Antalics has been inconvenienced by getting to and from where he needs to go. He noted that Hayes Street is a snow emergency route that is a busy street because people use Mountain Drive north to come to Hayes Street to get to the City. Many people from the campus go from the lower campus to the upper campus and they need to take that route and they also have to take Hillside Avenue. Mr. Antalics pointed out that in addition to Fifth Street where many students drive, those streets are very busy. On Hayes Street signs were being put on the snow mounds on Wednesday that it would be cleared on Thursday, but the snow was there on Sunday. Consequently people were parking in the right-of-way because they could not park because of the snow and in many cases it dramatically restricted traffic on Hayes Street. The same thing happened on Hillside Avenue. Mr. Antalics advised that a five minute drive for him from his house to his lab would take maybe only five minutes but one day it took him 15 minutes. Apparently snow removal has ended but Hayes Street has now five lanes, people at the curb, an aisle of three foot high snow, the right of way, another aisle of snow and another lane so you can drive on either side of those lanes. If someone is coming in the opposite direction someone has to pull over to get by and it is still that way today. So he would like to see snow removal on these streets because they are heavily travelled and he knows this has been a problem because many people he speaks to are very upset with the conditions. They know that he speaks his mind and they suggested that he should bring that up this evening. Mr. Antalics stated if Public Works can clear the snow on Hayes Street and on Fifth and Hillside that would be greatly appreciated.

*Intermodal Proposal*

Peter Crownfield, 407 Delaware Avenue, stated he was really glad to see that City Council made what he believes is the right decision on tabling this bus station at Riverport. He must say that he thinks that it is probably good to have a consultant to do all of these things even though it costs a lot of money because they will do the community engagement they are specified to do. Mr. Crownfield thinks the City has a pretty poor record on community engagement. The Parking Authority however is even worse, as far as he can tell they have zero community engagement. Mr. Crownfield would not rely on them for the post study process for community engagement. There was certainly very little community engagement with respect to the proposed structure off Graham Place. The parking study that Dr. Holland was talking about a few weeks ago still is not available and is classified by the Parking Authority as not finished, not complete and therefore not available for disclosure. Mr. Crownfield noted they seem to be making an awful lot of decisions without the benefit of the parking study. They did eminent domain of residents on Vine Street and Graham Place but that can only be done if there is a known established public purpose but without a parking study what is the public purpose. He would contend that all of those eminent domains actually were illegal. Mr. Crownfield does hope that the existing locations or other locations along Mechanic Street will be considered. The main reason they were not considered before was because they were looking to build this mammoth structure and that apparently is no longer in the cards. Mr. Crownfield added that this project and many others that come up including the development projects that have come up, the parking that has come up including the 600 plus parking garage all have significant environmental impacts. City Council has an Environmental Advisory Council and they are never asked to comment on any of these projects but every single one of these projects with an environmental impact should go through the EAC before it is allowed to come to Council or it should be referred to them and tabled until it comes back to them.

Courtney Barco, 11 West Second Street, Unit 314-Riverport Building, just wanted to start off by saying thank you. She stated before that she just started a new job today and she works in one of our local elementary schools so this is an excellent chance to get to tell them how local government works. Ms. Barco appreciated that Council took what we said to heart and actually tabled this. She appreciates the broadening the scope and looking back at some of the old places. There were a few other thoughts she had. City of Bethlehem is home to Runner's World Magazine or at least the surrounding area and we do a lot of races. She does not know if anyone here are runners but if you have been on the south side you have definitely had to go around them in the summer. Ms. Barco noted that from May until the end of October every Saturday morning there is something. All of those races go right in front of our homes and that is another thing that would be heavily impacted. Even if you are not a runner, it is huge revenue for the north side because people come from all of the nation to Runner's World Weekend to run that race. Ms. Barco added also there are many organizations that profit from doing charity work in that regard. When you come back to this and if Riverport is still a possibility, that is something to keep in mind. It goes even to beyond just us. Ms. Barco is all for looking into getting our public transportation up into a more thriving thing in our area. She does not know if Council is aware but we currently have a bus stop in front of Riverport. It is odd because we have a nice little gazebo which would serve nicely as a bus stop but the bus stop is under the bridge. She pointed out that it is a very bizarre setup; you have to stand in the street to wait for the bus so that would maybe something to look into as well.

## 12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk