

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING
10 East Church Street - Town Hall
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, March 16, 2021 - 7:00 PM

INVOCATION

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

President Waldron called the meeting to order. Present were Bryan G. Callahan, Michael G. Colón, Grace Crampsie Smith, Olga Negrón, J. William Reynolds, Paige Van Wirt, and Adam R. Waldron, 7.

Communication 6 H and Resolution 10 L added to the agenda

President Waldron announced that a Communication and Resolution will be added to our agenda tonight that were not previously listed at the release of the agenda on Friday, Communication 6 H and Resolution 10 L will be added to the agenda. These are related to the city's concern over the proposed closure of Ahart's Market considering the area is already a food desert.

Communication 6 H

The Clerk read a memorandum from Councilman J. William Reynolds and an attached proposed resolution in connection with the planned closure of Ahart's Market on the south side of Bethlehem, one of the only two major grocery stores in an area recognized as a food desert by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Resolution 10 L

Mr. Reynolds and Ms. Negrón sponsored Resolution 10 L that urges the Mayor and the Administration to investigate feasible options for incentivizing the continued operation of a high quality grocery store at the Ahart's Market site in order to promote equity and protect the health and well-being of individuals and families in south Bethlehem.

Closure of Ahart's Market

President Waldron remarked the news of the closure of Ahart's Market was something that blindsided a lot of people, specifically the residents that live in that area that depends on the grocery store that is currently there. The resolution that we will be considering this evening is to encourage the Administration to do everything that they can in order to either replace that grocery store as quickly as possible or investigate another option that would provide the residents in that area with a high quality fresh market. President Waldron imagines that resolution will pass unanimously this evening. He knows there is a group that was organized on the south side that had over 400 signatures to a petition to that same regard, encouraging the city to do everything they can. If anyone would like to call in and give additional comments this

evening on that topic, they are welcome to do so but he will let everyone know that is watching at home that City Council and the Administration are fully in support of making sure that there is as little disruption as possible in that area regarding a high quality grocer.

CITATIONS

Honoring Judith Shemanski

President Waldron read the Citation for Judith Shemanski on the occasion of her retirement from the Department of Public Works after over 30 years of service and stated the Citation will be mailed to her.

Honoring Chris Hutchinson

President Waldron read the Citation for Chris Hutchinson on the occasion of his retirement from the Public Works Department after over 40 years of service and stated the Citation will be mailed to him.

Honoring Kristopher Shirk

President Waldron read the Citation for Kristopher Shirk on the occasion of his retirement from the Police Department after over 20 years of service and stated the Citation will be mailed to him.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 16, 2021

Mayor Donchez Remarks on Closure of Ahart's Market

Mayor Donchez pointed out he issued a press release this afternoon dealing with the Kellyn Foundation that the Members of Council received. We are all disappointed to learn of Ahart's Market decision to close their location on the south side of Bethlehem. Since December of 2001 Ahart's has provided groceries to the residents of the south side and surrounding communities and has been a valued partnership for almost 20 years. On a personal note up until his Mother passed away a few years ago Mayor Donchez noted he took her shopping there once a week for over 30 years. So he knows the importance of Ahart's especially to the people on the south side. Because of the critical issue of food access for our south side residents he and his Administration have been working on this important project since Ahart's announcement last week. So far his staff has connected with the existing business and the property owner and connected with potential replacement grocery tenants and linked them with the property owner. Earlier today he announced our engagement with the Kellyn Foundation to provide fresh produce an additional two times a week on the western side of the south side of Bethlehem. His staff has also worked with Lanta to understand the bus routes that south side residents can use to access other grocers in and around the City of Bethlehem. He expects to reveal and publicize this information on social media, our website, and the websites of our south side partners over the next few days and weeks. We are working with the CADCB and the South Side Arts District to map existing fresh food options to publicize to residents in an effort to link residents from locally owned businesses that can provide fresh meats, seafood, fish, fruits, and vegetables and connect

with potentially replacement grocery tenants and link that tenant with the property owner. He supports City Council's resolution while investigating all the options for incentivizing a new grocery store at this location and we are prepared to work with the right tenant and to offer all the tools in the toolbox to keep that location a supermarket. He welcomes community support urging the attraction of a quality grocery tenant for this location. That support can be helpful when marketing of future retailers to this current owner that stresses the importance of the use to the property owner.

President Waldron thanked Mayor Donchez for his comments. We will have an opportunity for Council Members to talk about this resolution as we approach it in the agenda.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT (on any subject not being voted on this evening - 5 Minute Time Limit)

Parking Authority

Artie Curatola, 813 Laufer Street, informed he and other people have already contacted the police, the Mayor and others in relation to things about the Parking Authority. Not that they are doing anything super wrong except they are trying to make money, like any other business, but everyone says that they are not connected with the city. When he talks to Steve Fernstrom, the Director of the Parking Authority, he likes some of the ideas that Mr. Curatola has. He was told that the Mayor appoints the people for the Parking Authority and that if he fell in the Parking Authorities lot he cannot sue them if he wanted to. He did fall and he cannot even walk right anymore because he messed up his feet and his back. The Parking Authority is not with the city so the city is exempt from lawsuits. That does not seem quite right. If the taxpayers get injured if they want to get compensated they cannot get compensated. Mr. Curatola added that Mr. Fernstrom did try to get this person to contact him and he did contact her but she never contacted him back to make compensation for his damages. What is going on with the city that people if they get injured with something that is linked to the city, we, the taxpayers are not sure about the Parking Authority, we have no course of action. Mr. Curatola added that we are leasing things to people having to pay a small fee for producing something on property that belongs to the city. We are letting the Parking Authority use the streets, our tax dollars, they are using the streets to make money, as with other things like Musikfest, they are doing their festivals, paying rent for the area and pay a licensing fee. Why doesn't the city take charge and why do we not hire people who will work for less money to go ahead and put money into the city that will work with the city. We should put the festivals on; we the City of Bethlehem should take control of our city. Mr. Curatola stated it is the same with the Parking Authority, take control of it. If by some miracle he gets elected as Mayor next year, everyone who works for the city should give up at least 2% of their pay because they should be grateful that they are working for the city. That is not much to be asking and then we would have a lot more money in the funds for the city to be used in different things. The fact remains that we need to have control of the city and get people who really want to work with the city and do not mind giving up 2% of their pay and will work for less to begin with and do just as good of a job if not better than many of the people who are being paid the big salaries. That is his opinion.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT (on ordinances and resolutions to be voted on by Council this evening - 5 Minute Time Limit)

Ahart's Market Closure

Heather Terrible, 515 6th Avenue, stated she is the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors for the Bethlehem Food Co-Op. The mission of the Bethlehem Food Co-Op is to help provide access to healthy and affordable food for all members of the Bethlehem community. We stand in solidarity with the community being impacted by the imminent closure of Ahart's Market and are in full support of their efforts to make sure that Ahart's Market location remains operating as a grocery store. The Bethlehem Food Co-Op Board of Directors offers our full support behind the effort in securing a replacement supermarket for the Ahart's location.

Will Rufe, 707 Frederick Street, Fountain Hill, informed he is calling to discuss the former Ahart's property and to urge the city government to ensure that this property will be occupied by a grocery store of some kind be it through incentives, programs, or other processes. He urges the Mayor, Council, and all departments to encourage a community business to occupy this space. Mr. Rufe stated he is personally elected to represent 4,700 people in the borough on Fountain Hill, he is on Council there. This is easily the closest grocery store to our residents by far and if you move onto the south side of Bethlehem, five points and the area surrounding St. Luke's Hospital Ahart's was the only walkable store for the vast majority of the residents. He added that C-Town is wonderful and is a huge blessing but the community that is served by Ahart's currently is significantly far away from it and that community is made up of many marginalized people and for persons who driving is not a guarantee. Mr. Rufe urges the city government to do everything in its power to encourage a community oriented grocery to occupy this space and to try to curtail the obvious option of opening this up for things like development or other means. If there is any way that he could be of help or service he is happy to help.

Delia Marrero, 607 William Street, stated she wanted to call in as a resident of the community who lives, works, and plays in the area of the south side and the importance of the grocery store and ensuring that City Council supports maintaining quality access to fresh and nutritious foods in the neighborhood. She noted this is especially since Ahart's Market being on that side of town, further away from C-Town and the walkability and accessibility of residents in that neighborhood. Being someone who lives in a part of south Bethlehem that is actually a food desert she is privileged to have a vehicle to get around but she does understand the challenges of those folks who do not have a vehicle and to rely on a bus system, it could take several hours to get the food and get home and that is an inconvenience. Ms. Marrero just wanted to call in as a resident in support of ensuring that we always have access to fresh and nutritious foods in the area.

Anna Smith, 631 Ridge Street, informed she is calling to thank Mayor Donchez, Alicia Karner, and all the Members of City Council for all their support on this issue of finding a new grocery store for south Bethlehem. With fellow resident Veronica Moore this weekend we threw together a petition and we put this online to our friends on Facebook and through email and as of right now we have over 500 responses just in a few days of folks who are extremely enthusiastic about a new grocery store asking to fill the place of Ahart's Market. They also recognize the importance of a grocery store for our community. She wanted that letter to go into the record which she has sent to all Members of Council to secure a new grocery store for the western end of south Bethlehem and the current location of Ahart's Market. The impending closure of Ahart's Market will impact thousands of south Bethlehem and Fountain Hill residents who depend on this store as their only source for a wide variety of fresh healthy foods and other essentials within

walking distance of their homes. Ms. Smith added according to census data 25% of south side residents currently live within a half mile of Ahart's Market and less live further than a half mile from C-Town Supermarket. As of April 30th these residents will lose walkable access to a neighborhood grocery store and will be forced to travel outside their neighborhood to shop for food and other necessities. She noted that 19% of these residents lack access to a car and 25% of these residents live below the poverty line. In addition to the residents of south Bethlehem Ahart's Market also serves thousands of Lehigh University students who live on Lehigh's campus and in the surrounding neighborhoods, many of them who do not have access to cars. Unlike many predominately low income neighborhoods throughout our country south Bethlehem has historically benefited from access to affordable healthy foods thanks to direct action by our city government to procure quality supermarkets to serve our community. We are extremely fortunate to have both Ahart's and C-Town in our neighborhood. The announcement of Ahart's closure threatens to put the quality of life in our neighborhood at risk and places an unfair burden on our community. We ask that you take immediate action to recruit a new grocery store for the location at 410 Montclair Avenue and as former Mayor Don Cunningham stated in 2001, offer all the economic incentives at your disposal to ensure that south side residents have access to fresh quality and affordable food within walking distance of their homes. She is thankful to Council for reading this letter and knows that all of Council has already read it but she wanted to reiterate that we have 500 signatures and all of these folks are appreciative of the action that our city government, Administration, and Council will take on this issue. We will be trying to come together as a community, residents and community organizations over the next two weeks to discuss efforts to mitigate the negative impact of the departure of Ahart's Market in the short term before we get a new grocery store which we will hopefully get. She hopes that you all will be a part of that and she looks forward to engaging around this issue to ensure that the south side remains a wonderful place to live and a place where she grew up and chose to come back to and settle down to raise her family.

Dana Grubb, 2420 Henderson Place, stated he is calling because he read earlier this week the announcement that the City of Bethlehem is going to be getting a little over \$33 million dollars in a Covid Relief Block Grant. Regarding the Ahart's situation he is sure there are a lot of details that the city staff are trying to figure out about that revenue coming into the city. Given the Ahart's situation he thinks there may be an application here for use of that money to find a replacement. He believes the city should explore that and potentially use some of it at least to re-establish a full service grocer at this particular location. Mr. Grubb is looking forward to a public discussion about the use of that money in the coming weeks and he thinks in terms of priorities this might be a good use for some of that money. He wanted to call in and make sure that the city staff, Mayor, and Council are looking at this as a potential option to ensure that south side residents have access to a grocery in that part of our south side community.

Carolina Hernandez, 2614 Bethlehem Fields Way, stated she wanted to comment on Ahart's Market. She is a proud south Bethlehem resident and Lehigh University employee. She thinks it is absolutely crucial for our families and community to have access to a market particularly on that side of our community. We are proud of the work we are able to do with our community and our families. The accessibility to healthy affordable food is actually a given right. She is proud to be a part of the City of Bethlehem and she is confident that you all understand the crucial nature of this for our community. She supports the work that you all are doing and lends her support to maintaining a supermarket on that side of our town.

Rachel Leon, 946 East 5th Street, informed she wanted to call to say she agrees with what everyone else has said tonight. She wanted to encourage City Council to focus on making sure that Ahart's Market is replaced with a grocery store that is accessible to everyone in south Bethlehem. We really need to consider our pedestrian population and what is going to be accessible to them in a way of food.

5. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Members of Council
- B. Tabled Items
- C. Unfinished Business

6. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. *City Solicitor – Second Amendment to Communications Site Lease Agreement – Metro PCS Pennsylvania, LLC – 248 East Garrison Street Tower Site*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated February 22, 2021 from William P. Leeson, Esq., City Solicitor with an attached proposed resolution authorizing the addition of a second amendment to a communications site lease agreement between the City and MetroPCS Pennsylvania, LLC relating to communications equipment on the tower structure located at 248 East Garrison Street.

President Waldron stated resolution 10 A is on the agenda.

- B. *Director of Community and Economic Development – CDBG/HOME 2021 Annual Action Plan*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated March 4, 2021 from Alicia Karner, Director of Community and Economic Development related to the CDBG/HOME 2021 Annual Action Plan with an attached list of FY 2021 CDBG and HOME requests received by the city. An internal committee has reviewed all applications and made funding recommendations. These recommendations were presented to the Mayor for approval in February.

Scheduling Public Hearing

President Waldron stated he will accept a motion and a second to schedule a Public Hearing on the CDBG/HOME Annual Action Plan at the Tuesday, March 23, 2021 Community Development Committee Meeting at 6:00 PM in Town Hall.

Dr. Van Wirt and Ms. Negrón moved to schedule a Public Hearing on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 7:00 PM in Town Hall.

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Motion passed.

President Waldron stated a remote public hearing has been scheduled at the Tuesday, March 23, 2021 Community Development Committee Meeting at 6:00 PM in Town Hall.

- C. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – Recommendation of Award – Phillips Brothers Electrical Contractors, Inc. – WWTP Electrical Feeder and Equipment Testing*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated March 5, 2021 from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources recommending a contract with Phillips Brothers Electrical Contractors, Inc. for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Electrical Feeder and Equipment Testing. The term of the contract is 120 days to substantial completion and 150 days to final completion from the date of the notice to proceed. The cost is \$440,800 and there are no renewals.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 B is on the agenda.

- D. *Business Administrator – Art of Flight Lease – Golf Practicing Facility – Municipal Golf Course*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated March 9, 2021 from Eric Evans, Business Administrator with an attached lease agreement with the Art of Flight, Golf, Inc. for the operation of an indoor golf instruction, technology, and fitness facility at the City's Municipal Golf Course.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 D is on the agenda.

- E. *Director of Community and Economic Development– Recommendation of Award – Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. – East & West Broad Street Alternative Transportation Infrastructure*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated March 8, 2021 from Alicia Karner, Director of Community and Economic Development recommending a contract with Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. for work related to the East & West Broad Street Alternative Transportation Infrastructure. The estimated completion date is 12/31/2021 and the cost is \$20,000. There are no renewals.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 E is on the agenda.

- F. *Director of Recreation Bureau – Amendment to Use Permit Agreement – St. Luke's Delong Sports Camp at Earl E. Schaffer Ice Rink*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated March 11, 2021 from Jodi Evans, Director of Recreation Bureau with an attached resolution and associated Use Permit Agreement amendment related to the St. Luke's Health Network Delong Sports Camp at the Earl E. Schaffer Ice Rink and City of Bethlehem Monocacy Fields.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 F is on the agenda.

- G. *Chief of Police – Firearm Purchase – Horvath*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated March 8, 2021 from Police Chief Michelle Kott with an attached resolution and agreement for the purchase of a duty weapon by a retired Officer of the Bethlehem Police Department. Pursuant to the Third Class City Code, retired officers may purchase their duty firearms at fair market value.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 G is on the agenda.

H. *Councilmember J. William Reynolds – Ahart’s Market Closure – Food Desert – South Bethlehem*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated March 15, 2021 from Councilmember J. William Reynolds with an attached proposed resolution in connection with the planned closure of Ahart’s Market on the south side of Bethlehem, one of the only two major grocery stores in an area recognized as a food desert by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 L is on the agenda.

7. REPORTS

A. *President of Council*

B. *Mayor*

1. *Administrative Order – Grace Crampsie Smith – Appropriate Mental Health Services Appeals Board*

Mayor Donchez appointed Grace Crampsie Smith to membership on the Appropriate Mental Health Services Appeals Board effective through October, 2024. Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-051 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

2. *Administrative Order – Linda K. Bahner – Appropriate Mental Health Services Appeals Board*

Mayor Donchez reappointed Linda K. Bahner to membership on the Appropriate Mental Health Services Appeals Board effective through October, 2024. Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-052 to confirm the reappointment.

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

3. *Administrative Order – Joseph F. Leeson III – Civil Service Board*

Mayor Donchez appointed Joseph F. Leeson III to membership on the Civil Service Board as an alternate effective through December, 2022. Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-053 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

Covid Update

Mayor Donchez then gave an update from Health Director Kristen Wenrich. The City of Bethlehem has been fairly stable the last few weeks. We have been averaging 130 positive cases per week. The total number of people vaccinated as of yesterday, 19,055 and the total number of

people who have received both doses is 9,963. We have experienced our second dose of the Moderna vaccine last week, a shortage and this week which has led to a postponement of two clinics. The city is working with the Department of Health and we expect to receive our supply Wednesday or Thursday and should have everyone vaccinated by the end of the week or the beginning of next week. Mayor Donchez added we are working with the Northampton County of Aging and they began taking phone calls for appointments for seniors who do not have a computer or internet access. This will continue every Friday for the following weeks. As of March 12, 2021 the Bethlehem Small Business Cash Assistance under the direction of Alicia Karner, Director of Community and Economic Development has received 361 applications. They have awarded \$601,500 of HOME, CDBG, and Cares Act Funds. They have awarded 189 grants to small businesses in the city which has been used to pay for rent payments, employee payrolls, utility payments, inventory, and insurances. This is a big help to our small businesses throughout the City of Bethlehem.

C. *Public Works Committee Meeting*

Chairwoman Crampsie Smith stated the Public Works Committee met on March 4, 2021 at 5:30 PM. There were three (3) agenda items discussed at the meeting. The first item was discussion of the proposed gift of two (2) parcels of land to the City that are part of Lehigh Valley Industrial Park. The land was formerly owned by Bethlehem Steel. The committee voted to recommend approval of the proposed land transfers and referred them to full Council for consideration. The approval resolution is on tonight's council agenda. The second agenda was discussion of an administration-proposed bill and manual adopting policies and regulations for the determination of stormwater user fee credits and for appealing stormwater user fee determinations. The committee voted to recommend approval of the bill and manual and referred them to full Council for consideration. The bill is on tonight's council agenda for first reading. The third agenda item was discussion of a proposed bill concerning city contracting policies. The committee voted to recommend approval of the proposed bill and to confer with the administration on the details and schedule a future Public Works Committee meeting to continue discussion of the bill.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

None.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

Bill No. 09-2021 – Adopting Policies and Regulations for the Determination of Stormwater Use Fee Credits and for Appealing Stormwater User Fee Determinations

The Clerk read Bill No. 09-2021 – Adopting Policies and Regulations for the Determination of Stormwater Use Fee Credits and for Appealing Stormwater User Fee Determinations – sponsored by Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING POLICIES AND
REGULATIONS FOR THE DETERMINATION OF
STORMWATER USER FEE CREDITS AND FOR

APPEALING STORMWATER USER FEE DETERMINATIONS

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. Bill No. 09-2021 was passed on First Reading.

10. RESOLUTIONS

- A. *Approve Amendment to Site Lease Agreement – Metro PCS Pennsylvania, LLC – 248 Garrison Street Tower Site*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-054 that authorized to execute the second amendment to Communications Site Lease Agreement between the City of Bethlehem and MetroPCS Pennsylvania, LLC relating to communications equipment on the tower structure located at 248 East Garrison Street.

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

- B. *Approve Contract – Phillips Brothers Electrical Contractors, Inc. – WWTP Electrical Feeder and Equipment Testing*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-055 that authorized to execute a contract or amendment with Phillips Brothers Electrical Contractors, Inc. for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Electrical Feeder and Equipment Testing.

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

- C. *Approve Acceptance of Gift of Real Estate from Lehigh Valley Industrial Park*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-056 that approved the gifts of parcels of land known as 980 Gilchrist Drive and 2300 Commerce Center Boulevard. Administrations officials are authorized to accept delivery of the deeds for these properties.

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

- D. *Approve Art of Flight, Golf, Inc. Lease*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-057 that authorized to execute a lease agreement with the Art of Flight, Golf, Inc. for the operation of an indoor golf instruction, technology, and fitness facility at the City's Municipal Golf Course.

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

- E. *Approve Contract – Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. – East & West Broad Street Alternative Transportation Infrastructure*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-058 that authorized to execute a contract with Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. for the East & West Broad Street Alternative Transportation Infrastructure

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

F. *Approve Use Permit Agreement Amendment – St. Luke’s Delong Sports Camps at Earl E. Schaffer Ice Rink*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-059 that authorized to execute amendment No. 1 to the Use Permit Agreement between the City and St. Luke’s University Health Network for the St. Luke’s Delong Sports Camps at the Earl E. Schaffer Ice Rink and the City of Bethlehem Monocacy Fields.

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

G. *Approve BPD – Firearm Purchase - Benton*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-060 that authorized an agreement to effectuate the transfer of the City issued handgun assigned to Christopher Benton a Retired City Police Officer.

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

Motion – Considering Resolutions 10 H through 10 K as a group – Certificates of Appropriateness

Ms. Negrón and Ms. Crampsie Smith moved to consider Resolutions 10 H through 10 K as a group.

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Motion passed.

H. *Certificate of Appropriateness – 62 East Market Street*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-061 that granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace five existing windows at 62 East Market Street.

I. *Certificate of Appropriateness – 29 East Church Street*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-062 that granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace two garage doors and a man-door on the rear garage with added light fixtures at 29 East Church Street.

J. *Certificate of Appropriateness – 76 West Market Street*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-063 that granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace four existing attic windows.

K. *Certificate of Appropriateness – 91-97 West Broad Street*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-064 that granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace an existing fire escape.

Voting AYE on Resolutions 10 H through 10 K: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolutions passed.

L. *Approve Resolution – Ahart’s Market – Food Desert – South Bethlehem*

Mr. Reynolds and Ms. Negrón sponsored Resolution No. 2021-065 that urges the Mayor and the City Administration to investigate feasible options for incentivizing the continued operation of a high quality grocery store at the Ahart’s Market site in order to promote equity and protect the health and well-being of individuals and families in South Bethlehem.

Mr. Reynolds thanked City Clerk Mr. Vidoni who helped him write this resolution over the past several days. He is bringing this resolution forward but he thinks it is probably something all 7 members of City Council would have written and brought forth as well. We talk about systemic issues and obviously food access and the ability of our citizens to have access in their neighborhood is on the top of those types of issues. He sees it every day during his day job at Allen High School as far as what food access does for many of his students. We have certainly heard in the last several days as well as talk about his issue before. Everyone coming together, citizens and Ms. Smith had said that 500 people signed that petition and she mentioned that if you read the comments about what Ahart’s had meant to people in the neighborhood, some of those comments were things he had not thought of before. There is a lot of value in reading those comments as well with what the value is here. Mr. Reynolds stated it is important that we realize as we pass this resolution and everyone is unified, this is just a statement of policy. This does not put a grocery store there but it is a big deal that we have a voice in our community, in our Administration, and Council and we are all unified in a goal here moving forward. One of the things we will have to work on going forward is that process that the Administration will undertake to try to encourage and incentivize the reuse of this property as a grocery store. That is something we all agree on as far as the urgency is concerned. It is a real opportunity for us to come together to deliver something that is of the utmost importance to our residents. Mr. Reynolds remarked that is a little bit about why he brought this resolution forward. He had written the resolution with Mr. Vidoni but as he was writing it he honestly believes it is something that is coming from all 7 of us because it is something that we all feel is really important for us to prioritize going forward as a city.

Ms. Negrón stated she was glad that Councilman Reynolds reached out to her telling her about this resolution he was putting forward. When she moved to Bethlehem 23 years ago she lived in the apartment across the street from there when it was a Laneco. That was the place, the only place we knew and where we were buying our groceries. All through the 20 years after she lived on the south side and there was a supermarket where C-Town used to be and of course that became her go to and when they closed we also had a lot of movement in the community making sure that stayed as a supermarket. We are lucky to have C-Town in there providing fresh food and she added that C-Town provides transportation but it is not enough. She goes there often and individuals and families have groceries and they have 3 or 4 vans and they take 2 or 3 people at a time and take them home with these people’s groceries. But they do not have enough so sometimes people have to call an Uber or just catch the bus. You have no idea what it means to

not have a car and to take your kids and 10 bags of groceries home. That is how C-Town started, they were families that went to the C-Town in Allentown because they would get a ride home for free and they were coming to Bethlehem so often so they realized they had to go there. Still they take 2 or 3 families at a time back home with their groceries but they still do not have enough because there are too many families without a car and not able to get to the store. So that building has to remain a supermarket. She has already had conversations with friends at the Whole Supermarket that they are more than glad and were looking at that spot before. She will put them in contact with the Administration and she knows for sure that we will have a supermarket there because we have to. It cannot become another building with restaurants and apartments, it has to remain a supermarket and she hopes it does not take too long.

Ms. Crampsie Smith thinks it was a bitter sweet weekend in the city because we had the thrill of the Bethlehem Food Co-Op and their ultimate location on the north side and everyone was excited after all the years of planning. Then to hear of Ahart's closing that was devastating. She feels for the people on the south side because she grew up without a car and fortunately there was a grocery store across the street from us and another store downtown. We had to walk to get our groceries so she knows what it is like to not have a car. Fortunately she has a car now but if she did not she does not know what she would do because there is no store within walking distance of where she lives. As Councilman Reynolds said we see the importance of food security every day with our students at the high schools. A majority if our students are on free and reduced lunch and food security is vital for the existence of all people, especially children and their families. She wanted to applaud Councilman Reynolds for the resolution and the Mayor and Administration for being willing to tackle this issue. She hopes we can get a grocery store on the south side as soon as possible.

Mr. Colón thanked Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Vidoni for working on this resolution. He first heard about Ahart's Market online before he even saw the news article, with people talking about it and with local community groups. His first thought was that this is the second grocery store that those neighborhoods lost. We need to remember the Bottom Dollar that was on Delaware Avenue that closed just about 6 years ago so many of those who lived in the most western part of south Bethlehem and then Fountain Hill as we heard from Mr. Rufe, Ahart's became their primary grocery store especially those on foot. He added that Ms. Smith mentioned some of the census statistics that he was not aware of other than just some baseline understanding. If you want to know how many people were on foot around down especially south Bethlehem when we resume normal pantry operations at any of our food pantries, look at how many people walk miles in some cases to food pantry operations at the different food pantries. Mr. Colón thought about what communities that Ahart's serves and then what void is there. When you go in that neighborhood it is surrounded by 3 fast food chains and that is the last thing we want, young people, anybody rather than going to a local neighborhood grocery store to go through a fast food place to get something there. To the point of Mr. Reynolds, this is not a lease, this is not a business agreement, this is a piece of policy to encourage it but he has faith in the Administration that every lever will be pulled to sweeten the pot to get a grocer in there. Grocery stores as we are aware have very thin profit margins, it is a small business but it is a tough business. Now with the closing of Ahart's there is a void but there is a need for it being that 2 grocery stores have been lost to that community. He wishes anyone the best who seeks to further their investment in south Bethlehem by taking over that space.

Ms. Crampsie Smith remarked she wanted to say a huge thank you to Ms. Smith and Ms. Moore for their advocacy, it is admirable. The south side is fortunate to have you as residents.

Voting AYE: Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

11. NEW BUSINESS

Bethlehem Health Department

Mr. Colón remarked it is about a year to the date today that we were at Town Hall for a City Council Meeting where we were really getting in the early stages of the pandemic. Out of curiosity he looked up on our City's website and it says that the Bethlehem Health Bureau was founded in 1980 and he would bet that when the Health Bureau was formed in 1980 no one ever envisioned we would be in these times and that it would be a function of the Health Bureau to administer a vaccine for not only our city but surrounding communities. Going by the Mayor's announcement of close to 20,000 people have received their first vaccine, a great deal of credit needs to be bestowed upon everyone at the Health Bureau whether it is a city employee, or volunteer. All city departments have been impacted but it has been a full year now and he is confident that better days are coming. He is seeing that in his full time job but again he wanted to give a big thanks to the Health Department and all of those involved in doing what they have been doing.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 pm.

ATTEST:

Robert G. Vidoni, Esq.
City Clerk