

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING
10 East Church Street - Town Hall
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, April 4, 2023 - 7:00 PM

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

President Colón called the meeting to order. Present were Grace Crampsie Smith, Wandalyn J. Enix, Hillary G. Kwiatek, Rachel Leon, Paige Van Wirt, Kiera L. Wilhelm, and Michael G. Colón, 7.

PUBLIC HEARING

President Colón stated prior to the consideration of the regular Agenda items, City Council would conduct a Public Hearing to allow DCED staff to present the City's federal 2023 Community Development block Grant and HOME Investment Partnerships Program funding recommendations to Council. Following the hearing, DCED will submit a proposed resolution for Council's consideration that would approve the funding recommendations and submission of the City's 2023 Annual Action Plan to HUD.

Robert Vidoni, DCED Housing and Community CDBG and HOME Administrator, outlined the funding recommendations. Compared to 2022 allocations, the CDBG award increased 1.8 percent to \$1,416,201 and the HOME award rose 5.7 percent to \$455,213. The federal program provides annual formula grants to fund projects that meet certain national funding objectives that benefit low- and moderate-income populations preventing or eliminating slums and blight and addressing urgent community needs. The Community Development Block Grants support projects revitalizing neighborhoods, economic development and improving facilities and services. The HOME Investment Partnerships Program is meant to assist low-income households. Funds are awarded annually as a formula grant, based on housing supply, poverty and other factors. The program funds housing activities including direct rental and purchase assistance and building, acquiring, and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or ownership. The intent is to increase the supply of quality affordable housing for lower-income households, expand nonprofit housing provider capacity, strengthen state and local government capacity to provide housing, and leverage private-sector investments in housing.

Mr. Vidoni said there were 24 funding requests totaling \$2,298,087 compared to 17 CDBG requests that were funded in the amount of \$1,416,201. Four HOME requests received a total of \$455,213. Unfunded applicants are encouraged to apply for 2024 CDBG grants. Applications will likely open in fall and will be publicized online and through social media and email. Qualified applicants were advised they could consider also apply for a City Community Recovery Fund grant through DCED. Mr. Vidoni said the City anticipates receiving the 2023 funding this summer.

Mr. Vidoni listed the following CDBG recommended funding projects: 1. CDBG Program Administration and Planning Costs - \$263,240 (salaries and benefits for City staff, professional fees for consultants and other third parties, and planning studies), 2. North Penn Legal Services,

Fair Housing Project - \$20,000 (legal staff fees to enforce laws prohibiting discrimination in the sale of homes, rentals, financing, and property insurance), 3. Hogar CREA, Substance Abuse Treatment - \$50,000 (providing long-term inpatient rehabilitation for those suffering from addiction), 4. Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering, Inc. - \$2,000 (CDBG) and \$98,000 (CARES) (sheltering the homeless in winter), 5. ShareCare, Assistance for elderly and disable individuals - \$10,000 (assistance with caregiving, help with household chores, visitation, comfort animals and respite care for the elderly), 6. Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living, PLACE Program - \$10,000 (provides housing counseling for residents with disabilities and their families living on a limited income), 7. New Bethany Ministries, Representative Payee Program - \$52,750 (prevents homelessness and promotes self-sufficiency for low-income residents), and Hispanic Center of the Lehigh Valley, Food Pantry - \$15,000. Also 9. YWCA, TechGYRLS Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) Program - \$15,000 (after-school program that delivers science technology, math, and science enrichment for girls 9-13), 10. Kellyn Foundation, Mobile Food Pantry/Produce Voucher Program - \$30,000 (food and educational services in schools and the community), 11. New Bethany Ministries, Trinity Soup Kitchen - \$25,000, 12. CALV, Home ownership/financial counseling supporting the Bethlehem Homebuyer assistance Program down payment/closing cost assistance program - \$20,000 (supported by HOME and CDBG funding; \$20,000 recommended from CDBG funding), 13. City Housing Rehabilitation, Grants and Loans - \$275,000, 14. City Housing Rehabilitation, Program Delivery - \$130,000, 15. Greater Valley YMCA, Bethlehem Branch, Facility Renovations - \$198,000, 16. Boys and Girls Club of Bethlehem, Facility Renovations - \$40,000 (gym renovations), 17. Friendship park Renovations in the NRSA - \$240,211 (Northside Alive Initiative), and 18. Non-congregate Shelter Acquisition Costs - \$20,000 (to fund potential acquisition costs related to purchase of real property to build a non-congregate shelter).

The recommended 2023 funded HOME projects are as follows: 19. HOME Program Administration and Planning Costs - \$45,521 (pays for administration of the program, studies, third party fees, and salaries and benefits of the Community Development Bureau and managers of the program), 20. Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Allocation - \$68,282 (required 15 percent allocation), 21. City Housing Rehab (owner-occupied or rental) - \$143,000 (to rehabilitate homes to meet code standards), and 22. Affordable Housing Project Requests - \$198,410 (to fund potential projects such as affordable owner housing, rental housing, rental assistance programs or housing rehabilitation programs).

A Resolution will be submitted to City Council for consideration at its April 18 meeting.

Council Questions:

Dr. Van Wirt asked about the flow of money from CDBG and HOME. She believed there is a strict guideline that money must be spent within the program year. She asked how Bethlehem has done over the past few years of spend the money that comes in. If money is not spent, must it be returned or would the City receive less funding in the coming years?

Mr. Vidoni said that applicants to the City are told that the money should be spent within 12 to 18 months. This depends on the projects. Unlike HOME, CDBG is a little more flexible on timing. Spending within the year does not always happen, and it is not always under the control of the recipients, he said. The consequences could be that an agency will not be funded the next year or they could be but with the unspent amount deducted.

Dr. Van Wirt asked if the City is doing a good job in wisely getting this money spent.

Mr. Vidoni said he believed they are doing the best job that can be done. In addition to the City requiring quarterly reports, recipients also must provide a quarterly spending plan. This better helps the City to monitor that the agencies are aware of deadlines and have a plan to meet them.

Dr. Enix asked about Mr. Vidoni's statement that the City must show investment in the Northside Alive program with its Friendship Park project. She asked him to explain.

Mr. Vidoni said NRSA stands for Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area. The City had to apply to HUD to get this designation, which brings certain regulatory benefits. It allows more options for economic development or housing. The City must report on what type of investment is going into the area. The City must show physical and non-physical investments in the area to meet requirements.

Ms. Crampsie Smith noted consultant fees listed under Activity 1 and Activity 20 on Mr. Vidoni's handout of listed projects. She said she assumed that these were fees above and beyond those being paid to consultants for affordable housing. She asked him to describe the type of consultant fees that would be needed for these projects.

Mr. Vidoni said that Michael Baker, for example, is a separate consultant for affordable housing. The consultants listed in the handout are to provide specialized technical assistance with the CDBG and HOME programs. This could pay for environmental studies, for example, in instances where they are required or other professional expertise.

Ms. Crampsie Smith also asked about Friendship Park. She asked whether any renovations are envisioned for children with physical or sensory challenges. Could special equipment be ordered to be more inclusive or could this still be added if it is not already planned?

Department of Community and Economic Development Director Laura Collins said Americans with Disabilities guidelines would have to be met. She added that the redesign of Friendship Park was driven by community engagement meetings. She did not remember that specific point being made, but she thought that it was an element to be considered for this and other future parks.

Ms. Crampsie Smith said she knows that these elements can be costly, but she believed that there are grants available to help pay for these features. She believed this should be a goal to include in future park renovations.

Ms. Wilhelm noted that the City was only able to fund 17 of the 24 CDBG requests received. She asked whether guidelines apply to organizations that were awarded grants as to future applications. For example, she wondered whether an organization must not apply if they received a grant the previous year.

Mr. Vidoni said there is no hard and fast rule, but that is taken into account.

President Colón noted that Mr. Vidoni mentioned that allocations for both CDBG and HOME allocations rose this year. He asked how this compares to inflation and what historical funding levels have been.

Mr. Vidoni said funding levels have varied over the years, sometimes more and sometimes less. The funding levels do not simply track inflation.

President Colón asked what factors dictate the City's allocation.

Mr. Vidoni listed incident of poverty, age of housing access, income characteristics of the individuals, relationship in a relative sense between this metropolitan area and other metropolitan areas. It is mostly demographic and economic factors.

President Colón observed that it appears that participating in the Census is very important.

Public Comment

None.

President Colón announced that a proposed Resolution will appear on Council's April 18, 2023 agenda. The hearing was adjourned at 7:29 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 21, 2023

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

Graffiti

Resident John Reda said he addressed Council a year ago about graffiti in the City. It has not gotten better in the year since. He called this destruction of property and said it is embarrassing. Those caught need to be prosecuted.

Neighbor Complaint

Resident Kim Hein complained about a nuisance neighbor. She said music is being played at all hours of the night and she hears yelling, partying and banging. She has called the police several times and also has talked to Legal Services, her state Representative and other unspecified resources and now comes to Council asking for assistance with this problem. Some citations have resulted, but the conditions do not change. She said she cannot move, nor should she have to. She added that she suffers from seizures and anxiety.

President Colón invited Ms. Hein to stay until the end of the meeting to speak with anyone on Council. She said she would.

Seeking Answers

Resident Marsha Fritz returned before Council in search of a response to her request made at the March 21 meeting. She asked Council to obtain an answer from Mayor Reynolds as to why she was removed as the president of the City's Historic Architectural Review Board. Ms. Fritz has since applied for a seat on the City's Historic Conservation Commission, but she has not received a reply. She asked President Colón if he had the opportunity to seek answers from the Mayor about both situations. President Colón invited Ms. Fritz to remain until the end of the meeting to discuss the matter. She agreed to stay.

More Publicity Needed for Planning and Zoning Meetings

Resident Mary Jo Makoul stated concerns about resident notifications, specifically regarding Planning and Zoning meetings. She contacted both departments over several months about upcoming meetings and agendas. Each time she said she was advised to check the City's website. She did so on March 20 and contacted the Zoning Office about the April 12 Zoning Hearing because it was not listed on the calendar. She was told the calendar would be updated. She called two additional times that week, the last being March 24. Ms. Makoul said she was advised that this was because of staffing shortages, but the meeting listing would be added to the calendar on March 27. Ms. Makoul also said that many senior citizens do not have Internet access. They do not know what is going on in their neighborhoods. She suggested spending tax dollars to notify residents of similar meetings by mail or more numerous postings along streets near affected areas. She believed that there was only one notification posted for the February hearing for Hanover Apartments. She added that this was difficult to read because it was posted low and in small print. She said this is a disservice to residents. Ms. Makoul also suggested that if there is a known strong neighborhood resistance to a proposal, the Planning and Zoning boards could plan a special meeting to only address that project. She said this might require an additional meeting from time to time, but it would be in the public interest.

Recycling Urged

Resident Arthur Curatola spoke about landfills and recyclables. He said he sees items that are supposed to be recycled – such as glass – sticking out of people's garbage at curbside. Mr. Curatola suggested citing those who are caught in order to set an example that we should be recycling. He said it should be mandatory that any frozen goods be placed in biodegradable containers, not plastic which he believes should be banned. Mr. Curatola would like to see people bury waste from fruits and vegetables in their backyards to "make your own landfills in your own yards."

Asking Council for Help

Resident Teresa Kloiber opposes the proposed Hanover Apartments development. The plan calls for five stories plus an additional single-story parking area above ground. She said the developer called her to ask what could be done to make this a nicer building for neighbors, such as adding flowers and shrubs. She said those will not hide a "monstrosity" of a six-story building. She told him that a maximum of three stories would be acceptable to her. Ms. Kloiber said the response was that the number of stories would not be reduced. She said the neighbors have organized to try to fight this to at least reduce the plan. She asked for Council's help in not

allowing the proposed plan allowing them to retain the character of their neighborhood. She added that Hanover Avenue at West Broad Street is a high-crash intersection that would only be made worse – if not redesigned – if apartments are built. She said residents do not seem to have rights while this out-of-town investor seems to think it is his right to ruin their neighborhood by adding 317 apartments and potentially 600 residents. Ms. Makoul said that Historic Bethlehem on the South Side is permitted to push back against developers and limit them to three stories because that is what surrounds them. Given that circumstance, she believed that those on the North Side should be limited to two or three stories because that is the height of existing homes there. She believes that five or six stories would ruin the appearance of their neighborhood.

Intersection Concerns

Resident Paul Fondl emphasized traffic concerns for the proposed Hanover Apartments. He said the developer has noted that PennDOT will not require traffic improvements for nearby streets including W. Broad Street, Club Avenue, Hanover Avenue, and Eaton Avenue. Mr. Fondl said that Allentown and Bethlehem will be discussing a traffic study of this area in about two weeks. He added that the developer is willing to discuss the possibility of providing improvements at the intersection. Mr. Fondl said the intersection of W. Broad Street, Eaton Avenue, and Hanover Avenue is a high-crash intersection. There have been several recent accidents. Despite PennDOT's determination, Mr. Fondl said that something major has to be done to improve safety, perhaps a round-about. He suggested the use of some other safety features used elsewhere and showed Council photographs of the intersection and these potential measures. He said it would be unwise to add the estimated 550 cars that the 317-unit apartment complex would bring to this dangerous intersection. Mr. Fondl said that, in addition to this proposal, Allentown is planning to add more apartments on the south end of Wahneta Street that will only add to these conditions.

New Argument

Alex Hirsch said his appeal to Council to resume parking near his home has now reached 263 days. This time he asked Mayor Reynolds to speak with the Bethlehem Parking Authority Director to consider that, as a part-time resident and taxpayer, he should not be excluded from parking in the Residential Permit Parking area. Mr. Hirsch offered a new argument that would allow him to park within the RPP area. He said that Article 534 Section 6 of the ordinance regulating the RPP program allows parking for those who have out-of-state license plates. He believes he qualifies.

Supports Others' Comments

Resident William Scheirer supported Mr. Hirsch. He cited the example of out-of-state Lehigh University students who do not live in Bethlehem year-round and also have out-of-state license plates. Mr. Scheirer also supported Mary Jo Makoul's complaint that some meetings are not listed on the Community Calendar posted by the City. He said there has been a significant decrease in the information listed. He said he did not see tonight's Council meeting listed as of yesterday. **(Editor's note: City Council meetings are listed on the City's website under the icon "City Council Meetings" and do not appear under "Community Meetings".)** There was information for the Planning Commission, but for HCC and the Zoning Hearing Board later in the month, there was no agenda. Mr. Scheirer also supported objectors to the Hanover Apartments

project. He spoke on one of the variances being sought. The property is zoned CL, which stands for Commercial Limited, sometimes called Neighborhood Commercial. The developer wishes to eliminate commercial space from his plan. He proposes building all apartments. Mr. Scheirer said this gives the developer the best of both worlds. Apartment buildings even in the densest residential areas of the City are limited to 3 ½ stories. The CL District, however, allows 6 stories. He said the developer does not want commercial use; he just wants the height to allow more units. He said this, in effect, is creating a new zoning district and should not be allowed.

Backroom Politics Alleged

Resident Stephen Antalics said he has noticed a troublesome pattern in which Council members are discussing public business not in a public forum. He has seen several recommendations by the Mayor in recent months to various commissions and boards passed smoothly by Council. In the same period, four appointments involving historic commissions did not reach public consideration by Council. Why? He believes the proposed candidates were discussed privately by Council and candidacies were removed from the agenda because of insufficient support. He alleged similar “behind the scenes politics” involving a January 18, 2022 appointment involving an attorney being considered as an Assistant City Solicitor and as the Solicitor to Council. He said there had to be backroom discussions based on timing. Mr. Antalics next mentioned Ms. Fritz asking Council the last two meetings why she was not appointed to serve on the HCC. He criticized Council’s passivity in not questioning this action. He said only one Council member asked why not.

Separate Meeting Forum Suggested

Resident and business owner Lisa Ronca observed that several people tonight have the same concerns. The 5-minute public comment limit does not provide enough time to address them. She mentioned excessive development happening quickly. She expects that there will be some development, but this is going so fast and creating issues including more traffic and perhaps more crime. She suggested holding a meeting of local business owners and residents to speak about their concerns together and search for solutions. She agreed that sometimes meeting notifications are hard to find. She suggested more mailings. Ms. Ronca also disagreed with zoning that permits several stories of apartments if the first floor is commercial space.

Petition to Remove Benches

Resident and business owner Tina Kazakos offered a petition signed by 60 residents and merchants in a three-block area asking for the removal of benches at 4th and New Streets and 4th and Vine Streets. She said people in that area are tired of being threatened and verbally abused and are sick of cleaning up after people who are drunk, on drugs or suffering from mental illness. She said that police do not do anything about the situation. Removing the benches would not give people the opportunity to loiter. Ms. Kazakos said this would not be tolerated on Main or Broad Streets yet it is allowed to continue in the South Side Business District.

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

Crash Data Contract Questioned

Mr. Scheirer addressed agenda item 6B, the \$25,000 contract for Cedar Crest College to study crash data in the City within Northampton County. He recalled that crash data was discussed when the Zoning Ordinance was reviewed. He conceded that the time of day was not included in that data. As to crash causes, he said that is not difficult to determine: This is a combination of distracted driving and reckless driving. The \$25,000 could be better spent toward hiring the eight vacant police officer positions. He also asked whether this was an unsolicited proposal from Cedar Crest. If there were other proposals, he wondered what the selection criteria were.

More Contract Questions

Mr. Antalics also questioned the proposed Cedar Crest College contract award. He asked whether the person recommending the award is aware that there are two major universities in Bethlehem, did anyone determine whether Moravian and Lehigh are qualified to conduct this study, and who is the person recommending the award? He said if Council Members know these answers and are satisfied, they should vote. But, if they do not, they should table this matter for two weeks and get the answers.

5. OLD BUSINESS

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

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. *Deputy Fire Chief – Records Destruction – Fire Department*

The Clerk read a memorandum with an attached Resolution dated March 28, 2023 from Deputy Fire Chief Craig Baer requesting the Destruction of Records from the Fire Department. The Deputy Chief has reviewed the Municipal Records Retention Act, and the records listed on the exhibit fall within the categories where destruction is permitted.

President Colón stated the Resolution can be placed on the April 18 Council agenda.

B. *Director of Community and Economic Development – Recommendation of Award – Cedar Crest College – Community Mapping of Crashes*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated March 30, 2023 with an attached Resolution from Laura Collins, Director of Community and Economic Development, recommending a contract with Cedar Crest College to analyze and synthesize Northampton County crash data to meet community needs. The amount of the contract is \$25,000. The work is to be completed by September 30, 2023. There are no renewals.

President Colón stated Resolution 10 C is on the agenda.

C. *City Solicitor – Use Permit Agreement Revision – Christmas City Spirits – Blossom Fest – Multiple Vendors*

The Clerk read a March 30, 2023 memorandum with an attached revised Resolution and Associated Use Permit Agreement from City Solicitor John F. Spirk, Jr., Esq. The Permittee is Christmas City Spirits and the event is Blossom Fest. Added as Sub-permittees are Social Still, LLC, Franklin Hill Vineyards, Inc., Cellar Beast Winehouse, LLC, Kilimanjaro Distillery, LLC; the Easton Wine Project; The Colony Meadery, LLC, and Soaked, LLC trading as Soaked Winery. The agreement is for 11 AM to 7 PM on April 22, 2023. The premises is the Nevin Place right-of-way and a W. Walnut Street parcel, both of which are adjacent to the Sun Inn Courtyard and are designated on an exhibit attached to the Agreement.

President Colón stated Resolution 10 D is on the agenda.

D. *Director of Community and Economic Development – Recommendation of Award – Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc. – Friendship Park*

The Clerk read a March 28, 2023 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Laura Collins, Director of Community and Economic Development, recommending a contract with Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc. for final design, engineering and construction documents for Friendship Park redesign and to provide oversight during construction. The cost is not to exceed \$115,000. The project is to be completed by December 31, 2024. There are no renewals.

President Colón stated Resolution 10 E is on the agenda.

7. REPORTS

A. *President of Council*

B. *Mayor*

New Sister City Proposal

Mayor Reynolds reported on a kickoff event last week proposing setting up a new Sister City relationship with a city in Puerto Rico. A community survey is being conducted, and a follow-up meeting will be held. The survey is designed to establish which city will be named and what the relationship would entail. The Mayor said he wants the relationship to honor the heritage and the connections between Puerto Rico and Bethlehem, but also going forward, what could this mean for the community. This is not something that should be decided in City Hall, but through a collective effort with our community.

Successful Trans-Visibility Event

He also thanked everyone who attended the Friday flag-raising for trans-visibility. Ms. Kwiatek spoke during the event and remarked how much larger the crowd was this year than during last year's event. "It was a universally positive event," he said.

Stepping Up

Mayor Reynolds earlier this evening attended the United Way Celebration of Caring event. He noted that more than \$22 million was raised during the annual campaign. A common theme was that appreciative as they are for private philanthropy and the major institutions that contribute, government support is equally important. They appreciate the conversations that City Council has been having to put money in the budget for our Community Recovery Fund and those about housing. "It was mentioned multiple times that it cannot just be private sector, philanthropic effort, but it also has to be local governments, state governments, and the federal government stepping up," he said.

Proud to be the Model

Mayor Reynold also announced that Planning and Zoning Director Darlene Heller yesterday attended the American Planning Association Conference in Philadelphia. Ms. Heller, Kerry Wrobel of Lehigh Valley Industrial Park, and Kassie Hilgert of ArtsQuest "told the Bethlehem story" of turning around Bethlehem from a time of despair when Bethlehem Steel shut down, to redevelopment, to being a place where people want to live. "People throughout the country want to know how we did it," he said.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

A. *Bill No. 14 – 2023 – Amending 2023 Capital Budget for Non-Utilities*

The Clerk read Bill No. 14-2023 – Amending 2023 Capital Budget for Non-Utilities sponsored by Dr. Enix and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING
THE 2023 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR NON-UTILITIES

Voting AYE: Ms. Crampsie Smith, Dr. Enix, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Leon, Dr. Van Wirt, Ms. Wilhelm and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 14-2023 now known as Ordinance No. 2023-14 was passed on Final Reading.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

None.

10. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approve Records Destruction – Police Department*

Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2023-059 that authorizes the disposal of the public records in the office of the Police Department, as stated in Exhibit A.

Voting AYE: Ms. Crampsie Smith, Dr. Enix, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Leon, Dr. Van Wirt, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

B. Approve Records Destruction – Fire Department

Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2023-060 that authorizes the disposal of the public records in the office of the Fire Department, as stated in Exhibit A.

Voting AYE: Ms. Crampsie Smith, Dr. Enix, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Leon, Dr. Van Wirt, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

C. Approve Contract – Cedar Crest College – Community Mapping of Crashes

Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2023-061 that authorized to execute an agreement with Cedar Crest College for the Community Mapping of Crashes.

President Colón said that it is noted on contract information that the funding source is the Comprehensive Traffic Safety Program Grant. He wanted to confirm that the study is being paid for by a grant.

Ms. Collins said yes. She said this is a PennDOT-financed grant that the City has received for more than 20 years. The City Health Bureau is the administrator for Northampton County. A report will be distributed to all Northampton County municipalities.

President Colón asked why use Cedar Crest to perform the work.

Ms. Collins said the Health Bureau has successfully worked with Cedar Crest on a number of other projects. They have been excellent. They have experience with geographic information systems (GIS) work. This was one of the primary reasons that they were chosen.

Dr. Van Wirt asked if similar information is being gathered for Lehigh County and if this information will be added to the Northampton County information to give complete crash data for the City.

Ms. Collins said she would assume so, but she would find out and confirm.

Ms. Leon asked if anyone knows which area universities have the best GIS programs, so we can partner with them going forward. Or is Cedar Crest the leader?

Ms. Collins said she could not confidently speak as to the abilities of all, only that the City has had very positive experiences with Cedar Crest's GIS efforts in the past. She said she could consult with our IT personnel as to their dealings and recommendations with area schools.

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked whether the \$25,000 grant will cover all costs or whether this is a match requiring City funds.

Ms. Collins said no money comes from the City.

Voting AYE: Ms. Crampsie Smith, Dr. Enix, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Leon, Dr. Van Wirt, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

D. Approve UPA Revision – Christmas City Spirits – Blossom Fest – Multiple Vendors

Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2023-062 that authorized to execute a revised Use Permit Agreement for Christmas City Spirits to hold Blossom Fest.

Voting AYE: Ms. Crampsie Smith, Dr. Enix, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Leon, Dr. Van Wirt, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

E. Approve Contract – Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc. – Friendship Park

Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2023-063 that authorized to execute an Agreement with Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc. for design, engineering and construction documents and project oversight of the redesign of Friendship Park.

Ms. Kwiatek followed up on Ms. Crampsie Smith's earlier comments on this matter. She thanked her for raising the issue about accessibility to the park's facilities to make it as inclusive as possible. She noted that supporting paperwork indicated that the contract is for "final design, engineering and construction documents." She said it sounded as if there is still the opportunity to add input about the access.

Ms. Collins said she was glad that Ms. Kwiatek returned to raise this question. Since it was first discussed earlier in the meeting, Ms. Collins realized that the play structures are not being replaced. She said raising the accessibility question is an excellent point for this project. However, the play structures were replaced in 2019, so that work is not being done at this time.

Voting AYE: Ms. Crampsie Smith, Dr. Enix, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Leon, Dr. Van Wirt, Ms. Wilhelm and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

11. NEW BUSINESS

Finance Committee Meeting

Dr. Enix announced that the Finance Committee will meet at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 in Town Hall to discuss budget adjustments.

Dr. King Tribute

Dr. Enix also remembered Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on this day, the 55th anniversary of his assassination. She said he organized peaceful protests as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Marches included one in 1963 on Washington, D.C. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. He was arrested more than 25 times and wrote five books.

Council Contact Information

President Colón, after listening to some of the comments this evening, reminded all that they may contact the City Clerk's Office and ask to speak to a member of Council. It is not

necessary to wait until meeting nights. He added that all of their email addresses are listed on the City's website. President Colón said he could speak confidently that all try to be responsive. He added that he has been inside some residents' homes to hear their concerns. Other Council Members have done so as well. He added that he would speak to the City Clerk about how the website is managed. Additionally, President Colón added that a newsletter is distributed twice yearly to every mailing address within the City. He referred to the five-minute public comment, as have some residents, and said that those with matters requiring longer conversations should contact the City Clerk or email Council Members if this is the case.

Shared Concerns for Vacant Properties/W. Broad Street Traffic

Ms. Kwiatek thanked those in attendance for their comments tonight. She noted Ms. Ronca's point about developers who buy properties, let them set, and then deteriorate. Ms. Kwiatek shares this concern. Since she has been on Council, she said she has brought two properties to the attention of Code Enforcement, which has gone to the properties and cited the owners. She would encourage people to use the MyBethlehem app or contact Council Members when these conditions are found. There is a procedure, and Code Enforcement is responsive when conditions are brought to their attention.

As a West Sider, Ms. Kwiatek also said she is aware of the concerns involving the Hanover Apartments proposal. She believes that "we" need to do something about the traffic situation there.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 8:59 PM.

ATTEST:

Tad J. Miller
City Clerk