

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES
Wednesday April 9, 2025

City Council met in a stated session for the general transaction of business. Reverend Sylvia King called the Workshop to order at 4:46 p.m.

Mr. Britt offered the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

An Executive Session from 4:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. was held prior to the commencement of the workshop.

The following members of Council were present for roll call:

Reverend Sylvia King, Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt, Mr. Clark, Ms. Huchel, Mrs. Mock (6) Mayor Janakovic (1) was not present.

Also present: Arturo Martynuska, City Manager; Michael Capriotti, Assistant City Manager; Dave Andrews, Esquire; Aimee Willett, Esquire; Sara Williams, Executive Secretary; John Rutledge, Economic Development Director.

Barry Polster, Executive Director, Johnstown Regional Partnership; and James Carthew, Planning Commission, were also in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Charlene Stanton, 184 Sell Street, Johnstown, City resident and taxpayer, addressed Council regarding Codes and inquired if there was only one Codes Enforcement Officer for the entire City. She had concerns regarding Codes and the lack of enforcement. She noted filing a Right to Know Request regarding the number of code violation cases taken to court. The City's response was zero and suggested the City "take a stand" to enforce penalties.

Ms. Stanton indicated the email address for code complaints on the City's website is no longer in service, and the mailboxes for phone numbers in the City Directory are full. She asked that to be corrected.

Cathy Barefoot, 122 Tillman Avenue, Johnstown, requested Council to address any Central Park Project Updates, and the timeframe involved.

Mike Hamacek, 709 Railroad Street, Johnstown, also requested feedback from Council regarding the Central Park Main Street Project. He noted residents he had spoken to being upset and would like to see only minor repairs done to the park.

CENTRAL PARK PROJECT UPDATES

Alyssa Rouser, CJL Engineering, the entity finishing up the project handed over to them by SCAPE. She indicated the design is being finalized and is getting ready to advertise for bids in June, awarding contracts in August. The project should start after Labor Day, which would allow for any events prior to the start of the project that would end in the fall of 2026. She referred to handouts for further discussion of SCAPE'S original layout and proposals to add the fountain back in along with an access way. Mr. Arnone stated it was not feasible to keep maintaining the fountain as it was not practical for the weather conditions. There was discussion regarding plans to move the fountain to Sandyvale for possible use as a planter.

Ben Gagan, UpStreet Architects, was also present and offered comments.

It was noted all veterans' monuments except for one would remain along a walkway on the Franklin Street side. It was suggested that dwarf trees replace those that would be planted as replacements. Mrs. Mock suggested updates be provided more often than in the past to keep businesses owners aware of the timeline.

Gazebo Park will be leveled into the picnic area where tables are located. Electrical connections will be available for concerts, and the slope of the ground will be less than initially planned. Mr. Capriotti noted a regular full drawing will be presented ahead of the next Council meeting.

It was noted the number of plants called for has dropped from 4000 to 1700. There will be sprinkler areas in the grassy area of the park. A grant is being sought through an organization for Proven Winners plantings and the color scheme will be provided at the next meeting.

There was further discussion regarding the Gazebo plans. Improvements to the original slope reduction would offer a clear sight line all around. A feature wall will be more of a seating wall instead of just stacked stones. Light stanchions 39 feet high would be lowered. Original rain gardens for rain water management will be tweaked. A water feature will be the center piece of the park. The Christmas Tree would be located a little more to the left than what SCAPE has originally planned. There was discussion regarding a possible location for the tree after the project is started.

Gazebo Park will be a laydown site for the contractor, but the sidewalk would remain open. The project would need to be completed by October of 2026, so grant money can be closed out by December of that year.

CODES UPDATE

Mrs. Mock commented there had been a workshop regarding codes with Laurel Municipal and the fire department present. A plan is in place. She noted 71 violations this month, 21 of which were turned over to Laurel Municipal and 45 were done by the Johnstown Fire Department. She stated it is frustrating that public comments made were videotaped, but further comments regarding the matter were not.

It was noted the Codes program is "moving forward," and there are two individuals on staff. The number of violations completed by the Fire Department was amended to 73. Former emails were being forwarded to Codes, and the website is in the process of being redesigned. A new GIS specialist is being considered, and Arc Pro software is in place. Mr. Britt wanted the public to know that Codes does their job but was in the process of being held up.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATES

City Manager noted meetings with consultant Rothschild. John Rutledge, Director, DCED, stated creating a project spreadsheet with Rothschild. It reflected the amount of data received from Johnstown residents. Mr. Rutledge noted sending them stakeholder information to help with their data collection, and Rothschild plans on attending the next Planning Commission meeting. Tasks and dates of completion will be established at that time. A steering committee will be established. Additional community engagement sessions are scheduled. Mrs. Mock suggested use of a QR code to answer questions. There was further discussion regarding the distribution of information on the matter.

PUBLIC COMMENT:(LIMIT OF 3 MINUTES) NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Workshop adjourned at 5:49 p.m.