

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL (VIA ZOOM)
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
Wednesday, January 13, 2021

City Council met in a stated session for the general transaction of business. Mayor Frank Janakovic called the Public Hearing to order at 5:47 p.m.

The following members of Council were present for roll call:

Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt, Mr. Capriotti, Mayor Janakovic, Mrs. Mock,
Mr. Vitovich (6).

Absent: Reverend King (1).

John Trant, Interim City Manager; Elizabeth Benjamin, Esquire, City Solicitor; Bruce Graham, Gibson-Thomas Engineering; Jared Campagna, Public Works Director; Robert Ritter, Finance Director; Chad Miller, Interim Police Chief

STATEMENT BY SOLICITOR BENJAMIN

Ms. Benjamin explained the public hearing was convening in order to consider an ordinance of the City Council of the City of Johnstown addressing an amendment to the zoning ordinance as advertised in the Tribune Democrat on December 31 of 2020. The City of Johnstown was seeking to amend the zoning classification of Parcel No. 90-016-288.000, commonly known as the Garfield School located at 280 Decker Avenue in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, to a C-2 Community Business District. This matter is proposed in the form of an ordinance at Bill No. 30 of 2020. Copies of the ordinance remain available for public inspection via the City of Johnstown website and at the City Manager's Office at City Hall. An advertisement of this hearing, as well as the full text of the ordinance as proposed for final adoption, was published in the Tribune Democrat on December 31 of 2020 as reflected in the content of the ordinance.

The proposal is to change the zoning of the Garfield School or the Greater Johnstown Middle School as another reference for the property from its current designation of S Conservancy Zoning District to the C-2 Community Business District on the grounds that its current zoning designation significantly hinders the potential reuse of the property and increases the probable need for eventual demolition of the structure. The ordinance itself includes the proposed amendment to the zoning map that would change the classification and allow for immediate reuse of the structure.

The Planning Commission of the City of Johnstown was provided notice of the City's intention to seek this amendment to the zoning ordinance and was provided an opportunity to make recommendations.

Ms. Benjamin indicated that a public hearing was held previously on December 9, 2020, and reconvening on January 13, 2021, for purposes of any comments that members of the public or other individuals or Council members wish to make. She stated the hearing was being convened for the purposes of accepting any public comment at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John DeBartola, 1197 Bedford Street, commented that, in 2015, the Planning Commission denied the rezoning of the Middle School because of the commercial and residential properties. He stated the Middle School would create more low-income housing in an already economically depressed area and create a further burden on the taxpayers. He was concerned the matter was not being handled properly. Mr. DeBartola suggested that the Garfield Middle School be reopened and "used for the children." He hoped that some of the Council members would remember why the Planning Commission denied the application and make the proper choice.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the Public Hearing concluded at 5:58 p.m.