

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL (VIA ZOOM)  
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES  
Wednesday, December 9, 2020

City Council met in a stated session for the general transaction of business. Mayor Frank Janakovic called the Public Hearing to order at 5:45 p.m.

The following members of Council were present for roll call:

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

Absent: Mr. Capriotti (1).

John Trant, Interim City Manager; Elizabeth Benjamin, Esquire, City Solicitor; John Dubnansky, Economic Development Director; Jacob Zerby, Economic Development Specialist; Chad Miller, Interim Police Chief; Lou Crocco, Matt Hamett and Andrew Haines, Gatesburg Road Development were also present.

Remarks by Solicitor Benjamin

Ms. Benjamin explained the public hearing was being held for purposes of accepting public comment on what had been identified as Bill No. 30 of 2020 and is being introduced at the City Council's Regular Meeting later this evening. The ordinance was read into the record as follows:

**BILL NO. 30, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, ORDINANCE NO. 4964 ADOPTED APRIL 13, 2005 AND AS AMENDED BY ORDINANCE NO. 5086 PASSED JUNE 22ND, 2011; ORDINANCE NO. 5199 PASSED JANUARY 23RD, 2013; ORDINANCE NO. 5139 PASSED NOVEMBER 27, 2013; AND ORDINANCE NO. 1591 PASSED DECEMBER 2015 BY REZONING CERTAIN PARCELS OF LAND LOCATED IN THE 20TH WARD OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN.**

Ms. Benjamin noted the proposed has to do with property located at 280 Decker Avenue in Johnstown, PA, 15906, which is commonly known as the Greater Johnstown Middle School. She stated it is currently located within an S Conservancy Zoning District, that the zoning designation was determined to hinder reuse of the property and increase probable need for the eventual demolition of the structure. She stated it was determined that an amendment to the zoning map would allow for more immediate reuse and repurposing of the structure.

As a result, 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 provided an opportunity to make recommendations.

Public Notice of the intention to seek this amendment had been provided in the manner prescribed by the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Johnstown. Ms. Benjamin stated the public hearing was convening for purposes of accepting comment on the proposed zoning reclassification, which would change the Greater Johnstown Middle School location from an S Conservancy Zoning Classification to a Z-2 Community Business District.

She noted for the record that the Parcel Number for this property is 90-016-228.000.

Ms. Benjamin explained that this is the subject of an ordinance that had been presented on City Council's agenda for its December 9 regular meeting as a First Reading. There was proper advertisement of the public hearing and posting of the proposed change to the zoning amendment. She indicated that Jacob Zerby, Economic Development Specialist, was present to answer questions.

#### Public Comment

John DeBartola, 1197 Bedford Street, Johnstown, commented that it had been claimed that the Garfield Middle School was unusable, requiring a \$28 million repair bill and forcing children into overcrowded classrooms. He referred to it as a "union social backroom deal" to put a public asset in the hands of a private developer for pennies on the dollar. He asked Council to realize that Johnstown is a financially distressed city and needs to vote no on rezoning to avoid further low income housing to be placed within the City adding to the already concentration of poverty in the City.

Ms. Benjamin noted there would be further opportunity for public comment during the Public Comment period of the regular City Council meeting and again when the ordinance is reintroduced at the next meeting prior to final adoption.

#### Adjournment

There being no further business, the Public Hearing concluded at 5:55 p.m.