



## CITY OF CORTLAND COMMON COUNCIL MEETING

MARCH 7, 2023 - 6:00 PM

### MINUTES

**MEETING LOCATION**  
CITY HALL  
25 COURT STREET  
CORTLAND, NY 13045

**ZOOM MEETING ROOM**  
923 566 4700  
[ZOOM LINK](#)

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#### MAYOR

SCOTT STEVE

#### COUNCIL MEMBERS

WAYNE SCHUTT  
KATY SILLIMAN  
MARY CLARE PENNELLO  
PAT LANE  
SETH THOMPSON  
BILL CARPENTER  
TROY BECKWITH  
TOM MICHALES

#### CITY CLERK

ANDY JEWETT

#### CORPORATION COUNSEL

A.J. MELDRIM

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#### CONTACT

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#### RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

- Resolution No. 58 Approve Special Event Permit, Sound Device Permit and Street Closing for the Stone Soup Community Gathering
- Resolution No. 59 Authorize Agreement with Thoma Development Consultants for Community Development Services Not Otherwise Provided in Grant-Specific Contracts
- Resolution No. 61 Authorize Application and Acceptance of a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program SAFER Hiring Grant
- Resolution No. 62 Authorize Agreement with Clarkson University for Consulting Services Related to a Research Project



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#### PUBLIC HEARINGS

**Public Hearing No. 1.                      Proposed Local Law No. 12 of 2023 to Amend Chapter 300 to Allow for Building or Property Repurpose that Serves a Substantial Public Benefit**

A public hearing was opened at 6:02 p.m. Several residents spoke expressing their thoughts and concerns about the proposed local law. Diane Chu expressed concerns that the proposed local law may allow the building that formerly housed Parker School to be used in ways not consistent with zoning. Donald Chu stated his view that the former Parker School building should be for some public use and his concern about how use of the building may affect property values. Brendan McGovern read a letter from Jo Shaffer stating her opinion that use of the former Parker School building should be consistent with R-1 and R-2 zoning and not affect the character of the neighborhood. Brendan McGovern, a member of the City Planning Commission stated that he is opposed to the proposed local law, recommending that the zoning code be amended to allowing the Planning Commission to approve Special Use Permits in additional areas rather than the manner proposed. He stated that Planning Commission members have expertise and training by which to decide such issues. Whitney Hargett said she shares the concerns expressed by the previous speakers and that such decisions should be made by the Planning Commission rather than a political body. She also commented on her difficulties finding child care and advocated for additional child care capacity. There being no one else present to speak, the public hearing was closed at 6:15 p.m.

**Public Hearing No. 2.                      Proposed Local Law No. 13 of 2023 to Amend Applicable City of Cortland Charter and Administrative Code Provisions Relative to Code Enforcement to Comply with the Latest New York State Local Code Requirements**

A public hearing was opened at 6:15 p.m. There being no one present to speak, the public hearing was closed at 6:16 p.m.

#### CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL

Mayor Steve called the meeting to order at 6:16 p.m., and the City Clerk called the roll. The following Common Council members were in attendance:

Wayne Schutt – First Ward Alderperson  
Katy Silliman – Second Ward Alderperson  
Mary Clare Pennello – Third Ward Alderperson  
Patricia Lane – Fourth Ward Alderperson  
Seth Thompson - Fifth Ward Alderperson  
William Carpenter – Sixth Ward Alderperson  
Troy Beckwith – Seventh Ward Alderperson  
Thomas Michales – Eighth Ward Alderperson

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

MOMENT OF SILENCE/REFLECTION

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

FINANCE REPORTS

**Finance Report No. 1                      Capital and Grant Updates**

Capital and Grant financial reports were provided to Council members and the public in advance of the meeting.

**Finance Report No. 2                      Budget Reports (2022 YTD, 2023 YTD, 2021-22 Budget Comparison)**

Budget reports were provided to Council members and the public in advance of the meeting.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Steve recognized the Sectional championship victory of the Cortland High School Varsity Girls Basketball team and of members of the Indoor Track team. He praised the Fire Department for their work containing a fire on Main St. and thanked area fire departments which provided mutual aid. The Mayor said that there are some interested buyers of the recently vacated Huntington St. and Central Ave. business properties, and that the City will be providing public information on a new downtown parking program. He noted the upcoming retirements of Dave Stathis, Connie Sorrells, and Police Officer Kenneth Bush and his partner K-9 Lummel.

WARD REPORTS

- Ward 1: Council Member Schutt complimented the Fire Department's response to a fire on Main St. He recently toured the Salvation Army's food pantry and facilities and stated that they are a great asset to the community.
- Ward 1: Council Member Silliman thanked the Police Department for their efforts dealing with intoxicated college students, and the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Code Enforcement Division for their services on several issues. Ms. Silliman noted needs for sidewalk repair and said the sidewalk program should start earlier. She also said she signed up for the No Mow May program.
- Ward 4: Council Member Lane said SUNY Cortland's diversity officer spoke at a recent Town and Gown Ad Hoc Committee. She said some residents expressed concerns about Agenda Item No. 1. Ms. Lane conveyed an experience where she, her partner and a SUNY Cortland student rendered aid to a person in medical and physical need.
- Ward 5: Council Member Thompson said some garbage and recycling toes had been missed for pick up. He said some residents expressed concern to him about Agenda item No. 1. He thinks that ward reports should be given every meeting. Mr. Thompson also thanked DPW for their services.
- Ward 6: Council Member Carpenter said contract negotiations with the firefighters union begin March 1<sup>st</sup>. He suggested to Mr. Thompson that he call the owner of the City's trash and recycling hauling service as he has been very responsive.

- Ward 7: Council Member Beckwith thanked Police Officer Kenneth Bush and his partner K-9 Lummel. He encouraged people to support the St. Baldrick's fundraiser and thanked the Fire Department for their participation.
- Ward 7: Council Member Michales thanked DPW for repairing winter damage to streets. He attended Police Officer Kenneth Bush and his partner K-9 Lummel's retirement event and said it was very moving. Mr. Michaels said he, Mayor Steve and A.J. Meldrim the City's Corporation Counsel met with Spectrum about the franchise agreement that expired 18 years ago.

#### APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the February 21, 2023 Council meeting were approved.

Motioned by: Council Member Silliman

Seconded by: Council Member Beckwith

Approved: Ayes – 8 [Schutt, Silliman, Pennello, Lane, Thompson, Carpenter, Beckwith, Michales]  
Nays – 0

#### RESOLUTIONS

**Agenda Item No 1: Adopt Local Law No. 12 of 2023 to Amend Chapter 300 to Allow for Building or Property Repurpose that Serves a Substantial Public Benefit**

A motion was made and approved to table Agenda Item No. 1.

Motioned by: Council Member Beckwith

Seconded by: Council Member Carpenter

Discussion: Mayor Steve said the Planning Commission was scheduled to review the proposed local law and offer its recommendations prior to consideration by the Common Council but a quorum of the Planning Commission was not present to do so. He said he wants to table the matter until after the Planning Commission considers the matter. The Mayor responded to concerns expressed about the proposed local law, saying it would provide an avenue for the Planning Commission to consider a Special Use Permit where otherwise it could not, and it provides additional layers of review and opportunities for public input. He said the review and public input would include a public hearing prior to the Common Council making a determination of substantial public benefit, and a public hearing prior to the Planning Commission considering whether to approve or deny a Special Use Permit. Council Member Thompson suggested the language in the proposed local law be amended to clarify controls. Mr. Meldrim said that such changes could be made.

Approved: Ayes – 8 [Schutt, Silliman, Pennello, Lane, Thompson, Carpenter, Beckwith, Michales]  
Nays – 0

**Resolution No. 58 Approve Special Event Permit, Sound Device Permit and Street Closing for the Stone Soup Community Gathering**

RESOLVED, that the Common Council does hereby approve a Special Event Permit, a Sound Device Permit without fee, and Court St. closure for the Stone Soup Community Gathering I to be held on April 23, 2023 from



space and assistance with installation and sampling in support of Clarkson University’s research project relating to a process to extract nitrogen and phosphorous from dewatering sidestreams.

Motioned by: Council Member Thompson

Seconded by: Council Member Lane

Approved: Ayes – 8 [Schutt, Silliman, Pennello, Lane, Thompson, Carpenter, Beckwith, Michales]

Nays – 0

DISCUSSION ITEMS

**Discussion Item No. 1 Director of Administration & Finance Search Update**

Milestones leading to interviewing of candidates have been achieved. Additional milestones leading to hiring of a City Administrator are listed below.

Milestones	Status	Target Dates
Interview top 3 candidates virtually	Completed	March 2-3
Finalist in-person visits	Scheduled	March 10-16
Final review, recommendations to Mayor, negotiations		March 16-31
Council resolution to confirm hiring		April 4

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m. on motion of Council Member Silliman and approved by a vote of 8-0.