

APPROVED MINUTES of the Regular Meeting
of the City Council of the City of Rye held in City Hall
on January 8, 2020, at 7:30 P.M.

PRESENT:

JOSH COHN, Mayor
SARA GODDARD
CAROLINA JOHNSON
RICHARD MECCA
JULIE SOUZA
BENJAMIN STACKS
Councilmembers

ABSENT:

PAMELA TARLOW
Councilmember

The Council convened at 6:30 P.M. Councilman Mecca made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Souza, enter into executive session to discuss litigation and personnel matters. At 7:34 P.M., Councilman Mecca made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Souza, to exit executive session and commence the regular meeting of the City Council. The meeting began at 7:41 P.M.

1. Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Cohn called the meeting to order and invited the Council to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call.

Mayor Cohn asked the City Clerk to call the roll; a quorum was present to conduct official City business.

3. Draft unapproved minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Council held December 18, 2019 and the Special Meeting of the City Council held December 24, 2019.

Councilman Mecca made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Souza and unanimously carried, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Council held December 18, 2019 and the Special Meeting of the City Council held December 24, 2019.

4. General Announcements

Councilwoman Goddard extended a welcome to incoming Councilmembers Johnson and Tarlow. She announce that there will be an event entitled “Native Plant Event- Learn from Experts and Order Native Plant Material” on January 22, 2020 sponsored and held by the Rye Garden Club at 7:30pm at the Rye Free Reading Room.

Councilwoman Souza announced that the Rye Youth Council was sponsoring an event for high school students or recent graduates entitled, “Practical & Tactical: Steps to Take Now for your Financial Future,” to be held Monday, January 13, 2020 at 6:30pm at the Rye Free Reading room. She also welcomed the new councilmembers.

Councilman Stacks thanked outgoing Councilmembers Hurd and Tagger-Epstein for their service. He also welcomed Councilmembers Johnson and Tarlow.

Councilwoman Johnson thanked the community and Council. She said she looked forward to serving her community and working with the Council. She said that thanks to the funding from the City, the Rye Free Reading Room hours have been extended to 8:00 pm Monday through Thursday.

Mayor Cohn welcomed the new councilmembers.

5. Residents may be heard on matters for Council consideration that do not appear on the Agenda.

Mayor Cohn reminded everyone that due to popular demand, the Council has installed a clock and asked the public to observe a three minute time limit in their remarks.

George Szczerba, 16 Adelaide Street, addressed the Council. Mr. Szczerba identified himself as a form member of the Boat Basin Commission. He said he had been watching to the meetings and talking to people and that he observed that while the City Council approved the purchase of a hydraulic trailer, the purchase had not been completed. He was concerned as there is need for revenue this spring and the need for dredging. Mayor Cohn recommended that Mr. Szczerba follow up with the City Manager on the issue.

Mack Cunningham, Rye resident, addressed the Council. He reported that since the last City Council meeting, this community has sadly lost longtime resident Bill Ball, son of a police sergeant, and grandson of a fire chief. Mr. Ball served this community for 60 years and was a WWII Veteran. He served on the City Council for two terms, was on the Rye Town Park Commission for 18 years, served on the Rye Golf Commission for 12 years, was a part of the Rye Lions over 40 years, served on the hook and ladder team and was a chief for the Fire Department, and was a delegate for the Rye Republican Party. Mr. Cunningham remarked that he did not think that Mr. Ball’s service would ever be duplicated. Mr. Cunningham said that two highlights that stuck out were that 1) he was on the Council when Ed Grainger was the mayor, fighting and winning the effort against the construction of the Oyster Bay Bridge; and 2) Mr. Ball and the Council decided to purchase the Rye Golf Club for \$1.2 million. Mr. Cunningham said that this was a huge value added to the community and property values as a recreational asset. Mr. Cunningham recalled a time when he took the opportunity to honor Mr. Ball with a portrait of the Rye Golf Club, which was one of his most satisfying moments. He lastly said that it was important to recognize the legacy of Mr. Ball’s family, as his son, Andy Ball, also serves on the Planning Commission.

Paula Fung, 84 Elmwood Avenue, welcomed the two new councilmembers. She said it was a huge responsibility and on behalf of the Friends of Nursery Field, she thanked them for their

service. She spoke briefly against the building of synthetic turf. She encouraged the Council to read up about the issue. She said that the neighborhood and community feels passionate about the subject. She asked the Council for two favors: 1) to drive by Nursery Field and take a moment and look and see the houses that surround it; and 2) when people take kids to sports this week, ask them to not recycle or use reusable bottles. While small efforts may not seem like a big deal, she said most of us do these small measures to protect the environment and think it is the right thing to do.

6. Resolution Against Bigotry and Hatred.

Mayor Cohn said that he has not as mayor been a big resolution person because there is so much real work for the Council to do. However, he said that he was contacted a week or so ago by a councilwoman in Harrison who was working on a resolution there in response to an attack in the orthodox Jewish community in Rockland County. Her goal was have other towns pass a resolution to have a showing of solidarity across the county. We as the council have put together a short resolution. The following resolution is particularly focused on antisemitism.

Mayor Cohn made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Souza and unanimously carried, to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLVED, We, the City Council of the City of Rye, NY stand in solidarity with the people of Monsey, New York in rejecting all forms of bigotry, hatred, anti-Semitism and discrimination of any kind. We are appalled by the anti-Semitic attack on our neighbors and are resolved that hate will have no home in our community.

Our nation was founded on the principle of religious freedom and the right of all people to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We will do our part, and urge Rye residents to do theirs, to ensure that all people are free to practice their faith and pursue the American dream in peace. This will be the achieved only if we all resolve to respect and support one another, and to teach our children to do the same.

Councilman Mecca remarked that on January 6, 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt said the following, “In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression – everywhere in the world. The second is freedoms of every person to worship God in his own way – everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want...everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear...anywhere in the world. That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation.”

Councilman Mecca said that we can continue to fight and hope for these four freedoms.

7. Resolution to amend the 2020 Adopted Fees and Charges for the Boat Basin to increase fees for slips.

George Hogben, Boat Basin Supervisor, and Joe Pecora, Boat Basin Commission member, addressed the Council. They said that an increase in fees for slips had not occurred in over three years. The thought at first was to not have an increase, but as the dredging cost increases, it is important that the Boat Basin generate revenue to offset the rise in cost. The average increase would be approximately \$150 per vessel. An additional \$36,000 would be raised in total.

Mayor Cohn asked what effect, if any, the Commission feels this might have on keeping boats or attracting others. Mr. Pecora responded that they expect the normal turnover. They felt that they could most likely fill the spots. If there is a showing of dredging/ improvements, it can be helpful and defend the raise.

Councilman Stacks asked how they compared with the other basins in the area.

Mr. Pecora responded that it was hard to compare with other basins with regard to size, location, etc., but that New Rochelle would be the closest in comparison. For residents, the City of Rye is still offering less than what New Rochelle charges. For nonresidents, the City of Rye charges slightly more.

Councilwoman Goddard asked if the Boat Basin was at capacity.

Supervisor Hogben responded that they have some open spots.

Councilwoman Goddard clarified that the \$36,000 projection in the aggregate is based on the current capacity. Mr. Pecora and Mr. Hogben agreed.

Councilman Mecca made a motion, seconded by Councilman Stacks, to amend the 2020 Adopted Fees and Charges for the Boat Basin to increase fees for slips.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Mayor Cohn, Councilmembers Goddard, Johnson, Mecca, Souza, Stacks

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Councilwoman Tarlow

8. Presentation by Rye Sustainability regarding Fireman's Circle plantings and resolution authorizing transfer of \$3,800 from the Tree Fund to DPW so Rye Sustainability can execute the Fireman's Circle plantings.

Melissa Grieco, Rye Sustainability Committee, briefly discussed the Rye Healthy Yard program, which seeks to raise awareness in the community about practices such as mulching, composting, introducing native plants, and other important measures. The program is also encouraging creating a pollinator pathway. She said there were 27 communities within New York and Connecticut to participate in this effort. Residents and organizations pledge to keep healthy yards and maintain native plants. Ms. Grieco thanked the City's Building Department and Westchester Land Trust to procure a map that she displayed for the public showcasing the initiative

and how it has spread in the community. She said that members of the community felt that the newly renovated Fireman's Circle was a beautiful space that could be the perfect centerpiece for a Rye pollinator pathway. She said that collectively, a group of people have come together to facilitate things and try to make this happen. Currently, there is a balance of \$3,800 in the City's tree fund. There are going to be four trees proposed for the landscaping, which would cost \$3,600. She requested that the City approve that funding for the proposed trees.

Liz Garrett, landscape designer, presented to the Council. She thanked Melissa Grieco, Sue Drouin, Cathy Barnard and everyone who came to talk about this talked about designing a pollinator pathway at the Fireman's Circle. She said that everyone understands that the circle is a memorial. It demands respect. She said that the group certainly welcomed any feedback. She said that people need to access the space who use it as a memorial. That said, it has an opportunity to add value and sustenance. She said that members of the community want a space that is lush but also clean and tidy. Trees speak to that. Ms. Garrett then showed a slideshow presentation with a plan for the space. She discussed the proposed tree plantings.

There was discussion over the canopy of the trees and ensuring that there is no obstructing traffic. Councilman Stacks recommended deferring to the issue to the Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Committee on this issue.

Ms. Garrett discussed the pollinator garden considerations, tree species, growing season, and other factors. She also discussed type of trees in detail, such as flowering dogwood.

Councilman Stacks asked about irrigation at the circle. Ms. Garrett said that DPW has had annuals in those beds and a watering truck would be used. The proposed plantings would have relatively low care as long as they are well established.

Ms. Garrett's presentation showed photos of the recommended species and plantings.

Ms. Garrett then discussed pricing for the plantings, with the entire cost being around \$7,000. The trees each would be about \$3,650. She said the group hoped that DPW could deliver the materials. Ms. Garrett briefly discussed the acidity level of the soil, but any issue had been remediated. She said that in the future, the group was hoping to do plantings of low shrubs in the right-of-way bordering the circle. That was also indicated in the budget.

Mayor Cohn asked if DPW can keep track of the different demands of the plantings. Ms. Garrett said that she spoke with DPW staff; she said that their experience of the gazebo is indicative of the good work of DPW to maintain the plantings.

Councilwoman Goddard added that the garden club has been very helpful in lending expertise in the care of the plantings.

Councilman Mecca asked if Ms. Garrett and the group had presented this to the fire department who feels that this circle is something of a sacred ground to them. Ms. Garrett responded that she had not spoken to any of the people in the fire department.

Councilman Mecca said that the statue of the lady is maintained by the fire department. There is also a time capsule in the circle. Every year on September 11, the fire department puts out 343 flags for those fireman who lost their lives in 9/11. He also said that every Memorial Day, they lay out wreaths and have a memorial. He said that while it is City property, it is the respectful thing to do.

There was general discussion about the group presenting to the fire department. Ms. Garrett said that in terms of timing, it would be advantageous to tag the trees in late March or early April.

Councilman Mecca made arrangements for Ms. Garrett and Ms. Grieco to attend the upcoming Board of Wardens meeting to present their proposal.

Mayor Cohn commented that with respect to deer resistance of the plantings, he had a backyard consumed by deer. The one concern would be creating this beautiful garden and it being destroyed by the deer. Mayor Cohn complimented Ms. Garrett on her thoughtful job planning the proposed plant selection, and asked if it could include as much deer-resistant plants as possible. Ms. Garrett responded that she could accommodate that request.

Councilwoman Goddard thanked Ms. Garrett. She said that Ms. Garrett had been the former co-chair of the Rye Healthy Yard program and volunteered her expertise that way. Councilwoman Goddard said it was very clear that Ms. Garrett and the group have spent countless hours on this. She thanked everyone who has worked on this.

This item was adjourned to next meeting.

9. Appointment of the 2020 Deputy Mayor by the Mayor.

Mayor Cohn appointed Councilman Mecca as Deputy Mayor for the 2020 calendar year. He read a statement about Councilman Mecca and his longtime service to the City and the Council.

10. Designation of the City Council's Audit Committee by the Mayor.

Councilman Mecca made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Goddard, to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that Councilmembers Souza and Stacks be appointed to the City Council's Audit Committee for a one-year term commencing December 31, 2020.

11. Designation of the City Council Liaisons by the Mayor.

Mayor Cohn designated the following Council members as Liaisons to the following:

Board of Appeals – Councilwoman Tarlow
Board of Architectural Review – Councilwoman Goddard
Boat Basin – Councilwoman Tarlow

Human Rights Commission – Councilwoman Souza
Conservation Commission Advisory Council - Councilwoman Goddard
Emergency Medical Services – Councilwoman Johnson
Finance Committee – Councilman Stacks
Flood Advisory Committee – Councilwoman Johnson
Landmarks Advisory Committee – Councilman Stacks
Planning Commission - Councilman Mecca
Recreation Commission – Councilwoman Souza
Cable and Communications Committee – Councilwoman Johnson
Chamber of Commerce – Councilwoman Souza
Rye City School District – Councilwoman Souza and Mayor Cohn
Rye Free Reading Room – Councilwoman Tarlow
Rye Golf Club – Councilman Stacks
Rye Playland Advisory Committee – Councilman Stacks
Rye Senior Advocacy Committee- Mayor Cohn
Rye Town Park Commission – Mayor Cohn and Commissioner Hurd
Sustainability Committee – Councilwoman Goddard
Traffic and Pedestrian Safety – Mayor Cohn, Councilman Stacks
Master Plan Task Force – Held for a later date

12. Designation of the official City newspaper.

Mayor Cohn made a motion, unanimously carried, to designate the Journal News as the official City newspaper for the purpose of publishing legal notices.

13. Designation of the amounts of faithful performance bonds:

By way of background, Section § C23-3, “Surety bonds” of the City Charter stipulates that “The City Comptroller, City Clerk, City Judge, Acting City Judge, City Marshal and such other officers and employees as may be specified by the Council shall give bond for the faithful performance of their duties. The bond shall be in such sum and with such corporate sureties as may be approved by the Council. The premium of all such surety bonds shall be paid by the city.”

Councilwoman Mecca made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Johnson and unanimously carried, to designate faithful performance bonds for the City Comptroller, City Clerk and City Marshall in the following amounts:

A. City Comptroller	\$ 1,000,000
B. City Clerk	\$ 500,000
C. City Marshall	\$ 100,000

ROLL CALL

AYES: Mayor Cohn, Councilmembers Goddard, Johnson, Mecca, Souza, Stacks
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Councilwoman Tarlow

14. Appointments to Boards and Commissions, by the Mayor with Council approval.

Mayor Cohn made the following appointments and reappointments to the Boards, Commissions and Committees, which the Council approved:

Board of Appeals

Susan Brown, reappointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2022
Alan Weiner, reappointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2022
(Alan Weil to remain as chair)

Board of Architectural Review

Louis Rollano, appointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2022
Jim Cornacchia, retroactively reappointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2021
Frank Gadaleta, retroactively reappointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2021
Kathy Grainger-Hobbins, reappointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2022
Nancy Patota, reappointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2022
Michael Harrington, retroactively reappointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2020

Conservation Commission/ Advisory Council

Lori Fontanes, reappointed for a two-year term to expire December 31, 2021
Melissa Grieco, reappointed for a two-year term to expire December 31, 2021
James Custer, reappointed for a two-year term to expire December 31, 2021
Ryan Prime, appointed for a one-year term to expire December 31, 2020
Alexis Devane Tomaino, appointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2022
Julie Canter, appointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2022
James Dalton Murphy, appointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2022
(Tracy Stora to remain chair)

Board of Ethics

Elizabeth Griffin Matthews, reappointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2022

Rye Playland Advisory Committee

William Meyers, reappointed for a two-year term to expire December 31, 2021
John Fray, reappointed for a one-year term to expire December 31, 2020
Lucinda McKinnon, reappointed for a one-year term to expire December 31, 2020
Mike Visci, reappointed for a two-year term to expire December 31, 2021
Carolyn Cameron, appointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2022
Sabrina Bunn, appointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2022
Kimberly Higgins, appointed for a two-year term to expire December 31, 2021
John Egan, appointed for a three-year term to expire December 31, 2022
(Chair is William Meyers)

Rye Town Park Commission

Emily Hurd and Mayor Cohn, reappointed for a two-year term to expire December 31, 2021

Sustainability Committee
James Ward, appointed
(Melissa Grieco, chair)

15. Old Business/New Business.

There was nothing discussed under this agenda item.

16. Adjournment.

There being no further business to discuss, Councilman Mecca made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Souza and unanimously carried, to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn D'Andrea
City Clerk