

City of Morgantown
430 Spruce Street, Morgantown, WV 26505

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
October 3, 2023

Regular Meeting: October 3, 2023: The regular meeting of the Common Council of the City of Morgantown was held in the Monongalia County Commission Chambers on Wednesday, October 3, 2023, at 7:13 pm.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Selin.

Present: City Manager Kim Haws, City Clerk Christine Wade, City Attorney Ryan Simonton, Mayor Jenny Selin, Deputy Mayor Joe Abu-Ghannam and Council Members: Louise Michael, Danielle Trumble, Dave Harshbarger and Brian Butcher. Bill Kawecki was present via Zoom. Assistant City Manager Emily Muzzarelli was absent.

Approval of Minutes: September 19, 2023, Special Meeting minutes; September 19, 2023, Regular Meeting minutes; September 26, 2023, Special Meeting minutes; September 26, 2023, Committee of the Whole Meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Correspondence:

Fire Prevention Month – Deputy Fire Marshal Andrew Dotson provided an overview of Fire Prevention education and efforts he provides to our community.

Deputy Mayor Abu-Ghannam presented a proclamation, proclaiming October 14, 2023, as Arbor Day in the City of Morgantown.

Mayor Selin presented a proclamation to Human Rights Commission Chair Annie Cronan Yorick, proclaiming October 9, 2023, as Indigenous Peoples Day in the City of Morgantown.

Councilor Butcher presented a proclamation to Ash Orr, proclaiming November 2023, as Transgender Awareness Month in the City of Morgantown.

Councilor Harshbarger presented a proclamation to City Clerk Christine Wade, proclaiming October 16-20, 2023, as Municipal Government Week in the City of Morgantown.

Councilor Michael presented a proclamation to Hannah Richards, proclaiming October 2023, as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in the City of Morgantown.

Councilor Trumble presented a proclamation, proclaiming October 2023, as Community Planning Month in the City of Morgantown.

Public Hearing: None

Unfinished Business: None

Boards & Commissions:

Motion by Councilor Kawecki, second by Councilor Trumble, to appoint, by consensus, Cindy O'Brien, to the Ward Boundary Commission for a 2-year term: 7/1/2023 – 6/30/2025.

Motion by Councilor Butcher, second by Deputy Mayor Abu-Ghannam, to appoint, by consensus, Katie See, to the Planning Commission as the 7th Ward Representative for a 2-year term: 1/1/2022 – 12/31/2024.

Motion by Councilor Harshbarger, second by Deputy Mayor Abu-Ghannam, to appoint, by consensus, Jordan Hyde, to the Health & Wellness Commission for a 3-year term: 1/1/2023 – 12/31/2025.

Motion by Councilor Michael, second by Councilor Trumble, to appoint, by consensus, Mason Arbogast, to the Health & Wellness Commission for a 3-year term: 1/1/2023 – 12/31/2025.

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Public Portion:

Mayor Selin declared the Public Portion open.

Mary Ann Fouls, 828 Bloody Run Road, is requesting more topics to be placed on the website. She thanked the city for posting the Comprehensive Plan on the website and asked if an Action Plan from the Comprehensive Plan can be listed as well. She also asked if the city could provide updates as updates occur. She spoke about safety and asked for updates on crime, litter, and the Sobering Center use.

Annie Cronan Yorick spoke regarding the MEI Report.

There being no other individuals who spoke, Mayor Selin declared the public portion closed.

Special Committee Reports: None

Consent Agenda:

New Business:

An Ordinance Amending Article 1301: The below-entitled Ordinance was presented for first reading.

An Ordinance Amending Article 1301 of the Morgantown Planning and Zoning Code pertaining to the Comprehensive Plan for the Physical Development of the City of Morgantown; to Delete References to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan; and, to Adopt the 2023 Comprehensive Plan (Morgantown 2033)

City Attorney Ryan Simonton explained. After discussion, motion by Councilor Kawecki, second by Councilor Butcher, to amend the Environment Element Chapter (page 116) with the following additions: 1. E-3.3C Collaborate with the City Tree Board and other stakeholders to evaluate and establish a tree canopy cover goal for the City of Morgantown and plan for implementation; and 2. E-3.7 Collaborate with stakeholders to address the policy issues, goals and implementation strategies set forth in the Climate Action Plan prepared by the City's Green Team and adopted by Council Resolution on December 6, 2022. Motion carried 7-0.

Mayor Selin explained the amendment requested. After further discussion, there was a motion by Councilor Trumble, second by Councilor Harshbarger to approve the original Ordinance. Motion carried 7-0.

After further discussion, motion by Councilor Trumble, second by Councilor Butcher, to amend ED-1.1. Reference was added to "Morgantown Municipal Airport:" 1. The Richwood Neighborhood area is added as Focus Area #6. Motion carried 7-0.

Amend the Police Civil Service Commission Rules & Regulations: The Police Civil Service Commission Rules & Regulations was presented for approval.

City Attorney Ryan Simonton explained. After discussion, there was a motion by Councilor Harshbarger, second by Deputy Mayor Abu-Ghannam to approve the above-entitled Ordinance to second reading. Motion carried 7-0.

Hazel Ruby McQuain Park Capital Construction Project: The HRMP Capital Construction Project was presented for approval.

City Manager Kim Haws explained. After discussion, there was a motion by Councilor Harshbarger, second by Deputy Mayor Abu-Ghannam, to approve the above Capital Construction Project at the Hazel Ruby McQuain Park. Motion carried 7-0.

City Manager's Report: shared that there are pockets of areas within the city organization that are just in difficult way, it's been proven very difficult to hire new staff in the areas of the PD, the airport, and several others. Staff have been very busy interviewing individuals both internally and externally, and they hope to make hiring decisions within the next couple of weeks for several of those key positions. Regarding the Richwood project, he has a meeting with Mr. Rogerson in the morning. He shared that they needed to make sure that council was brought up to speed on what's going on before they vote. They are creating a presentation where folks can visualize what they're talking about in terms of height and parameters. He and Mr. Rogerson want to make sure to bring those concepts in for city council for their input. City Manager Haws shared that he had a meeting with Public Works. He expressed his appreciation to all staff, stating that we have exceptional employees who try hard, and they're committed.

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Report from City Clerk: shared with Council that the Fire Civil Service Commission Open House was a success this past weekend with more than 20 folks attending. More information about the Entry Level Firefighter agility can be found on the city's website at www.morgantownwv.gov. Tomorrow night, the Police Civil Service Commission will be holding promotional exams for one First Sergeant and two Sergeants. On October 28, the Police Civil Service Commission will be holding entry level police officer exams (written and agility) at 9am.

Report from City Attorney: thanked council members and their consultants for discussing the comprehensive plan and changes proposed. They will work with them as well as Development Services to reflect those changes in the plan, and the appendix documents provide notification to the planning commission, and then move through councils second reading and adoption of the comprehensive plan so that you can then move forward to the zoning ordinance enactment part implementing those provisions. And likewise on the Police Civil Service Commission rules, we can follow up with council members individually on questions asked and work with staff as well to communicate those requests and questions to the Civil Service Commissioners who are also involved with directly as needed and see if there are some additional changes that we can get back to council.

Report from Council Members:

Councilor Kawecki: thanked those who were involved with the comprehensive plan who really took it to heart and contributed, and the Green Team was one of the groups who contributed, and he is appreciative for what they offered. The Richwood Project has been in process for close to four years, and he would really like to hear a little more input as to what the vision is for that area. In other words, what can they expect with zoning changes and how can they implement it? He looks forward to some creative thinking and would like to see what they are advocating for. These structures are going to be around for half a century or more, so it's a commitment, and they want to make sure they make the right move. He complimented the attorney for his work on the Police Civil Service Commission Rules and Regulations document. When he asked him how and who contributed to the changes that they saw with this document, Attorney Simonton was very detailed, and he touched on all the bases. It was a collaboration, was well thought out, and he does appreciate the explanation.

Councilor Butcher: thanked the staff for putting together the comprehensive plan, noting that it is a big task, and he is glad that they could do it so thoughtfully. He shared that they had a Suncrest neighborhood association meeting, and it was well attended. He thanked Matt Cross for leading that meeting, and Beth Ann for leading that meeting. There was good conversation amongst the neighbors about Suncrest primary school and what they would like to see done with that space once the Board of Education tears it down. Someone had a great idea of an outdoor Montessori during the summertime. He stated that it was neat to hear a lot of the people's very innovative ideas. One of the community members stopped by and asked one of the construction workers when the school was going to be torn down and they said October 13th. Councilor Butcher stated that people had talked about saving bricks and plaques, and maybe sell some of the bricks or just build a sign for Suncrest out of them. Some of the people expressed that they would like to see some of the older nicer trees saved. He shared that he attended the Human Rights Commission meeting, and they had some concerns as a commission about the DEI report since Council was to receive the report before the September Committee of the Whole and it has not yet been received.

Councilor Harshbarger: shared that he attended the Greenmont neighborhood association meeting, and they have a cool mockup of what their entrance sign is going to look like. There was a ribbon cutting for the Collins Ferry Connector and it is officially open. He is excited to have that section of the trail officially open. The Century Ride is happening for rail trail fundraising from October 14 through the 22nd. If you go to Montrails.org you can get there and see how to donate. There are about 12 different people who will be raising funds that you can donate to for covering the entire distance of the rail trail in one day during that window of time. There is a MUB meeting next week on Tuesday if the Council has any items they would like him to bring to the meeting. As an update, the Westover long term plan for incorporating that sewer system into the MUB system, their long-term plan must be approved by the DEP. That is a requirement placed on by MUB on the city of Westover.

Councilor Trumble: shared that on October 11, 2023, at 5:30 pm the Morgantown Police Department is hosting a Women in Policing Open House and inviting any females interested in potentially joining the police force or learning more about policing in general to the training center, the old Defense in Depth. On Saturday, October 7, 2023, there will be the annual Morgantown Zombie Crawl at 6:30 pm on High Street. The evening of October 13 will be the Arts Walk and the afternoon of Saturday, October 14 will be Hops on the Mon which is also a Main Street event. The cold weather shelter has made no progress. They had another meeting, and there is still no organization or area that is intending to host a cold weather shelter. They have been working at H3 with Bartlett House, and their intention is to do everything within their power. She has a meeting with the Assistant City Manager and the Director of Bartlett House next week to discuss. Bartlett House intends to increase the capacity in their Triage Shelter by about 50% for the winter. So, their normal 28-bed facility they're looking at increasing to at least 40 beds. So that'll cover a portion of folks and they are still putting out some feelers for other spaces. She thanked the city for replacing the lights on the Walnut Street Bridge. She had been working with the folks in Greenmont for many months trying to make that happen, noting that it is a well-traveled bridge, especially at night. She also thanked

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Public Works and Director Davis for quickly taking care of the dumpster that was in the middle of Brockway Avenue. She stated that it was a Republic issue and that they didn't secure it when they were done emptying it, so it rolled out into the street. There are plans to try to work with the property owner and with Republic to make sure that the dumpster is properly secured in the future. She also stated that parts of the Woodburn neighborhood, most of Harrison Street, a lot of lower Charles Avenue, and parts of Ridgeway, for the last two weeks have been missing their trash pickup. Parts of Woodburn had the recycling picked up, but the trash was not. Parts of Greenmont have gone several weeks without their recycling being picked up.

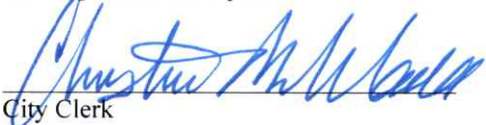
Councilor Michael: reminded folks about the October 11, 2023, Women in Policing Open House event.

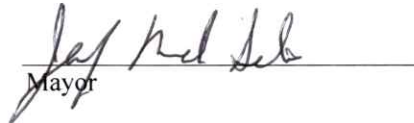
Deputy Mayor Abu-Ghannam: shared that they had a neighborhood meeting this past Monday. He thanked City Manager Haws for helping again as they are looking forward to shutting down Madigan Avenue this upcoming Halloween. This always makes trick or treating safer and easier for walkers, for those pushing strollers, and as well as those that are in wheelchairs because they have more access to going from house to house. With Municipal Government Week around the corner, he is excited to say that has students that have volunteered to sit as the city council in a meeting. They are going to start creating their own ordinances this week to vote on at the mock council meeting. On a personal note, on October 14, 2023, at 1 pm at Morgantown High's cafeteria the wrestling team is hosting a Bingo Day to raise funds for the upcoming season. The installation of new padded walls, as well as adding a second weigh-in/changing area for the girls' team, because what a lot of people don't know is that the state has finally officially recognized girls wrestling. So now they're getting a chance to have a platform to showcase all their hard work and talents. He stated that he is really excited for the upcoming season. And the good news is with Hops on the Mon being from 3 pm to 7 pm, and bingo being from 1 pm to 3 pm there is no crisscross, and folks can go straight from the high school all the way to the Mon, so that's a win for everybody.

Mayor Selin: shared information about a movie that will be showing tomorrow evening in the Black Theater in the Mountainlair at 7:30pm. The movie is called Impossible Town. It is a West Virginia story, and it's part of a set of premieres of this movie. People can look online for a clip of the movie. She shared that it looks like an absorbing movie. She shared the passing of George Longenecker who was a Professor of Landscape Architecture, and the founder of the West Virginia Botanic Garden before it was called the West Virginia Botanic Garden. She shared that when she first came to town there was a food Co-op at the Episcopal Church and this is where she met George Longenecker. He was there dividing up food for his family. Mr. Longenecker also happened to be from Madison, Wisconsin. She shared that she saw his name in the Arboretum, his dad has a section of the arboretum named after him. There was a point when he needed the first bit of insurance for the Botanic Garden, and he had a table at the Marilla Center where he was trying to collect the last bit of money that he needed. Mayor Selin asked him how much he needed, and it was some odd figure under \$40, and that was a kind of donation at that point that she could make, so she has always felt very connected to him. He is a person who has put in the time for his community by starting the Botanic Garden, has pruning workshops, and just so many different things that he's done over time that have added tremendously to our community. She does like the idea as they're passing the comprehensive plan of making it into an action plan as they move forward with more specific things, targets, and doing it in a way where they're putting it together with a group. She really appreciates all the work that went into the comprehensive plan.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, motion by Deputy Mayor Abu-Ghannam, second by Councilor Michael to adjourn the meeting. Time: 9:14 p.m.


City Clerk


Mayor