

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
CITY COUNCIL  
PUBLIC SPEAKING SESSION  
MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2015  
6:30 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council President McCarthy called the Public Speaking Session to order at 6:45 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

City Clerk Hudson called the roll.

The following members were present:

130<sup>th</sup> District: Susan Brannelly, Enrique Torres  
131<sup>st</sup> District: Jack O. Banta, Denese Taylor-Moye  
132<sup>nd</sup> District: Robert Halstead, Patricia Swain  
133<sup>rd</sup> District: Thomas McCarthy  
134<sup>th</sup> District: AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Michelle Lyons  
135<sup>th</sup> District: Richard Salter  
136<sup>th</sup> District: Josè Casco, Alfredo Castillo  
137<sup>th</sup> District: Milta Feliciano, Lydia Martinez  
138<sup>th</sup> District: Melanie Jackson  
139<sup>th</sup> District: James Holloway

A quorum was present.

**THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2015 AT 6:30 P.M., IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, BRIDGEPORT, CT.**

**NAME**

**SUBJECT**

**Beth Lazar**

1241 Main Street, Apt. 728  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Say no to corporate welfare, say no to extending Seaview Avenue and save the the woods.

Ms. Lazar came forward to address the Council with seven other people holding signs about saving Remington Woods.

*Council Member Brannelly joined the meeting at 6:46 p.m.*

Ms. Lazar said that the City should say no to corporate welfare and the extension of Seaview Avenue. The Seaview Avenue extension would go through the Remington Woods, which was owned by DuPont. The City would have to maintain the road and this would be corporate

welfare at the taxpayer's expense. She listed several things that would have to be done in terms of creating the Seaview Avenue Extension including sewer, water and electrical lines. Ms. Lazar said that she opposed the development of Remington Woods because of environmental issues. The woods are filled with a variety of wildlife that would be pushed out. Also the extension of the road would increase traffic, pollution and possibly cause flooding when it rains.

**John Marshall Lee**  
30 Beacon Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06605

City Council, financial reviews?

Mr. Lee came forward and read the following statement into the record:

Members of the City Council, I want to thank you for helping me form one of the most important decisions of my life, the pursuit of a City Council seat in the 2015 election. You see I am a serious reader and also a close listener. Using those talents and a good amount of time during the past five years I have studied Bridgeport issues on paper through financial reports and the external audit. I have spoken in public, written letters to the CT Post and blog with others interested in Bridgeport affairs almost daily.

In recent years I have addressed the Council at these sessions and attended a good number of sub-committee meetings. My three major priorities for Bridgeport governance have been to encourage OPEN, ACCOUNTABLE and TRANSPARENT process to benefit the City as a whole. Previously, I have stated that many of you handle constituent issues and problems very well, but how does the Council perform on matters facing the entire City?

Regarding OPEN, ACCOUNTABLE and TRANSPARENT:

- Why has there been no response from one or more of current Council members who were part of the group of 15 in 2013 who illegally appropriated about \$30,000 of taxpayer funds to make gifts to local charities and took personal credit for the gifts in a primary and election year? No meeting agenda, minutes or record of a vote as you listened to your President lead you on this path? Charitable gifts to good charities are yours to make with your own funds, not other people's money. It's a bad precedent for the City to let stand!!
- The City Charter calls for a meeting each year for the Capital budget, a meeting that is not held. Chapter 9, Section 6c says that ***"the city council shall solicit suggestions, comments and recommendations from city officials and the members of the public regarding the proposed capital budget and shall conduct at least one public hearing."*** Why do you fail in this duty? Why do you pass a \$40 Million capital budget with more than 30 requests on one piece of paper without addressing the plans and funding before the public? Does the public feel that it is participating as intended?
- Students in school? Do you know that in the budget fiscal year most recently audited (2013-14), our municipal contribution, that is the amount from local taxpayers in contrast to Federal and State funds for Public Education was \$56, 872,000, which when spread

among 21,008 youth comes to \$2750 per student? By contrast did you know that New Haven and Hartford local taxpayers provide over \$4500 per each student in their city? Why is this contrast not publicly revealed here in the City? Are Council members supporting public education? If so, why is this gap present? Can City budget efficiencies find necessary money for the BOE?

- And as I shared two weeks ago, there are 13 City Departments that show a line item 06 that covers **Other Financing Uses**. Can anyone explain how this number has ‘silently’ increased over three years from \$66,862,919 to over \$79 Million?

Where and when does your Council dig into numbers brought to you by the City Departments? Why aren’t more reports provided to the public on the City site? Where is the necessary staffing to assist you as in other municipalities? The funding is present in your budget. What holds you back from using it and becoming much better?

I have more questions you know. But I have decided to seek the answers by running for office and winning a seat on the other side of this rail. If I am successful I will have more than five minutes twice per month to make a request and find answers. I have been a Watchdog and shall continue to be vigilant, perhaps barking occasionally, and rarely growling, on behalf of all the people. I can think of no higher calling for a taxpayer citizen than as one person with one voice and two ears, to encourage “best practices” in the City of Bridgeport. What will happen? Time will tell.

**Tania Mayen**  
59 Rennell Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Activities for kids this summer including  
“Park City Movie Nights”.

Ms. Mayen came forward and spoke about the various summer youth programs and activities that would be available during the summer months.

**Rev. Velma Lovelace**  
1186 Noble Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT

Thank you, Mayor Finch, for the  
park improvements.

Rev. Lovelace came forward to say thank you to the Mayor and said she appreciates what he had done in Bridgeport. She said that she was very excited about what was being done with the parks, particularly Pleasure Beach which is now open after so many years. Rev. Lovelace also was appreciative of the fact that the Mayor is putting more police officers on the street, particularly after the tragic shooting the other day.

**Ms. Elaine Ficarra**  
1070 Main Street  
Bridgeport, CT

P.T. Barnum Festival

Ms. Elaine Ficarra came forward and greeted the Council members. She said she was the director of the P.T. Barnum Festival. She said that the theme of the parade is 'Hands Across the

Water' because Bridgeport is reaching out to those who don't live in Bridgeport to come, stay and play in Bridgeport. She mentioned that the City had received grant funding from the State to help promote the Festival. There are also discount coupons for the out of town residents for the Zoo and other attractions. The Wing Ding will also include a clambake. Ms. Ficarra said that Mr. Robert Kennedy from Public Works had been chosen as the Grand Marshal for the parade.

The next name on the speaker list was Mr. David Goodman. Council President McCarthy called the name a number of times and there was no response.

**Ms. Lela Torro**  
Bridgeport CT.

Remington Woods

Ms. Torro came forward to speak about Remington Woods and said that the Woods were a precious resource. The City should not settle for corporations coming in and taking open space for development. She requested that the City Council save this precious resource.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Council President McCarthy adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2015**

**7:00 PM**

**City Council Chambers, City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace**  
**Bridgeport, Connecticut**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Finch called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m.

**PRAYER**

Mayor Finch then requested Rev. Lovelace to lead those present in prayer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Finch then requested Mr. Josè Cruz, a military academy student who was being mentored by Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia, to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

City Clerk Hudson called the roll.

The following members were present:

130<sup>th</sup> District: Susan Brannelly, Enrique Torres  
131<sup>st</sup> District: Jack O. Banta, Denese Taylor-Moye  
132<sup>nd</sup> District: Robert Halstead, Patricia Swain  
133<sup>rd</sup> District: Thomas McCarthy  
134<sup>th</sup> District: AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Michelle Lyons  
135<sup>th</sup> District: Rev. Mary McBride-Lee, Richard Salter  
136<sup>th</sup> District: Josè Casco, Alfredo Castillo  
137<sup>th</sup> District: Milta Feliciano, Lydia Martinez  
138<sup>th</sup> District: Michael Marella, Melanie Jackson  
139<sup>th</sup> District: Eneida Martinez, James Holloway

A quorum was present. Council President McCarthy announced that Council Member Austin was celebrating his 47th wedding anniversary with his family and could not be present.

Council Member McBride requested a moment of silence for Savonnie McNeil and the other victims of the recent Trumbull Gardens shooting.

Council President McCarthy requested a moment of silence in memory of Virginia Keeley, a Democratic Town Council Member and also in memory of Lorraine Laske, Atty. Art Laske's mother. All those present stood in silence for a moment to remember the various people named.

**ITEMS FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION:**

**104-14 Communication from CAO re: Proposed Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Grant Offer for Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Project No. 3-09-0002-031-2015 at I.I. Sikorsky Memorial Airport in Stratford FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.**

City Attorney Anastasi commented that this item would require a 2/3rd majority to pass.

Ms. Teri Brown, Assistant CAO and Mr. Steve Ford from the Sikorsky Airport came forward to speak about the various projects that were underway at the airport. She explained that the grant funding had been received on June 1st and has to be submitted by July 10th.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED AGENDA ITEM 104-14 COMMUNICATION FROM CAO RE: PROPOSED FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) GRANT OFFER FOR AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (AIP) PROJECT NO. 3-09-0002-031-2015 AT I.I. SIKORSKY MEMORIAL AIRPORT IN STRATFORD FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:**

**Approval of City Council Minutes: May 4, 2015 and May 11, 2015 (Special Meeting)**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED THE MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2015.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER L. MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Approval of City Council Minutes: May 11, 2015.**

Council President McCarthy stated that Council Member Swain wished to amend the minutes and requested that following statement be read into the record as part of the motion to amend.

**May 11, 2015 (Special Meeting) –**

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 11, 2015 SPECIAL MEETING.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO AMEND THE MINUTES OF MAY 11, 2015 TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT THAT COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN READ INTO THE RECORD AS FOLLOWS:**

"Moving forward, the City and Council will both be well served if we had an unbiased consultant that could help us during the budget process to ask the right questions and help us to understand the answers given by the administration. Furthermore, this consultant would not need to be an additional burden to the tax payers as there is already money in the legislative budget for such a position."

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO AMEND THE MINUTES OF MAY 11, 2015 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 11, 2015 AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**RESOLUTIONS TO BE REFERRED TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, ETC.:**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO BE REFERRED TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, ETC.**

**103-14 RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY COUNCIL MEMBER(S) L. MARTINEZ AND FELICIANO RE: REQUEST TO DESIGNATE THE INTERSECTION OF PARK STREET AND BERKSHIRE AVENUE AS BEING AN "ALL-WAY-STOP" WITH APPROPRIATE SIGNAGE BEING POSTED AND STOP LINES BEING PAINTED ON THE ROADWAY SURFACE AT ALL FOUR CORNERS, REFERRED TO BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSION.**

**105-14 RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES RE: REQUEST THAT CITY COUNCIL MEMBER'S WRITTEN AND ELECTRONIC REQUESTS FOR DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION OF ANY KIND BE PROVIDED EXPEDITIOUSLY, REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):**

**\*88-14 Public Safety and Transportation Committee Report re: Application for Waiver to Extend Driveway Width Entrance Located at Globe Industries on 197 Ash Street.**

**\*100-14 Contracts Committee Report re: Agreement with Vision Government Solutions, Inc. for the Reappraisal and Revaluation of Taxable, Real and Exempt Property Located within the corporate limits of the City.**

**\*95-14 Budget and Appropriations Committee Report re: Municipal Suspense Tax Book.**

Mayor Finch then asked if there was any Council Member who would like to remove an item from the Consent Calendar. Council Member Brannelly requested that Agenda Item 100-14 be removed from the Consent Agenda. City Clerk Hudson then read the revised Consent Agenda into the record.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS AS THE CONSENT AGENDA:**

**\*88-14 PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT RE: APPLICATION FOR WAIVER TO EXTEND DRIVEWAY WIDTH ENTRANCE LOCATED AT GLOBE INDUSTRIES ON 197 ASH STREET.**

**\*95-14 BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: MUNICIPAL SUSPENSE TAX BOOK.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR PASSED WITH 18 IN FAVOR FOR 88-14 (BRANNELLY, TORRES, BANTA, TAYLOR-MOYE, HALSTEAD, SWAIN, MCCARTHY, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, SALTER, CASTILLO, L. MARTINEZ, FELICIANO, MARELLA, JACKSON AND E. MARTINEZ) AND ONE ABSTENTION (HOLLOWAY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY FOR 95-14.**

**\*100-14 Contracts Committee Report re: Agreement with Vision Government Solutions, Inc. for the Reappraisal and Revaluation of Taxable, Real and Exempt Property Located within the corporate limits of the City.**

Council Member Brannelly said that there may be a change in the tax re-evaluation because of the change to Land Evaluation.

Ms. Kelly-Lenz, the Finance Director, came forward to say that the change for land evaluation tax will include City involvement along with State and Federal involvement. If the legislation approves the land evaluation tax, the re-evaluation would be done in 2018 when all the property would be re-evaluative.

Council Member Halstead said that he was in favor of the land evaluation tax until a better method is identified.

Council President McCarthy said that the appraisal effort has to go forward and while the land evaluation process is a lengthy one. While he was in favor of the land evaluation, he felt that the best thing would be to do would be to pass the contract and have the land evaluation process move on a parallel track.

Council Member Halstead said that this was wrong.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HALSTEAD MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 100-14.  
\*\* THE MOTION FAILED DUE TO A LACK OF A SECOND.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED AGENDA ITEM 100-14 CONTRACTS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: AGREEMENT WITH VISION GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS, INC. FOR THE REAPPRAISAL AND REVALUATION OF TAXABLE, REAL AND EXEMPT PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR PASSED WITH 18 IN FAVOR (BRANNELLY, TORRES, BANTA, TAYLOR-MOYE, SWAIN, MCCARTHY, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, SALTER, CASTILLO, L. MARTINEZ, FELICIANO, MARELLA, JACKSON, E. MARTINEZ AND HOLLOWAY) AND ONE OPPOSED (HALSTEAD)**

**MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON:**

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED THE FOLLOWING MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON:**

**89-14 Public Safety and Transportation Committee Report re: Grant Submission: U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program (Project #16430).**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**33-14 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Resolution Authorizing the Disposition of certain City-Owned Properties by Auction, Sale to Abutter or by Sale to Community Based Housing Development Corporations.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED AGENDA ITEM 33-14 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSITION OF CERTAIN CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES BY AUCTION, SALE TO ABUTTER OR BY SALE TO COMMUNITY BASED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS.**

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

Council Member Holloway said that he wanted to make sure that the properties in the center of Bridgeport are not being given to non-profits that don't pay taxes. Groups like Habitat build homes that are put back on the tax rolls.

Council Member Halstead said that there was a reverter clause in the contract that returns the property to the City.

Council Member Feliciano said that there needed to be a cleaner process for this type of transaction.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 33-14 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Halstead said that he would like to take a personal privilege. He said that there had been an issue about a tax abatement. He said that this was not appropriate to have negotiations with the developers without notifying the Council Members and that there needs to be more inclusive and transparent process. The only way he found out about the meeting was when he happened to see a group of people gathered in one location.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she was involved in the effort to support those who were hurt and in pain in the neighborhood where the shooting took place. Mayor Finch commented that after Rev. Lee concluded her Sunday Services, she led a march down to Trumbull Gardens and the following day lead another march that had over 500 people participating in it. He spoke about how the State regulates the cars more than they regulate firearms. He said that in the past, there were no background checks at gun shows because there were no computers to facilitate this. However, now, our phones can do a background check. The City will be doing a gun buy-back program. While hunting guns and rifles are used for hunting, they are also used for crimes.

Council Member E. Martinez said that she would like to thank the Police Department. She recommended that a Healing Community Service be set up for Trumbull Gardens residents and others who were harmed by this. She said that the children continue to walk through the memorials on the site and they grow up believing this is something that will be part of their lives forever.

Council Member E. Martinez said that the Mayor should not have to initiate a buy-back program with private funding. Mayor Finch said that he had been in touch with the legislators about this.

Council Member L. Martinez said that there were many people who were working to help the people. She spoke about two groups that had met together to help one another when tragedy strikes. Bridgeport is a City that cares and there are many people who work hard every day to improve it.

Council Member Swain said that that she was dismayed about the issue regarding the tax abatement. Mayor Finch replied that all the Council Members should be welcomed at all meetings.

Council Member Lyons said that there was another shooting at the end of her street. She said that she was at the scene and would encourage the Governor to give the City more funding for police officers. The summer is coming and that is not a comfortable thought.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she was pleased that the City residents stood with the residents of Trumbull Gardens. Bridgeport residents stick together when things happen. The

nine people who were shot could have been shot in any part of the City. God Bless all the victims and the City.

Council President McCarthy said that Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia and Council Member Holloway were at the National League of City Elected Officials Summer Conference in Salt Lake City, UT and a moment of silence was requested at that meeting when the news about the shooting was announced.

Council President McCarthy also reminded everyone that that there is only one Council Meeting in July and one in August.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO ADJOURN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services