

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2022
City Council Chambers, City Hall
45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, CT 06604**

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Nieves called the Public Speaking session of the City Council to order at 6:31 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The City Clerk Lydia Martinez called the roll.

130th District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy
131st District: Jorge Cruz, Tyler Mack
132nd District: Marcus Brown, Rolanda Smith
133rd District: *Aikeem Boyd, Jeanette Herron*
134th District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia
135th District: Mary McBride-Lee, Rosalina Roman-Christy
136th District: *Frederick Hodges, Alfredo Castillo*
137th District: Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle
138th District: *Maria Pereira, Samia Suliman*
139th District: Ernest Newton

A quorum was present. Names shown in italics did not respond when the roll was called. It was stated that Council Members Boyd, Herron and Pereira were absent due to illness.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2022 AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604.

NAME

SUBJECT

John Marshall Lee
30 Beacon Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605

COB – Finances & Governance.

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

Slightly more than a week ago I heard a person remark, “What do you expect of the largest City in the State? With no hotel proper, no first run movie theater, and no independent bookstore.” I thought it a great

question. In recent years we had at least one of each variety. Well, shut my mouth! I was introduced to a genuine independent bookstore on Main Street in the Arcade, sometimes referenced as the second oldest shopping mall in the US.

Have you heard of KINDRED THOUGHTS. One co-owner came through local schools including East Side Middle School where one of his teachers and Latin coaches was “Letter To The Editor” writer to Post publications of renown, Peter George. Small world, isn’t it? And KINDRED THOUGHTS has organized conversations scheduled for interested readers who discover the shop and wish to participate in discussions.

When hotels or similar buildings are converted to residences intended for senior, disabled, or poor citizens as has happened along Main Street then we can assume that Federal guidelines for financial assistance such as Section 8, leaves little room for “shopping” and non-essentials. From the results achieved by the Planning and Economic Development Office it seems that their plan is becoming achieved. Little or no commercial development to draw people to town to spend funds, and offer work, other than for a meal or occasional sports or entertainment event is seen downtown.

Yet where is the further development of your ordinance initiative regarding replacement of Fair Rent and Fair Housing Board deaths? The Mayors found no one able to serve City residents for more than a dozen years with the expansion of housing? And the deaths in plain sight of these two commissions, the only ones termed FAIR, puts the lie to the work results of several mayors, doesn’t it? But you changed things, with the Ordinance Committee effort. When will those groups rise once again?

On a final note, one year ago, Channel 12 viewers were able to see Senator Blumenthal, Representative Himes, and local Council in front of the Stratfield Apartments expressing outrage over multiple issues including getting trapped in elevators. As a participant and observer on behalf of the Greater Bridgeport NAACP I want to call attention to Jorge Cruz and Tyler Mack for relentless participation in the formation of an issues-oriented Tenants Association ready to represent over 190 units at that location. Thank you for your productive work.

And a Happy Thanksgiving to all who join you to celebrate this wonderful American holiday on Thursday.

Dasha T. Spell
284 Beechwood Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Education & Community.

Ms. Spell came forward and introduced herself to the Council. She said that she wanted to follow up on her previous comments. She said that last year, Council Member Brantley passed away, and Council Member Brown endorsed Mr. Mack. She then listed other candidates that had been

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presented by the DTC and the Council District members to fill vacant Council seats. These were all appointments of the candidates that were done in a timely manner. However, there is still no appointment for the vacancy in the 139th District. Starting in January, the Council will begin work on the Capital Budget, along with many other major projects. She questioned whether the Council was delaying appointment of the Council Member to fill the vacancy until Ms. Martinez was clear of her legal issues.

Tony Barr
141 Pennsylvania Avenue, #8
Bridgeport, CT 06610

To address Council on conduct when speaking to constituents or community.

Mr. Barr came forward and introduced himself to the Council. He then asked Council Member Cruz to stand.

(Council Member Cruz left the Council chambers at this time.)

Mr. Barr said that Council Member Cruz had posted something that was disrespectful. He claimed that council Member Cruz was a racist because of the garbage that he had posted on social media. When people disrespect Mr. Barr, he will show up at their house to address the issue.

Joel Gonzalez
347 Lenox Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06605

247 Colorado Ave. in Bridgeport.

Mr. Gonzalez came forward and introduced himself to the Council. He said that right before Ganim beat Finch, he won a property in an auction. When the title search was done, it had \$850,000 in liens. He did not know about the liens but the City Attorney told him that the property was sold as is. He said that when the City takes possession of the property, there should be research done.

Jacquelyn Cauthen
397 Charles Street
Becoming D.I.V.A.S
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Becoming D.I.V.A.S Book & Poetry Club and Kindred Thoughts (Book Store).

Council President Nieves called Ms. Cauthen's name but there was no response.

Michael Michaud
264 Broad Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Bassick High School Construction.

Mr. Michaud came forward and introduced himself to the Council. He then spoke about the proposed site for the new Bassick High School. The area floods and the ground is sandy. Seaside Park floods and when there are major storms, the neighbors don't have a good exit strategy. He asked that a thorough environmental study be done.

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Mr. Michaud also spoke about his concerns with the increase in traffic. He said that the area is already busy and could not understand how the traffic will be handled. When the land was taken from the UB, it was a larger parking lot and now there will be fewer parking spaces available for students.

Victoria Majewski
378 Willow Street.
Bridgeport, CT 06610

Vacant City Council Seat in District
139.

Ms. Majewski came forward and introduced herself to the Council. She said that she had spoken at the last meeting about the vacancy in 139th District along with several others. She said that she was present with a Call to Action for the Council regarding the vacant seat in the 139th District.

She added that she would like to address an email dated November 19th that was sent to all the Council Members from Council Member Newton. The email stated that Ms. Majewski did not live in the 139th District, but owned a condo in New Haven and was married. She said that she lives with her parents on Willow Street and invited the Council Members to drop by at any time. Ms. Majewski said that she had moved to New Haven for college but moved back to her parents' home in 2020. She noted that Council Member Newton attached a screen shot that stated she was married to an Antoinette Majewski. Ms. Majewski explained that Antoinette Majewski is her mother and Ms. Majewski is not married to her own mother. She added that she was disappointed in Council Member Newton sending the email since he knows both her and her family. Ms. Majewski said that she had also spoken to Council Member Newton who had said he would put an end to this rumor.

Ms. Majewski stated that wanted people to understand that she was not the enemy, but a constituent. She is not anyone's competition, but a member of community.

She said that she was present to speak about the vacancy in the 139th District. She agreed with Ms. Spell earlier comments and reminded everyone that previous vacancies had been filled within a matter of weeks. This vacancy has existed for months. The community is concerned that the plan is to leave the vacancy open until Ms. Martinez concludes her legal matters. She said that it was not Ms. Martinez's seat, but a community seat. The DTC has no claim to the seat and the Charter does not mention the DTC in terms of nominations. The Council is supposed to be the checks and balances for the legislative branch of government. She also mentioned a potential conflict of interest.

Ms. Majewski said that the community will not back down from asking the Council to fill the vacancy. She added that she was not present to assert power, but to simply keep Ms. Martinez out of the seat. At the last meeting, Ms. Majewski said that she had submitted her resume and two letters of endorsement to the Council, one from the Working Families Party and the other from the NAACP. If the Council Members do not want Ms. Majewski to fill the vacancy, then she requested that they select someone else other than Ms. Martinez. She said that she would love to see someone from her community rise up to fill the vacancy and would support them.

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Jazmarie Melendez
316 East Pasadena Pl.
Bridgeport, CT 06610

Vacant City Council.

Ms. Melendez came forward and greeted the Council Members. She said that she wanted to address the Council regarding their responsibility. She explained that this was not the first time nor the last time that the community would be bringing up the issue of Eneida Martinez. The Council has a history of corruption and if the Council reinstates Ms. Martinez it will erode the hope that the community has that they would ever see a Council that reflects the community, which it is not right now. It is shameful that when a community comes together but the Council remains silent, the Council ignores the pain of the community rather than thinking of the restorative justice practices that would support the community that they serve.

Ms. Melendez said that in 2021, Ms. Martinez did run and it was clear that the community did not want her to represent the District. She has many political ties that benefit herself versus the community that ultimately resulted in Nyair Nixon being shot in her establishment. Those actions were harmful and cannot be repaired. She should be removed from any political position in Bridgeport. All the Council Members hold an obligation to the community rather than their friendships with Ms. Martinez. It is time to remove their interpersonal relationship with her and look at the facts that she would not be voted into the seat, there are pending legal charges that include reckless endangerment and the illegal sale of alcohol. Ms. Martinez is a constant reminder that when the community does not want someone working for them, the Council protects those in political positions over the community.

This shouldn't even be a topic that the community is discussing particularly when people know the details of what was going on in her illegal strip club. Ms. Martinez is a "Councilwoman" who uses her political ties to have the police acting as her private security at the club, which costs a lot of taxpayer dollars. This is a Councilwoman who also has a history of disrespecting grieving families. She supports the police and the prison system when it impacts others but she does not want to take responsibility for the blood that is on her hands at this moment.

Ms. Melendez promised that it might take time and work for the corruption that the Council is allowing will end and the community will insure that Ms. Martinez is off the Council. This will be one of those steps for justice for Nyair. Remember that the life that was lost cannot be fixed. If they need to hold direct action to demand a clear answer from the Council, the community can do that and it has been done in the past. It is time to hold Ms. Martinez accountable.

Eneida Martinez
819 Connecticut Avenue, #2
Bridgeport, CT 06607

Ms. Martinez came forward and greeted the Council Members. She said that in 2006 she began to engage in political activities. She has been active in her community with and without a title. Individuals have the right to come before the Council to speak and give their input as to how

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they feel. That is their right which can't be taken away. However, not knowing the knowledge or the facts of what took place at an establishment is wrong. It is not right to chastise anyone unless one knows the facts.

Council President Nieves reminded the audience to respect the speaker since everyone else had been given a chance to speak without interruption.

Ms. Martinez said that she did indeed have a pending legal case, but it was a misdemeanor for reckless endangerment in the second degree for COVID violations. Anyone with questions can go down to the Health Department to do their homework to find out whether the establishment was legally open or not.

Defamation of character is grounds for a lawsuit. Slander is grounds for a lawsuit. They don't talk about lawsuits when individuals who come to address the Council are receiving money from the City for lawsuits. Therefore, Ms. Martinez said that she would continue to represent the District with or without a title.

Ms. Martinez asked the Council Members to request Ms. Majewski give them a list of what she has fulfilled on the East End. She has not fulfilled anything since the primaries. However, Ms. Martinez took the third place as a write in candidates with 221 votes, which was more than Ms. Majewski received. Ms. Majewski does not live on Willow Street, she lives in New Haven.

Council President Nieves requested that the audience please refrain from speaking out.

Ms. Martinez stated that she would continue to do what she has to do for the City. For herself, she would not allow any community activist that came forward because she was born and raised in Bridgeport and has lived on the East End since 1986. She would not let anyone come to the Council and demand a seat that has not worked for it.

Council President Nieves repeated her request that the audience please refrain from speaking out.

Ernest Newton
190 Read Street
Bridgeport, CT 06607

Council Member Newton came forward and greeted his fellow Council Members. He said he hated to do this, but the Council Members were sitting in their seats and would endorse his partner. The Working Families Party is a party that presents candidates for public office. When Ms. Simmons won the election, she ran on the Democratic ticket, which gives the right to the Democratic party to choose whoever it wants to for the vacancies.

Council Member Newton said that Ms. Majewski claimed that he lied, but he reminded everyone that he only claimed what was written. So whatever was written in the article was a lie. He asked if the only time someone was involved was when they were in office, what would happen when

they were not longer in that office? He said that he was involved in everything that happens in the Upper and Lower East End, but hadn't seen Ms. Majewski. Does that make him a liar?

He said he didn't care what outsiders say because the Town Committee will select the person, just like they did for Council Member Smith and other candidates that have come before the Council. That's the way the process works. If people don't like the process, then they should change it. It is the Democratic structure and messing with it would mess up who is Mayor, the State Senators, and others. The Council has always honored the candidates that the Town Committee had selected.

There are some Council Members who think they are Council Members at large and oversee the whole city. That's not what the Charter says. In the Charter it says that the Council ratifies the appointment of individuals that are recommended by the Town Committee. The people that haven't read the Charter don't realize this.

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Nieves closed the Public Speaking Session at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2022

7:00 PM

City Council Chambers, City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace

Bridgeport, Connecticut

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ganim called the Regular Meeting of the City Council to order at 7:03 p.m.

PRAYER

Council Member McBride-Lee led those present in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Brown led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The City Clerk Lydia Martinez called the roll.

130th District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy
131st District: Jorge Cruz, Tyler Mack
132nd District: Marcus Brown, Rolanda Smith
133rd District: *Aikeem Boyd, Jeanette Herron*
134th District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia
135th District: Mary McBride-Lee, Rosalina Roman-Christy
136th District: *Frederick Hodges, Alfredo Castillo*
137th District: Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle
138th District: *Maria Pereira, Samia Suliman*
139th District: Ernest Newton

A quorum was present. Names in italics did not respond when called.

It was stated that Council Members Boyd, Herron and Pereira were absent due to illness.

Council Member Brown requested a moment of silence for the five lives that were lost at the Colorado Springs night club shooting.

Council Member Newton requested a moment of silence in honor of the former Council Member John Olson, who had passed away.

Those present in the Chambers then observed a moment of silence for the various individuals who had recently died.

City Council Citation: In Recognition of retired Bridgeport Police Captain Raymond Masek for 32 years of exemplary service to the City.

Retired Police Captain Masek was called forward and presented with the City Council Citation recognizing his contributions to City residents.

A Meeting of Abutters of Lafayette Street and University Avenue per Item #135-21 to be discontinued pursuant to the requirements of Section 13a-49 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, who may be heard on the matter.

Mayor Ganim opened the meeting at 7:21 p.m. He explained to those present that this was a meeting of abutters regarding the discontinuation of Lafayette and University Avenue, not a public hearing. He went on to say that there were only two abutters, the University of Bridgeport and the City of Bridgeport.

He then asked Ms. Lynn Haig, the City of Bridgeport OPED Planning Director, who was present to represent the City if she had any comments she would like to make. Ms. Haig indicated that she did not have any comments to make at that time.

Mayor Ganim then asked if there was anyone present from the University of Bridgeport. No one came forward.

Hearing none, Mayor Ganim closed the meeting of the Abutters of Lafayette Street and University Avenue per Item #135-21 to be discontinued pursuant to the requirements of Section 13a-49 of the Connecticut General Statutes at 7:22 p.m.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

Approval of City Council Minutes: October 3, 2022

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 3, 2022 CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 3, 2022 CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, BROWN, SMITH, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, CASTILLO, NIEVES, VALLE, SULIMAN AND NEWTON) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (LYONS).**

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

147-21 Communication from Central Grants re: Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) – Climate Resilience Fund (#23447), referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.

148-21 Communication from Central Grants re: Grant Submission: Department of Transportation (DOT) – Rights of Way Project – Resilient Bridgeport Rebuild by Design (RBD), referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.

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

146-21 Resolution presented by Council Member(s): Nieves, Mack, Burns and Vizzo-Paniccia re: Proposed Resolution to Establish a Charter Revision Commission, referred to Ordinance Committee.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO COMBINE BOTH THE COMMUNICATION TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES AND THE RESOLUTION TO BE REFERRED TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, ETC. FOR APPROVAL.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE COMMUNICATION TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES AND THE RESOLUTION TO BE REFERRED TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, ETC. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):

***135-21 Public Safety and Transportation Committee Report re: Resolution Authorizing the Discontinuance of a section of Lafayette Street between Atlantic Street and University Avenue and the section of University Avenue between Lafayette and Broad Street.**

Mayor Ganim asked if there was any Council Member who would like to remove this item from the Consent Calendar. No one indicated that they would like to do so. The City Clerk then read the agenda item into the record.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN MOVED THE FOLLOWING CONSENT CALENDAR:**

135-21 PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DISCONTINUANCE OF A SECTION OF LAFAYETTE STREET BETWEEN ATLANTIC STREET AND UNIVERSITY AVENUE AND THE SECTION OF UNIVERSITY AVENUE BETWEEN LAFAYETTE AND BROAD STREET.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR AS PRESENTED PASSED WITH TWELVE (12) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, BROWN, SMITH, VIZZO-PANICCIA, LYONS, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, CASTILLO, NIEVES, SULIMAN AND NEWTON) AND THREE (3) OPPOSED (CRUZ, MACK AND VALLE).**

ADJOURNMENT.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service