

Regular Meeting

These minutes are for the regular meeting of the Beacon City Council, held in the Municipal Center at One Municipal Plaza on February 3, 2020. Please note that the video recording of this meeting is available at <https://vimeo.com/389239629>

Council Members Present:

Amber Grant, At Large
George Mansfield, At Large
Terry Nelson, Ward One
Air Rhodes, Ward Two
Jodi McCredo, Ward Three
Dan Aymar-Blair, Ward Four
Lee Kyriacou, Mayor

Council Members Absent:**Also Present:**

Anthony Ruggiero, City Administrator
Nick Ward-Willis, City Attorney

Mayor Kyriacou held a moment of silence in honor of African American History Month.

First Opportunity for Public Comments: Each speaker may have one opportunity to speak up to three minutes on any subject matter.

Speakers:

Stosh Yankowski

Mr. Yankowski clarified his comments from the previous meeting. He said he tried to say that he wants to keep Beacon beautiful. He apologized for his comments.

Theresa Kraft

Ms. Kraft said that Alexander Hamilton worked on the Federalist Papers while temporarily living in Beacon. The City of Beacon should protect historic and cultural resources. The Council should focus on affordable and low-income housing. Poughkeepsie and Newburgh are focusing on building new housing units, several of which are for low-income residents. It is imperative that reports and problems are properly shared with other municipalities regarding shared water systems. Regarding water, she asked rhetorically, "How much toxicity is too much toxicity?"

Community Segment: Comprehensive Plan Discussion/Zoning History in Beacon's Fishkill Creek Development District, Central Main Street District and Linkage District

John Clarke, City of Beacon Planner

Mr. Clarke gave a presentation on the history of zoning in the Fishkill Creek Development District, the Central Main Street District and the Linkage District in Beacon. To view the entire presentation, please visit the link below: <http://agenda.cityofbeacon.org/CoverSheet.aspx?ItemID=8564&MeetingID=534>

Mr. Clarke discussed the creation of and subsequent expansion of the Fishkill Creek Development District.

He discussed the history of the Central Main Street District as it went from an historic, pedestrian oriented Main Street to an essentially isolated business district designed for vehicular access. Urban Renewal called for low level buildings along Main Street to be sandwiched between parking lots which would be abutted by high rise housing. He then discussed the transition to mixed-use zoning on Main Street. Finally, he touched on the fact that buildings such as 226 Main Street cannot be built as it appears in today's current zoning. Today's zoning is modeled after 151 Main Street thanks to recent amendments.

Mr. Clarke discussed the history of the Linkage District which was created in 2013. It is located between City Hall and the Train Station. The purpose of the zoning was designed to provide more residential uses, commercial was (for the most part) not permitted so as not to compete with Main Street. In 2014 the Linkage District was changed to eliminate peripheral parcels from the District. In 2017, after the Comprehensive Plan update, commercial development was allowed, in limited size and by special permit, primarily along Beekman Street and West Main Streets.

Public Hearings

Public Hearing to Discuss a Proposed Local Law to Amend Chapter 134 of the Code of the City of Beacon Regarding Historic Preservation

Mr. Ward-Willis introduced the Public Hearing as a continuation of a previous public hearing from January 21, 2020.

Peggy Ross

Ms. Ross asked the Council what the benefit would be for religious institutions to be part of the Historic District Landmark Overlay. She said that the Mayor feels that RD5 was too restrictive and changes would be advantageous. She asked if there were some special exemptions that the Council would consider. She posed a hypothetical question, "If the Beacon Hebrew Alliance were to sell their building one day, could they take their windows; how would an economic hardship come into play?"

George Mansfield

Mr. Mansfield said that if the Council were to provide an exemption for a religious institution, the property could not be torn down if it were ever sold.

Theresa Kraft

Ms. Kraft said that the historic district protections should stay with the building upon a sale. She said that the City should have an Historic District Preservation Landmark Commission to review changes to buildings within the HDLO, and make recommendations for additional HDLO nominees. Poughkeepsie, Kingston and Newburgh already have committees such as these. The National Register of Historic Places is a federal program, beyond the scope of Beacon's HDLO guidelines. If Beacon strengthens the HDLO, they will protect the City's cultural resources.

Harvey Kaplan

Mr. Kaplan said that he and his brother Rich Kaplan operate Max's on Main. He said that in 2017 he purchased the building that houses Max's on Main. At the time, they did not know that the building would be included in an Historic District. He would like to know if there is a process for individual building owners to become

exempt from the HDLO. He and his brother will participate with whatever the Council chooses.

The Council directed John Clarke to include site feature recommendations within the HDLO nomination forms.

- Motion to adjourn the Public Hearing to February 18, 2020 by Councilmember Grant
- Second by Councilmember McCrede
- Motion passes 7 – 0

Council Reports

Councilmember Dan Aymar-Blair

Mr. Aymar Blair said he will hold Office Hours on the second Saturday of every month at Trax Coffee House from 8 am – 9:30 am. He said that this Saturday at 1 pm The Beacon Rising Women’s Choir will perform at the Town Crier. They are raising money for Beacon charities including the Beacon Community Kitchen, the Newburgh LGBTQ Center, Beacon Prison Rides, The Love Quest Foundation and the Compass Arts Community Center.

He inquired about prohibiting the installation of fossil fuel infrastructure related to new construction including large renovations. Brookline Massachusetts and a few places in California have done this. However, the City Attorney discovered that New York State has a prohibitive stance on this for municipalities. State law preempts local governments from legislating in this area. An option for the Council would be to write a resolution to New York State requesting they change this policy.

Councilmember Amber Grant

Ms. Grant said she met with Joule Energy and provided a program update. The deadline to sign up has been extended to March 31st. For each household that signs up, Joule Energy contributes \$50 to a community fund for Beacon. As of January, the fund is “very close” \$10,000. If anyone would like to more information they can visit hudsonvalleycommunitypower.com/localsolar or call 845 859 9099.

Jodi McCrede

Ms. McCrede invited people who are interested in creating a working group to discuss municipal broadband to reach out to here at jmccredo@cityofbeacon.org. She will be working with the School District on this project.

Councilmember George Mansfield

Mr. Mansfield said that parking meters were not discussed as part of the Main Street Access Initiative. The parking problem is a parking management problem and not a problem of a lack of parking. The discussion should be about discouraging the use of vehicles rather than accommodating vehicles. One solution would be to re-open the conversation with MTA about the rail trail before parking structures are discussed.

He said that Mary Kay Verba of Dutchess Tourism has retired and he thanked her for all of the hard work that she has done for Beacon.

Councilmember Air Rhodes

Mx. Rhodes said that they spent most of the week with the Natural Resource Inventory. The draft version is an excellent, exciting document. It will be adopted in the coming weeks. They have been working with other

Councilmembers to finalize the document.

They reminded everyone to wash their hands because a lot of people are missing work due to sickness.

Councilmember Terry Nelson

Mr. Nelson reminded everyone to obey the speed limit. A deer was struck by a vehicle on Verplanck Avenue, this could have easily been a child.

He thanked everyone who attended his Office Hours; he specifically thanked Michelle Revis for reaching out to him. His next Office Hours will be February 22nd from 11 – 1 at the library.

A neo-Nazi group has been putting up signs in Beacon. He reminded people that if they see something, they should say something to the Beacon Police Department.

Mayor Kyriacou

Mayor Kyriacou said that it is very important for City of Beacon residents to participate in the 2020 Census. Legislative seats and federal funds totaling over 600 billion dollars are allocated based upon the number of people counted in Beacon. Information given to the Census Bureau will be kept private.

He pointed out that he is supportive of the City's community solar program however he is cautious about the self-help elements with regards to political gains.

Mayor Kyriacou and Fire Chief Gary VanVoorhis announced a modernization of the fire stations and the closure of Beacon Engine. Their joint report can be found at the end of these Council Minutes.

Local Laws and Resolutions

Resolutions 1- 4 below were voted on together as part of a consent agenda.

- Motion by Councilmember Jodi McCredo
- Second by Councilmember Terry Nelson
- Consent Agenda Passes 7 – 0

1. Resolution Amending the 2020 City of Beacon City Council Meeting Schedule
2. Resolution Approving the Reappointment of Michael Deane to the Human Relations Commission
3. Resolution Approving the Appointment of Faye Leone to the Conservation Advisory Committee
4. Resolution Approving the Reappointment of Brian DiFeo to the Conservation Advisory Committee

Mayor Kyriacou and City Administrator Anthony Ruggiero thanked the Water and Sewer Department and the Department of Public Works for the job they did repairing a sewer break on January 31st.

5. Resolution Setting a Public Hearing to Receive Comments on the Proposed Local Law to Extend for Three Months the Moratorium Imposed by Local Law 6 of 2019 for February 18, 2020

- Motion by Councilmember Grant

- Second by Councilmember McCrede
- Motion Passes 7 – 0

6. Resolution Setting a Public Hearing to Receive Comments on the Special Use Permit Application for 3 Water Street for March 16, 2020

- Motion by Councilmember Nelson
- Second by Councilmember Rhodes
- Motion Passes 7 – 0

7. Resolution Authorizing the City of Beacon to Enter into a Contract with David Church for Professional Services

- Motion by Councilmember McCrede
- Second by Councilmember Grant
- Motion Passes 7 – 0

8. Resolution Authorizing the City of Beacon to Enter into a Contract with Mitchell Associates Architecture PLLC for Architectural Design Services

- Motion by Councilmember Mansfield
- Second by Councilmember Grant
- Motion Passes 7 – 0

Fire Chief Gary VanVoorhis

None of the fire stations are ADA Compliant, some don't have exhaust pipes or sprinklers.

Approval of Minutes

Resolution Approving the Minutes from the January 21, 2020

- Motion by Councilmember Rhodes
- Second by Councilmember McCrede
- Motion Passes 7 – 0

Budget Amendments

- Motion by Councilmember Nelson
- Second by Councilmember Rhodes
- Motion Passes 7 – 0

Second Opportunity for Public Comments

Louis Amoroso Sr.

Mr. Amoroso Sr. said that no one from the City got in touch with the presidents of the fire companies to tell

them about the closing of Beacon Engine. Speaking to residents in the Third Ward and parts of the Fourth Ward, he said that they will not have good fire service. The City of Beacon has not spent money on the existing fire stations.

Motion to move to Executive Session

- Motion by Councilmember Mansfield
- Second by Councilmember Rhodes
- Motion Passes 7 – 0

Next Council Workshop: February 10, 2020

Next Council Meeting: February 18, 2020

Motion to Adjourn

- Motion to Adjourn by Councilmember Grant
- Second by Councilmember Rhodes
- Motion passes 7 – 0



City of Beacon, New York

Office of the Mayor
Lee Kyriacou, Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 18, 2020

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BEACON EXPANDS FIRE DEPARTMENT WITH FOUR FULL-TIME HIRES; MAYOR CALLS FOR REGIONALIZED FIRE PROTECTION

Beacon, NY: At a Council Meeting on February 18th Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou announced today the hiring of four career firefighters, as part of the largest expansion of Beacon Fire Department in decades, while calling for local governments to come together and find tax-efficient regional solutions to dwindling volunteers.

Beacon Fire Chief Gary VanVoorhis introduced the city's four newest firefighters, following unanimous approval of the City Council:

- **Dar Sims** served six years as a firefighter and EMT with the Castle Point Fire Department, six years in the Marine Corps, and holds numerous national and state firefighting certifications.
- **Kevin Glinks** is an experienced firefighter and EMT who served two years with the Global Foundries Emergency Control, and holds several firefighting certifications.
- **Kari-Leigh Lahey** has served as a volunteer firefighter in Beacon for seven years, and has four years of EMT experience with Mobile Life Support Services.
- **Ahmed Ismail** is a volunteer Lieutenant and Captain for the East Fishkill Fire Department, and has served as an EMS Officer at Grand Central Terminal in New York City.

Chief VanVoorhis said: "All of the new firefighters are exceptionally qualified, and Beacon is fortunate to attract them. They each earned perfect scores on the county civil service exam, served as career or volunteer firefighters in the past, and are EMT trained and experienced.

"With these new hires, every shift will increase from three to four career firefighters, 24/7. They will all work out of our Tompkins Hose firehouse during the day, and at night a pair each will be housed in Mase Hook & Ladder and Tompkins Hose. This improves both community safety and the safety of all our firefighters."

Mayor Kyriacou added, "Welcome aboard. Speaking for the entire Council, we are pleased to see both a stronger and more diverse firefighting capability. Our commitment is to modernize the City's firefighting facilities, encourage hiring diversity, and limit tax increases while keeping our city safe."

Three new full-time positions are partially funded by a federal Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant that the City received in 2019. All SAFER funding will end after three years, and thereafter city taxpayers must bear the full expense.

The Mayor spoke about dwindling fire and emergency volunteer counts. "Volunteers – in particular those capable of fighting an interior fire – continue to decline in Beacon and the nearby five fire districts; it is a national trend that affects every community. As interior fire-capable volunteers continue to decline, Beacon cannot afford to be the only municipality in Southern Dutchess with paid

responders (the federal VA hospital also has full-time firefighters). Current arrangements, including mutual aid, will not solve this problem. For the safety of our communities, and the pocketbooks of our taxpayers, I respectfully call for fire services in Southern Dutchess to begin a dialogue on how best to address this common crisis facing us all.”

Marc Molinaro, Dutchess County Executive, agreed: “I congratulate Beacon on its expanded career firefighter staff, and agree with Beacon’s Mayor that declining fire and emergency volunteers will not be solved without municipal cooperation. As County Executive, I stand ready to encourage and potentially offer exploratory funding for municipalities working together to tackle this difficult problem.”

About the Beacon Fire Department

The City of Beacon Fire Department currently has 13 full-time career firefighters (16 are approved in this year’s budget), over 18 volunteer firefighters and two support personnel, with five fire apparatuses in three stations: Beacon Engine (built 1886 at 57 East Main Street), Mase Hook & Ladder (built 1911 at 42 Main Street) and Lewis Tompkins Hose (current building built in 1982 at South Avenue and Route 9D; original 1886 Main Street building now owned by Hudson Beach Glass). The Department responds to more than 1,800 emergency and fire calls per year, and boasts the county’s fastest response time. The fully allocated cost of police and fire services represents an estimated 50% of the budget.

About the City of Beacon:

Beacon, New York is located on the eastern shore of the Hudson River 60 miles north of New York City, with a population of 15,000. Originally a Native American settlement, the area was purchased from the Wappinger Tribe in 1683 and settled by Dutch and other Europeans, leading to the riverfront community of Fishkill Landing on the Hudson, and the mill community of Matteawan on Fishkill Creek. The two communities were incorporated together as the City of Beacon in 1913, named for the Revolutionary War signal fires on Mount Beacon. Beacon thrived as a 19th and 20th Century factory city, but as factories closed after WWII and the local economy declined, the city went through a period of hard times. Today, Beacon has successfully reinvented itself as a 21st Century river community centered around tourism, the arts and access to the scenic Hudson River heritage area. A diverse and thriving small city, it is now home to DIA:Beacon (one of the largest exhibition spaces in the country for modern and contemporary art), a network of Hudson River parks connecting to Fishkill Creek and Mount Beacon trails, and a vibrant historic Main Street of art galleries, shops, cultural venues and restaurants.

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